

**“WE DO NOT YET HAVE DEVELOPMENT”:
ENCOUNTERS OF DEVELOPMENT KNOWLEDGES, IDENTITIES
AND PRACTICES IN A NGO PROGRAM IN RURAL HAITI**

by

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by Raymond Vander Zaag

ABSTRACT

In rural Haiti, community development programs are delivered predominantly by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and commonly have goals related to empowerment, participation, and local capacity development. Yet attainment of these goals is often difficult, and analysis of these programs neglects the complex micropolitics of development interventions. This thesis investigates the local-level encounter and contestation of NGO and local discourses of development in a community in rural Haiti.

My theoretical framework is taken from a post-developmental perspective, which sees discourses of development as pervasive forces which shape identities, knowledges and relations of power in much of the southern world (Escobar, 1992a; 1992b; 1995; Ferguson, 1990; Crush, 1995; Peet and Watts, 1996). Yet, following Foucault (1980; 1982), these discourses of development are not monolithic or fixed, but rather remain critical sites of encounter where various social actors struggle and manoeuvre for political, social and economic advantage. The impact of community development programs can only be understood in terms of complex local-level processes in which different social actors interpret, negotiate and contest knowledge and power ‘interfaces’ (Long, 1989; 1992) created at these sites of encounter.

I analyze four specific sites of encounter: NGO-supported community development associations; improved home-yard kitchen gardens; NGO activities in

support of a politically active peasants' movement; and the process of field research itself. I demonstrate that while the dominant position of NGO development discourse has led local people to adopt 'identities of underdevelopment' and embrace the promise of development, they also manoeuvre to interpret these interventions in largely pragmatic ways. Even in a self-described 'peasants' movement', rural grassroots contestation of development discourses are struggles *for* access to and participation in the perceived benefits of development. Contrary to post-developmental claims that such grassroots organizations represent 'new social movements' that reject 'development' and articulate local identities and knowledges concerning 'alternatives to development' (Escobar, 1992b; Esteva, 1992), I argue that rural Haitian identities and knowledges remain firmly embedded within overall dominant discourses of development.

Understanding NGO interventions in terms of discursive struggles leads to more insightful and appropriate understandings of the dynamics of local community development interventions. My research also suggests that, in rural Haiti, the renegotiation of development according to pragmatic 'local development knowledges' frustrates the intentions of outside NGOs, resulting in a none-the-less predictable stalemate of partially successful but dependent local development activities.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF APPENDICES	xii
GLOSSARY of ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
Chapter 1 THE ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT: INTRODUCTION	1
The Context for the Research within Development Studies	4
Outline of the Organization of the Thesis	20
Chapter 2 THE ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT: THEORETICAL APPROACHES	24
Development as Discourse	25
The Roots of Development Discourse	31
Enlightenment Knowledge and Subjectivity	31
Sociological Knowledge and Subjectivity	32
Postmodernist Knowledge and Subjectivity	34
The link between subjectivity and knowledge	40
Subjectivity, Knowledge and Development	42
Knowledge and Development	43
Power and Development	45
Post-developmental Analytical Tools	49
Chapter 3 THE ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT: THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK	55
An Actor-oriented Interface Research Framework	55
The Research Questions and Objectives	61
Research Methods and Procedures	63
Participation, Reflexivity and Interpretation	70
Confidentiality and Identities	73
Translation and Terminology	75

Chapter 4	SITES OF ENCOUNTER: A GEOGRAPHY OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN RURAL HAITI	76
	Geography and Early History of Hispaniola	77
	The Early Political Economy of Rural Haiti	78
	The American Occupation and its Effects	81
	The Arrival of Underdevelopment	84
	The Return of 'Development' in Rural Haiti	91
	The Nature of Development Assistance in Rural Areas	101
	Rural Politics and Community Development	102
	The Politics of Community	106
	Conclusion	111
Chapter 5	SITES OF ENCOUNTER: THE GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT IN MAISSADE	112
	Regional History and Geography	112
	Physical Geography of Maissade	113
	History of Maissade	114
	Peasant Livelihoods in Maissade	118
	The Save the Children Program in Maissade	124
	Other Development Programs in Maissade	138
	Earlier Development Projects	139
	Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC)	141
	MPP - <i>Movman Peyizan Papaye</i>	148
	Association des Volontaires pour le Développement de Maissade - AVODEM	156
	Conclusion	157
Chapter 6	SITES OF ENCOUNTER: THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS IN BODLO/SAVANN	159
	Discourses Concerning Community Associations	161
	Recent History of the Farmers' and Women's Associations in Bòdlo/Savann	166
	The Bòdlo Farmers' Association	167
	The Savann Women's Association	173
	Analysis - The Implementation of Empowerment	178
	Encounters of Knowledge and Power: Events and Practices in 1997	181
	Conclusion	208
Chapter 7	SITES OF ENCOUNTER: KITCHEN GARDENS, WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER ROLES IN DEVELOPMENT ...	209
	The SC Discourse Concerning Women's Empowerment, Agriculture and Gardens	210
	Women's Empowerment	210

Women's Role in Agriculture	214
Women's Houseyard Gardens	226
Gender Negotiations and Women's Participation in Development	241
The Discourse of Gender Equality and Mutuality	243
Male Discourses of Resistance to Women's Empowerment	248
The Discourse of the Competent Development-oriented Woman	252
Conclusion	257
Chapter 8	SITES OF ENCOUNTER: PEASANT MOVEMENTS AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT POLITICS 260
Grassroots Peasant Movements in Haiti	262
MPP and the Discourse of the Grassroots	266
MPP Encounters at the community level	277
MPP's Community Cane Mill	279
Manoeuvring to Save and Borrow	285
Paying for Literacy	291
Conclusion	294
Chapter 9	SITES OF ENCOUNTER: THE FIELD RESEARCH 297
Theoretical and Methodological Issues	298
Practical Difficulties	302
Research Encounters	305
The <i>groupman</i> in Bòdlo.	306
Kitchen garden focus groups	312
Implications for Practice and Theory	315
Conclusion	321
Chapter 10	CONCLUSIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS 323
Knowledges of development and identities of underdevelopment	325
The effects of development programs	331
Implications for NGO Development Practice	334
BIBLIOGRAPHY	340
Appendix One. Questions Used for <i>Jaden Lakou</i> Focus Groups	364
Appendix Two. Survey Questionnaire on Women's Role in Agriculture	366
Appendix Three. Declaration of Women's Associations of Anwò	370
Appendix Four. Evaluation Report	372

LIST OF TABLES

Table 7.1	Summary of Women and Agriculture Surveys conducted in Maissade . . .	219
Table 7.2	Comparative Importance of <i>Jaden Lakou</i> and Large Gardens	232
Table 7.3	Other Crops Reported in Home-Yard (proportion of households)	237
Table 7.4	Household Decision Making Roles	246
Table 7.5	Women's Ranking of Changes in Gender Relations	248
Table 7.6	Women's Ranking of New Competencies They Have Achieved	255

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Map of Haiti, showing location of the town of Maissade	62
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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix One. Questions Used for <i>Jaden Lakou</i> Focus Groups	364
Appendix Two. Survey Questionnaire on Women's Role in Agriculture	366
Appendix Three. Declaration of Women's Associations of Anwò	370
Appendix Four. Evaluation Report	372

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- AGPM:** *Assosyasyon Groupman Peyizan Mayisad* (Association of Peasant Groups of Maissade) An association of the farmers' associations, formed with the support of SC in order to carry on development activities in Maissade after the end of the SC program.
- AKED:** Pseudonym for the regional development NGO established by CRWRC, operating a community development program in an adjacent commune. It also had program interventions in the communities of Anwò and Timonn.
- ASEK:** *Asanble Seksyon Kominal*. The three-person 'assembly' for each rural section, which were being elected for the first time in the April 1997 elections.
- AVODEM:** *Association des Volontaires pour le Développement de Maissade*. (a local NGO founded by the former deputy (parliamentary representative for Maissade), which had received a few grants for small projects in the area.
- CIDA:** Canadian International Development Agency. The Canadian government agency which delivers most of Canada's official development assistance.
- CONAJEC:** *Conseil Nationale d'Action Jean-Claudiste*. A political organization organized during the last years of the Duvalier era.
- CRWRC:** Christian Reformed World Relief Committee. A North American church-affiliated NGO which initiated and supported a community development program in an adjacent commune to Maissade from 1976 to 1993.
- FAO:** Food and Agriculture Organization, an agency of the United Nations system.
- GRO:** Grass-roots organization. A type of NGO that is usually smaller and membership-based, utilizing collective voluntary action of members rather than primarily paid professional staff.
- HAVA:** Haitian Association of Voluntary Associations. An umbrella organization of international and national development NGOs working in Haiti.
- IMF:** International Monetary Fund.
- IPSA:** *Inite Pwodiksyon Semans Atizana*. A program of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) which promoted the local production of seed of 'indigenous' varieties of corn.
- KASEK:** *Konsej Seksyon Kominal*. The three-person 'council' which administered municipal affairs in each 'rural section' (township) in a commune.
- LO:** Local organization, particularly a local membership-based community organization.

- MPNKP: *Movman Peyizan Nasyonal Kongre Papay*. An emerging national peasant movement organized and promoted by MPP and its leader, Chavannes Jean-Baptiste.
- MPP: *Movman Peyizan Papay*. A regional 'peasants' movement' and development organization, centered in the community of Papay northeast of the regional capital Hinche, which was very active in both local and regional politics and development.
- MSPP: *Ministère de la Santé Publique et la Population*. The Haitian government's Health and Population Ministry.
- NDF: Nutrition Demonstration Foyers. These were a key intervention of the WAND project. The foyers consisted of two-week (ten-day) feeding and training sessions conducted by trained health agents and women's club leaders, to which mothers with malnourished children were invited in order to learn improved feeding and child health practices.
- NGO: Non-governmental organization.
- NSM: New Social Movement. A broad range of identity-based grassroots social movements (i.e. indigenous, ecological, peasant, women's, informal sector, ethnic and other alternate social groups) engaged in resistance and struggle for cultural, economic and community survival in the face of dominant developmentalist forces.
- OAS: Organization of American States.
- OPL: *Oganizasyon Politik Lavalas*. The political party which supported candidates affiliated with President Aristide in the 1995 elections. By the 1997 elections, however, a split emerged, resulting in a new political coalition, named *Lafanmi Lavalas*, directed by Aristide, and OPL assuming a position of opposition to Aristide.
- PVO: Private Voluntary Organization. This is the term used most frequently in the United States to refer to the voluntary development agencies that in the rest of the world are called NGOs.
- SC: Save the Children Federation. The American affiliate of the worldwide federation of Save the Children agencies.
- SPC: *Sere Pou Chofe*. The saving and credit program initiated and promoted by MPP within its member groups. Members were required to purchase one 'membership share' for G5 in order to join, plus pay G5 for a passbook and G1 as an entry fee. They were then encouraged to deposit 'savings' each month, and so build the capital of the 'credit union'. Members who accumulated G50 in savings were eligible for loans from the SPC.

- UCS: *Unité de Coordination Santé*. The regional health structure, designed to coordinate government and private voluntary health services in each region of the country, proposed as part of InterAmerican Bank financing to the Ministry of Health.
- UNDP: United Nations Development Program.
- UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund.
- U.S.AID: United States Agency for International Development. The official U.S. government development assistance agency.
- VSN: *Volontaires pour la Sécurité Nationale*. The official name of the paramilitary organization commonly known as the *tonton macoutes*, created during the Duvalier era.
- WAND: Women in Action for Nutrition and Development project, a 3-year U.S.AID-funded project implemented by a coalition of three Central Plateau NGOs. SC had overall management and coordination responsibilities, and implemented the project in Maissade.
- WCI: Woman Child Impact project, a four-year (1992-1996) U.S.AID funded project to Save the Children U.S. for 'women's empowerment' activities in four countries, including Haiti. This grant funded the majority of SC's activities promoting the women's clubs and women's associations.

Chapter One

THE ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT: INTRODUCTION

“The goal of the Woman/Child Impact Program (WCI) is to contribute to human development and the empowerment of women and children as critical participants and beneficiaries of their community’s social and economic development.”

Save the Children Maissade Project Document, 1992.

“Nou poko gen developman.” (“We do not yet have development.”)

Women’s club member, Maissade, Haiti, 1997.

“Has the notion of ‘development’ become passé?”

From a poster for a conference entitled “Towards Post-developmentalism” held at the Harvard University Law School, April 1998.

The above quotations present three seemingly contradictory statements concerning development. The first statement expresses optimism - the planners at the non-governmental development organization (NGO) Save the Children (SC) confidently see their program interventions as actively contributing to the development and empowerment of women in rural Haiti. This confidence was later confirmed in a positive final program evaluation report, which stated that:

One of the most important accomplishments of the WCI Program has been the highly successful introduction of women as direct participants and targets of [Save the Children] interventions, not just as agents to reach children, but as participants and beneficiaries in their own right in the process of community and rural development (Boyle, 1995, p. 12).

However, the Haitian woman who, as a member of a women’s club, was a participant in this ‘women’s empowerment’ program for over four years, stated to me that development

was something that still had to 'come' to her community. Despite the organization of a women's development association in her community and the various credit, education and income generation activities it had undertaken with Save the Children support, she understands development to be something 'out there' that her community still does not have, something that remains elusive yet desirable. Meanwhile, academics gathered at Harvard suggest that the notion of development belongs to the past (even before it has had a chance to come to rural Haiti,) and question if it should not be replaced by 'alternatives to development' articulated by various grassroots social movements.

These three statements illustrate (though by no means exhaust) the numerous understandings that different people hold concerning development. In Haiti, as in other places where development assistance is practised or theorized, development is a powerful but contested concept. Thus, in the above statements, Save the Children officials are legitimating their program interventions, a local woman challenges the effectiveness of these interventions and expresses her desire to receive 'development' as she sees it 'out there' beyond her rural community, and development researchers contest the dominant neo-liberal development paradigm. The different meanings of development held by different people (NGO officials, local women and men, or development researchers), and their use in statements like those above, become ways of establishing and contesting claims to power. They can be analyzed as discourses of development, as claims to power through struggles over the meaning of development.

This thesis is an investigation of the local-level operation of various discourses of development in a community development program in rural Haiti. My theoretical framework is taken from a broadly post-developmental perspective, which sees

discourses of development and underdevelopment as pervasive forces which shape identities, knowledges and relations of power in much of the southern world (Escobar, 1992a; 1992b; 1995; Ferguson, 1990; Slater, 1992, Watts, 1993; Crush, 1995; Peet and Watts, 1996). Yet, following Foucault (1980; 1982), these discourses of development are not monolithic or fixed, but rather remain critical sites of encounter where various social actors struggle and manoeuvre for political, social and economic advantage. This theoretical approach will guide my analysis of community development interventions in a rural Haitian community as encounters of local community discourses of development with development discourses associated with outside NGOs. I will argue that the impact of community development programs can only be understood in terms of complex local-level processes in which different social actors interpret, negotiate and contest knowledge and power 'interfaces' (Long, 1989; 1992) created at these sites of encounter. I analyze four specific sites of encounter - NGO-supported community development associations; improved home-yard kitchen gardens; NGO activities in support of a politically active peasants' movement; and the process of field research itself - where these development discourses are contested and thereby revealed. I propose that analysis of these discursive struggles leads to more insightful and appropriate understandings of the dynamics of local community development interventions. My research also suggests that, in rural Haiti, rural grassroots contestation of development discourses are struggles *for* access to and participation in the perceived benefits of development. Contrary to post-developmental claims that such grassroots organizations represent 'new social movements' that reject 'development' and articulate local identities and knowledges

concerning ‘alternatives to development’ (Escobar, 1992b; Esteva, 1992), I argue that rural Haitian identities and knowledges remain firmly embedded within overall dominant discourses of development.

The Context for the Research within Development Studies

In this section, I will locate my research within the broader field of development studies. After first briefly outlining the overall state of the field, I will narrow the discussion to describe the place that NGOs and local community organizations have occupied in development theory. The section will conclude with a discussion of the weaknesses of mainstream analytical approaches to the study of the impacts and dynamics of NGO interventions aimed at empowering local community organizations and strengthening civil society.

Development has been a dominant social project in the so-called ‘Third World’¹ for the past five decades. The lack of development has become the dominant identity of these regions of the world, reflected in the fact that they are most commonly referred to as the ‘developing world’ or as ‘less-developed’ countries. (The previous, more direct, label of ‘underdeveloped’ is no longer deemed acceptable.) Development assistance has become a big ‘industry’, spending tens of billions of dollars each year² and employing

¹ The term ‘Third World’ is used to suggest the distancing and ‘othering’ that is part of the process of declaring certain areas of the world to lack development. In the remainder of the thesis, I will use the term ‘South’ when referring to the countries that have traditionally been the targets of development assistance.

² The donor countries in the OECD provided approximately \$US 48 billion in total overseas development assistance (through both bilateral and multilateral channels) in 1997 (OECD, 1999, Table 1). This figure has declined considerably from a total of over \$60 billion in 1992 (OECD, 1999, Table 1).

tens of thousands of people around the world in a whole complex of organizations, institutions and bureaucracies devoted to “international good deeds” (Hancock, 1989; Powell and Seddon, 1997.)

Despite the large amount of financial and human resources devoted to development assistance, producing ‘development’ has proved to be complex and difficult. Mainstream western development theory (which has dominated the development industry) has implemented and then abandoned a steady succession of paradigms and models, in an attempt to produce ‘better’ development.³ While the annual development reports from the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) indicate that some aggregate human welfare indicators (such as life expectancy, infant mortality, literacy) are improving in most regions of the world,⁴ other indicators (such as per capita income, health care, schooling) are decreasing, particularly in comparison with the ‘developed’ world and in specific regions of the ‘developing’ world (e.g. World Bank, 1997; 1998; UNDP, 1997; 1998). The environmental and cultural costs of development are also increasingly recognized (i.e. Peet and Watts, 1996; Adams,

³ It is difficult to make a sharp distinction between development theories and the models of development practice they produce. It is perhaps more helpful to suggest a continuum extending from specific models of development assistance interventions to broader, underlying ‘theories’ of development. Specific development assistance models have included: technology transfer and investment (the 1950s and 60s), community development (the 1960s), integrated rural development and basic needs (the 1970s), women-in-development, NGOs, and institution building (1980s), participatory development and environmentally sustainable development (the 1990s). (For reviews of the history of development assistance models, see Cassen (1986); OECD (1986) and Delgado (1995)). The dominant underlying theory of development behind these interventions has been ‘modernization’, based on Western models and experience, applied in economic, political, social, and institutional spheres. Economic aspects of modernization have dominated, and in the 1980s shifted from the role of the state to a neo-liberal emphasis on market forces, limited government and structural adjustment and free trade. In the 1990s, the pendulum has swung back somewhat, with ‘good governance’ and democratization being added to the neoliberal economic emphasis (Delgado, 1995).

⁴ Though not in Africa.

1995; Pieterse and Parekh, 1995; Hale, 1997). Much debate continues, therefore, both about whether 'aid works' (Cassen, 1986), and much more fundamentally, about whether 'development works' (i.e. Sachs, 1992; Escobar, 1995a; 1995b; Schuurman, 1996).

In the ongoing attempts to make both development and development assistance work, the themes of empowerment, participatory development and the strengthening of local organizational capacities remain among the most important. These have been particularly important themes in rural development efforts, since it is in rural areas that the majority of the world's poor live, and their poverty is linked to their weak institutional participation and influence in their national socio-political-economic life.

The history of participation and community involvement in rural development extends almost to the beginning of development itself. The literature analyzing the theme of participation in rural development is large (e.g. Hapgood, 1969; United Nations, 1971; Uphoff, Cohen and Goldsmith, 1979; Chambers, 1983; Goulet, 1989; Abbott, 1995; Craig and Mayo, 1995; World Bank, 1996; Opp, 1998), and I will only provide a very brief outline of its evolution to its current incarnation.

Starting in the late 1950s and continuing through to the early 1970s (Holdcroft, 1984; Delgado, 1995), community development programs (also known as *animation rurale* in Francophone nations) were popular, and attempted to promote localized development which lifted entire rural communities out of their 'backwardness' and 'isolation' through what are now seen as idealistic principles of community participation, self-reliance and local societal integration (Opp, 1998, p. 43; Bryant and White, 1982, p. 209; Holdcroft, 1984). In the 1970s came an emphasis on 'development participation', which focused on improving the effectiveness of development interventions through the

involvement of beneficiaries in defining and implementing programs. This emphasis was linked to the 'basic needs' paradigm of the time, and also incorporated concern to bridge the 'organizational gap' between central government agencies and rural communities through the strengthening of local participatory institutions (Esman and Uphoff, 1984, p. 50). Yet, top-down planning approaches remained dominant in most actual mainstream development practice, and the "difficulties in starting or sustaining effective local institutions [kept] many agencies from making organization a central part of their development strategy" (Esman and Uphoff, 1984, p. 50).⁵ At the same time, more radical, 'bottom-up' participatory movements emerged, guided by alternative visions of local development based on conscientization, self-empowerment, collective action, and political and economic liberation (e.g. Freire, 1970; Goulet, 1971).

During the 1980s, mainstream development interventions were dominated by macro-economic structural adjustment concerns, which were linked with state retreat from social services, and their (partial) replacement by the private and 'voluntary' sectors. Participation and local development largely became the domain of increasing numbers of 'intermediary' NGOs (Carroll, 1992). Yet the political and institutional difficulties of implementing structural reform, as well as criticism for the impact of structural adjustment programs on vulnerable social groups, have brought the major development agencies such as the World Bank to return to ideas of participation (e.g.

⁵ I cannot but wonder if the difficulties of promoting local organization were the effect rather than the cause of top-down planning approaches! The difficulty of understanding and intervening in complex local situations will be a major theme in my discussion of previous research on NGO development interventions later in this chapter.

World Bank, 1989; 1996).⁶ Thus, participation is again incorporated within current development policy priorities of good governance, promoting civil society and democratization, local partnership and development sustainability. As Williams and Young (1994, p. 87) note, the concept of governance includes both ‘technical areas’, such as the policy and legal frameworks and political and administrative institutions, as well as ‘civil society’, a broad range of representative associations, NGOs, and other social or voluntary groups.⁷ These elements of civil society are seen as creating channels of participation, establishing “links both upward and downward in society and [voicing] local concerns more effectively than grassroots institutions” (World Bank, 1989, p.1). Indeed, as Fisher (1997, p. 440) comments, the potential of a “global associational explosion has captivated the imagination of a wide variety of development planners, policy makers, activists and analysts”. Some observers have gone as far as to declare that “the third world ... is being swept by a nongovernmental, associational, or ‘quiet’ revolution that ... may ‘prove to be as significant to the later twentieth century as the rise

⁶ Some view this as a ‘degradation’ and cooption (Gardner and Lewis, 1996, p. 111), or ‘recycling’ (Watts, 1995) of the original conception of participation, as mainstream development agencies seek to gain ideological legitimacy while none-the-less still insisting on prescribing and imposing Western models of economy and politics (Gardner and Lewis, 1996, p. 113, see also Watts, 1995).

⁷ The concept and nature of ‘civil society’ has sparked numerous debates. The most helpful definition of civil society that I have seen is that of Hadeius and Ugglä (1996, n.p., cited in Stewart, 1997, p. 15):

A common way of clarifying the concept of civil society is to say that it denotes (a) a certain area of society which is (b) dominated by interaction of a certain kind. The area in question is the public sphere between the state and the individual citizen (or household). Civil society is further distinguished by the fact that the activities contained therein take an organized and collective form. When we speak of civil society, it is to groups arranged in social networks of a reasonable fixed and routinized character that we refer.

of the nation-state was the later part of the nineteenth century” (Fisher, 1997, p. 440, citing Salamon, 1993, p. 1).

Thus, the concept and discourse of civil society is currently the dominant framework in which mainstream development agencies view local participation and community involvement. A Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) document states: “A key dimension of sustainable development is building strong civil societies. Strengthening civil society, and the voice and capacity of marginalized actors within it, has become an important element of CIDA’s development policies and in the work of Canadian voluntary agencies” (CIDA, 1996, p. 3). This is seen as particularly important in countries such as Haiti, which have weak democratic traditions and institutions. In Haiti, current U.S.AID plans include the promotion of “the formation and growth of community level groups around collective sustainable management of natural resources and sanitation” and encouraging decentralization and the expanding role of “civil society organizations” so that they can “build their advocacy skills so that they may positively influence government policies and oversee public institutions” as well as “resolve community-level problems.” (U.S.AID, 1998, n.p.)

The delivery of ‘civil society-building development’ - participatory, empowering and local community capacity-building development interventions - has increasingly become the domain of NGOs and grassroots organizations (GROs).⁸ This rise of NGOs

⁸ The category NGO by its very definition includes a wide variety of organizations that only share the ‘porous’ characteristic of being officially ‘non-governmental’. Traditionally, NGOs have been seen as belonging to the ‘third’ sector of voluntary service organizations, after public (government) and private (market) institutions. Within development assistance, NGOs range from large professionalized international agencies working in many countries (i.e. CARE, World Vision, Médecins Sans Frontières) to small national volunteer-staffed agencies. Because of this diversity, some analysts have designated the term GRO for small, membership-based, collective action voluntary organizations, as a subset of NGOs.

within development assistance is based on their role as linkage institutions between local communities and outside donors and governments. NGOs are seen as having unique abilities in bridging knowledge and power differentials to reach the poor and improve their wellbeing. These linkage abilities are viewed from a range of perspectives.

Mainstream donor agencies such as the World Bank, the UN system and the official OECD-country agencies, in response to their concerns with weak state administrative capacity and the need for good governance, have turned to NGOs as flexible, (cost-) efficient, entrepreneurial and decentralized alternatives for the delivery of social services and the promotion of 'civil society' (e.g., Israel, 1991; Salman and Eaves, 1989; Carroll, 1992; World Bank, 1994; Lewis, 1994; Edwards and Hulme, 1996; Stewart, 1997).

Writing about the new development policy agenda of good governance, Edwards and Hulme (1996, p. 961-62) state,

NGOs and GROs are awarded a key role in the democratization process by bilateral and multilateral agencies.... They are seen as an integral part of a thriving civil society and an essential counterweight to state power, opening up channels of communication and participation, providing training grounds for activists, and promoting pluralism.

Some see this emphasis on the role of NGO as going too far. As Powell and Seddon (1997, p. 9) state, "for many, NGOs [have] become equated with civil society, and civil society with NGOs - as if there are no other institutions or organizations ... of any significance in promoting civil rights and human development." The result, Edwards and Hume suggest, is that NGOs may be getting "too close for comfort" to official aid donors,

For a discussion of the relationship and distinctions between NGOs and GROs, see Uphoff (1993). NGO and GRO areas of intervention range from traditional concerns such as agriculture, health and education to human rights and peace-building.

thereby compromising their performance, independence and legitimacy (Edwards and Hume, 1996, p. 961).

Advocates of grassroots and 'bottom-up' approaches to development have long focused on NGOs' ability to promote participation, to empower traditionally marginalized groups and build on their local knowledges and capacities, and so to create an 'alternative' development that challenges dominant, globalizing modernization approaches (e.g., Korten, 1980; 1990; Esman and Uphoff, 1984; Carroll, 1992; Chambers, 1983; 1993). Yet in each perspective, the important characteristics and advantages of NGOs relate to the linking or mediation of knowledge and power processes between the outside (development agencies, state bureaucracies and political structures) and local populations. The related ideas of linkage, mediation and transfer form the core of the theoretical understanding of NGO advantage in development interventions.

The rise in prominence of NGOs in development practice can be seen in the level of financial resources being channelled through them. According to OECD statistics (1995, p. 126-7), northern NGOs provided \$6.3 billion in development assistance to developing countries in 1993. Reflecting their role as service providers for bi-lateral donor agencies, over one-third of this amount came from bi-lateral agencies in 1993 (as opposed to private, voluntary sources.) Five percent of the total official bi-lateral aid given by OECD countries was channelled through northern NGOs in 1993 (OECD, 1995). In Canada, considerably larger proportions of government bilateral development assistance are channelled through NGOs. CIDA provided 14 percent of its total budget directly to Canadian NGOs in 1993 (Smillie and Helmich, 1993), and in addition, many of CIDA's bilateral projects were implemented by NGOs as contractors. In addition to

northern NGOs, there are (tens of) thousands of southern NGOs, supported both by northern donors (NGOs and official) and national sources, though there are no reliable estimates of their exact number or the total monetary value of their programs.

With the rise in prominence of NGOs in development practice has come a flurry of analysis and comparative research on NGO roles and performance in development assistance. These studies are beginning to respond to what numerous analysts have referred to as a “disproportionate” lack of documentation and analysis of NGOs in development (Carroll, 1992, p. 22; also Riddell and Robinson, 1995, p. 2; Israel, 1991, p. 11-12; Edwards and Hulme, 1996, p. 963). Edwards and Hulme remark that an increasing number of such studies are questioning “many of the accepted wisdoms about levels of poverty-reach, cost-effectiveness, popular participation, flexibility and innovation among NGOs and GROs” (Edwards and Hulme, 1996, p. 963). Some of this research on NGO performance has focused on more macro policy issues, such as NGO-state relations, NGO accountability and donor dependence, and public policy influence (e.g., Fowler, 1991; Bratton, 1990; Farrington and Bebbington, 1993; Edwards and Hulme, 1995). Other research has focused on more micro-level organizational and structural variables, in an attempt to find “the common or recurring organizational features and development strategies” (Carroll, 1992, p. 9) associated with good performance. These studies analyze NGO performance in terms of criteria such as cost-effectiveness, ‘poverty-reach’, beneficiary participation, organizational capacity building, women’s involvement, leadership and management (e.g., Carroll, 1992; Esman and Uphoff, 1984; Riddell and Robinson, 1995; Edwards and Hulme, 1995).

Yet the complexity, variability and multiplicity of concrete NGO interventions (and the societies in which they operate) mean that only very limited understandings and models of NGO performance can be described, as many of these studies of NGO performance themselves recognize (e.g., Carroll, 1992; Riddell and Robinson, 1995; Edwards and Hulme, 1996; Fisher, 1997). Often development interventions produce unintended results that overshadow their intended objectives, which may or may not be achieved (e.g., Ferguson, 1990; Long and Villarreal, 1993). Riddell and Robinson (1995, p. 81) describe the limitations of their study in the following paragraph:

If this summary of the results of the case studies has shown anything, it is surely the complex nature of societies into which NGO projects are inserted, as well as the sheer range of different internal and external factors which influence project outcomes. The results . . . throw light on the difficulties NGOs face in their attempt to assist in poverty alleviation, as well as helping us understand better what might or might not prove to be effective. Yet there are clearly other, and perhaps even more important, lessons to be learnt, many of which probably lie embedded in the files and experiences of the increasing number of NGOs in the North and the South who are seeking to contribute to the alleviation of poverty across the developing world. This study has barely scratched the surface of an area of development which remains extraordinarily difficult to understand, and thus to address comprehensively.

Riddell and Robinson seem to recognize that NGO interventions are dynamic and complex practices, that cannot be enclosed within organizational and planning models. Yet they lack the analytical tools to conceptualize these process.

More recently, a number of studies have taken a more critical approach to NGOs. These studies have analyzed the 'politics' of NGOs within development practice - their increasing incorporation and 'closeness' to official aid agencies (Edwards and Hulme, 1996), the contested nature of civil society and therefore also of NGO roles within civil society (Stewart, 1997), and the location of NGOs within complex and multiple local and global networks of ideas, knowledge, funding and people (Fisher, 1997, p. 439).

Studies of local community organizations (LOs) - key elements of strong 'civil societies' - have displayed similar conceptual weaknesses. Some analyze local organizations using concepts of collective action taken from rational choice theory, simplifying human agency and rationality to considerations of exchange and utility maximization (i.e., Nabli and Nugent, 1989; Nugent, 1993; Bardhan 1993). Perhaps the best known and most detailed (though now somewhat dated) study of local organizations has been undertaken by Esman and Uphoff (1984; see also Uphoff, 1986; 1993). Using 150 case studies, they attempted to 'disaggregate' the concept of local organization by examining their performance at the 'micro level', in order to determine "which structural and operational features are associated with various dimensions of successful performance under different environmental conditions" (Esman and Uphoff, 1984, p. 286).

Esman and Uphoff recognize the complex and social nature of LO interventions: "Such projects are not a matter of transferring known techniques but of attempting to adapt existing, contingent knowledge to social structures and relationships that are only imperfectly understood and are not passive objects for transformation" (1982, p. 284). Yet they continue to use what Nuijten (1992, p. 189) calls "notions of formal bureaucratic rationality." The analysis remains conceptually enclosed, focused on analysing project impacts only in terms of project objectives, and on creating models and discovering key organizational variables. While the dynamic and contextual nature of the intervention process is often acknowledged, there is no place for different social actors to appear, for other actors' 'projects' to be operating, for other impacts and effects to be considered other than those of 'development' (Heijdra, 1989; Nuijten, 1992). The analysis does not

examine these development processes at the level of meanings and understandings people attach to them, and is therefore not able to examine the complex knowledge and power processes involved. Despite the recent emphasis on empowerment and increasing local community participation in civil society, few other recent studies are available which explicitly examine the impact of programs intended to achieve these goals.

The difficulty of understanding and analyzing the complexity and diversity of NGO and LO development interventions in local situations has been critiqued on the basis of the positivist notions of knowledge and power implicit in these approaches (Scoones and Thompson, 1993; Escobar, 1995; Long, 1992a; Hobart, 1993). These critiques point out the shortcomings of viewing knowledge (either expert 'scientific' knowledge or local 'indigenous' knowledge) as a tangible stock that NGOs can easily extract, accumulate or transfer. They show the shortcomings of approaching power as an external, structural force that acts upon or through particular social categories of people (i.e., peasants, women, bureaucrats), or that can easily be shared or claimed through 'empowerment'. Instead, they suggest that knowledge and power are intimately linked, shaped in complex and multiple ways by people's position in the social world, and in turn shaping people's identities and action. These approaches demonstrate the importance of focusing on the local level, and the agency and identities of diverse human beings. As Long states, analysis needs to focus on individual actors' "capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion" (Long, 1992a, p. 22). Thus, NGO interventions cannot be understood simply as planned, linear processes, or without 'deconstructing' normative concepts such as

participation and empowerment (Long, 1992a), and examining the encounters of identities and knowledges.

Summarizing the current literature on NGOs, Fisher suggests

This literature as a whole is based more on faith than fact: There are relatively few detailed studies of what is happening in particular places or within specific organizations. few analyses of the impact of NGO practices on relations of power among individuals, communities, and the state, and little attention to the discourse within which NGOs are presented as the solution to problems of welfare service delivery, development and democratization (Fisher, 1997, p. 441).

The current critiques of development are rooted in more fundamental and radical analyses based on examination of the foundations of modern Western thought and society. These post-modernist and post-structuralist approaches have challenged the Enlightenment hope that human rationality and positivistic scientific knowledge will lead to truth, freedom and progress. This critique sees development theory as the application of this western modernist faith in its scientific knowledge and economic progress to the non-Western world. The development enterprise is seen as Eurocentric and dominating, first constructing the 'developing world' according to its conceptual apparatus, and then authorizing and normalizing its interventions and prescriptions. As Escobar states, "From this perspective, development can best be described as an apparatus that links *forms of knowledge* about the Third World with the *deployment of forms of power and intervention...*" (Escobar, 1995a, p. 213, emphasis added). An increasing body of critical scholarship has emerged which has analyzed the 'discourse of development', examining how the idea of development has evolved into a powerful complex of knowledge, practices and institutions with the ability and authority to "make and remake the world" (Crush, 1995, p. 8; also Escobar, 1995a; 1995b; Sachs, 1992; Peets and Watts, 1993;

Routledge, 1995; Cowen and Shenton, 1996; Moore and Schmitz, 1995; Pieterse and Parekh, 1995; Gardner and Lewis, 1996). In a related manner, many of these scholars are examining the grassroots initiatives of various social movements as they struggle for their own space to define and transform their lives (i.e. Escobar and Alvarez, 1992; Friedman, 1992; Routledge, 1996; Crush, 1995). The label 'post-developmental' has become attached to these approaches (Latouche, 1993; Mohan, 1997; Pieterse, 1998), in reference to their call for 'alternatives to development' (Watts, 1995, p. 45; Pieterse, 1998) that move beyond the paradigm of development.

Yet not all local and grassroots resistance and confrontation with development rejects the mainstream development project. As a number of analysts have pointed out, "many popular organizations are concerned with *access* to development, with inclusion and participation, while others are concerned with renegotiating development, or with devolution and decentralization" (Pieterse, 1998, p. 363). Many political struggles in the South are "reactive in terms of material well-being rather than proactive in a more progressive and radical sense" of alternate politics and identity (Mohan, 1997, p. 322, citing Fuentes and Frank, 1989). As Rangan (1996, p. 206) illustrates in a case study from India, many new social movements are "not *against* the idea of development, but are *part* of it." These analysts emphasize that discourses of development remain highly diverse, their "complex meanings, values and benefits constantly negotiated and contested in the public realm" (Rangan, 1996, p. 209; also see Mohan, 1997).

All these new approaches have brought a range of innovative conceptual and analytical tools, which have been used to move the focus of development studies in new directions. I will present both the theoretical foundations and the specific features of

these post-structuralist tools in detail in the following chapter. Broadly speaking, however, these approaches bring a more micro, interpretative 'cultural' analysis to development, as opposed to more macro, 'material' positivist analyses. Development interventions are examined in terms of the operation of knowledges, identities, meanings and discourses - how these 'cultural' aspects of society both are constituted by and contest relations of power in development. These approaches focus on the local micropolitics of development, in which identities, knowledges and discourses produce and reproduce social relations, and how symbolic contestations embody or constitute the struggle for improved livelihoods and increased resources. They focus on the interplay between these everyday actions and larger scale development processes, and the resulting complexity and multiplicity of development practice. By exposing the operation of diverse social forces (power) through the practice of development, they seek to create new possibilities for alternative action and self-determination for poor and marginalized peoples.

In this thesis, I will apply some of these post-structuralist analytical tools concerning knowledge, identity and power to examine NGO development interventions aimed at promoting rural community development in Haiti. I will examine how discourses of development operate in a specific NGO community development program in rural Haiti, how they interact with and affect the identities and knowledges of local people involved in the program, and how these people in turn deploy strategies based on these identities and knowledges. The effects of the NGO community development program will be analyzed by conceptualizing its development interventions as creating complex sites of encounter and struggle of development knowledges and identities. This

analysis will attempt to show that ‘what happens’ in a development program can only be understood in terms of the encounter of these knowledges and identities concerning development. By examining the dynamics of the “flow of meaning” (Dahl and Hjort, 1984, p. 172) involved in a specific development program, I hope to contribute to a more general understanding of the social processes involved in development interventions.

It should be stated that my goal in this study is not to evaluate Save the Children’s development programs (or NGO community development programs in general), in terms of how well they promote development or achieve their goals, or against some measure of effectiveness or efficiency.⁹ Thus, my purpose is not to analyze or theorize about the role of NGOs and community associations in the practice of community development, though some inferences will likely emerge from the analysis. Similarly, I also do not focus on the outcomes of the encounter of outside development agencies and local community actors - to attempt, in other words, to declare ‘who wins’ and ‘who loses’. Rather, the goal is to analyze what happens in development practice in order to understand a little better *how* these things happen. The goal is “a better theoretical grasp of the problems of planned intervention and social change” (Long and Villareal, 1993, p. 140), particularly as experienced in rural Haiti. Such understanding can lead to better and different practices by NGOs and other development assistance agencies in the future, by encouraging them to abandon simplistic models of intervention in favour of more nuanced and theorized approaches to local social realities (Long and Villareal, 1993, p. 141; Long, 1992, p. 4.)

⁹ At the end of my field work in Maissade, I prepared a ‘consultant’s report’ for Save the Children, in which I provided such an program evaluation, along with specific programming recommendations. This report is included in Appendix Four.

Outline of the Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is organized in ten chapters. The first three chapters focus on laying out a 'post-developmental' theoretical framework for my analysis of development intervention. This introductory chapter has introduced the topic under study, set the context for the thesis within the field of development studies, and described its goals and purpose. The second chapter develops the theoretical approaches utilized in the thesis in detail. It begins by introducing the concept of discourse and 'development as discourse', drawing on Foucault's notions of power/knowledge and subjectivity. The roots of (and challenge posed by) these analytical concepts are then established through a review of the recent progression (from modernism to post-structuralism) of theoretical approaches to knowledge and subjectivity in the social sciences. I then review how these post-structuralist approaches relate to development theory and the study of knowledge and power in development interventions. These three reviews are then tied together in the final section of the chapter through elaboration of how a Foucauldian 'analytics of power' approach can be applied to the analysis of the encounter of development discourses.

The third chapter develops the research framework. It describes Long's 'actor-oriented' approach to studying development interventions, detailing how it applies the theoretical concepts developed in chapter two. The research questions that guided the study are then presented. These questions then lead to a description of the particular research methods and procedures utilized during the field research. The chapter concludes with a discussion of some of the theoretical concerns raised by the field methodology.

The following six chapters develop the body of the analysis by describing and analyzing a series of 'sites of encounter' which illuminate the dynamics of identities, knowledges and power resulting from the operation of discourses of development. Chapter four and five are largely historical. Chapter four describes the development geography of Haiti as a historical and geographical site of encounter of interventions that are the antecedent of current development practice. While providing the historical and geographical context for the study, the description also attempts to show how the 'space/place' that is Haiti has been shaped by past dominant discourses.

In Chapter five, a similar analysis is provided for Maissade, the site of the NGO development program and the research. The history and geography of Maissade and its regions are described, focusing in particular on the character of rural livelihoods. Then the history and structure of the Save the Children are described. The final part of the chapter describes other development programs in Maissade, both past and present, with particular emphasis on a 'rival' development program that is part of a larger regional and national 'peasants' movement'. This section attempts to show, also at the local level of Maissade, how 'development' has been an important 'cultural' or 'discursive' site of struggle which has shaped people's identities and social understandings.

Chapter six describes and analyzes the encounters that take place as a result of Save the Children development interventions at the site of the farmers' and women's associations in one of the communities studied. The events that took place during the research period are described, and these are then analyzed in terms of the meanings attributed to the associations and their development activities by the various actors, and the knowledges and identities people assumed in relation to them.

In chapter seven, the analysis turns to a more physical site, household gardens, and examines a range of contested understandings of gender relations and 'women's development' that are revealed at the site of these gardens. The official SC program discourse concerning women's role in rural society and agricultural production, and the importance of kitchen gardens is critiqued and contrasted with the understandings and actions of local women and men. The second part of the chapter utilizes the interventions promoting the kitchen gardens to examine and analyze the discursive struggles around ideals of household mutuality and equality and the 'competent, development-oriented woman'.

Save the Children was not the only development program operating in Maissade, and chapter eight analyzes the encounter of discourses at the site of the program interventions of MPP, a self-described 'peasants' movement'. The chapter first reviews the literature describing grass-roots movements in Haiti, and then analyzes and critiques the grass-roots development discourse of MPP in relation to New Social Movement theory. The third section examines the specific local practices of MPP and the community groups and individual participants involved in its programs, and demonstrates that even more 'alternative' development programs largely remain struggles for access *to* development, rather than struggles against it.

Chapter nine tackles the field research process itself as a site of encounter. Current concerns for participatory and 'reflexive' research methodology are reviewed, and the practical difficulties I encountered implementing such an approach are discussed. The identities, understandings and actions of both local people and myself as the researcher are examined through the analysis of several research 'encounters', to show

how they too can be understood to illustrate the knowledge and identity effects of the discourse of development.

The final chapter of the thesis attempts to provide some interpretation of the findings of the research, engaging in synthesis and reflection on the implications of the arguments presented in the thesis. I first discuss some empirical questions concerning the generalizability of the notion of rural Haitian 'identities of underdevelopment'. Then I suggest some theoretical interpretations concerning the directionality and intentionality of emergent 'structures of power' that result of NGO development practice in rural Haiti. Finally, I discuss some of the practical implications of my analysis for current development practice.

Chapter Two

THE ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT: THEORETICAL APPROACHES

In the first chapter I outlined the shortfalls of positivist mainstream development theory, particularly as it has been applied to the study of NGOs and grassroots development interventions, and introduced the poststructuralist concept of development as discourse. In this second chapter, I develop this conceptual approach in greater detail, through a discussion of its key theoretical foundations in post-structuralist thought.

First, I elaborate the idea of discourse and 'development as discourse'. This review will show that these conceptions rest critically on new ways of viewing two foundational ideas in the social sciences: knowledge and identity. Therefore, in the second section I return to review the theoretical progression of these two key concepts in the last 200 years. Third, I describe and critique how these theoretical conceptions of knowledge and identity have provided the basis for different models of development and development intervention, from 'modernist' transfer-of-knowledge models to post-colonialist, identity-based models. I suggest that even so-called post-developmental approaches, despite their emphasis on alternatives and difference, also often become fixed and idealist 'models'. Finally, I return to the notion of discourse and elaborate a post-structuralist 'analytics of power' theoretical approach to the analysis of discourses of development. I suggest that such an approach enables the analysis of the operation and effects of development interventions, revealing the complex encounter of multiple external and local 'developmentalist' and 'post-developmental' discourses.

Development as Discourse

As was introduced in the first chapter, a discourse of development is a particular way of representing the notion of 'development'. A discourse "is a group of statements which provide a language for talking about - i.e. a way of representing - a particular kind of knowledge about a topic" (Hall, 1996a, p. 201). Such a notion of discourse derives from the work of the French social theorist Michel Foucault, who called such a group of statements that 'work together' a "discursive formation" (Foucault, 1972, p. 38). Thus, for example, when statements about development are made within a particular development discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct development in a certain way, and limits the other ways in which development can be represented (Hall, 1996a, p. 201; Foucault, 1981).

Yet discourse is not separated from action, and the notion of discourse rejects "the conventional distinction between thought and action, language and practice" (Hall, 1996a, p. 201). As Hall (1996a, p. 201-02) states,

Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But it is itself produced by a practice: "discursive practice" - the practice of producing meaning. Since all social practices entail *meaning*, all practices have a discursive aspect. So discourse enters into and influences all social practices (italics in original).

This means, for example, that Western discourses of development - what development is, how development is produced - are deeply implicated in Western practices towards and interventions in 'less-developed' countries. Development has become a discursive formation,

a particular mode of thinking and a source of practice designed to instill in 'underdeveloped' countries the desire to strive toward industrial and economic

growth. It has become professionalized, with a range of concepts, categories and techniques through which the generation and diffusion of particular forms of knowledge are organized, managed and controlled (Gardner and Lewis, 1996, p. 6, citing Escobar, 1988; 1995b).

This conception of discourse and its relation to knowledge and practices brings the notions of truth and power into consideration. The concept of discourse seems similar to the notion of 'ideology': "a set of statement or beliefs which produce knowledge that serves the interests of a particular group or class" (Hall, 1996a, p. 202). Yet as Hall states, the notion of ideology is "based on the distinction between *true* statements about the world (science) and *false* statements (ideology), and the belief that the facts about the world help us to decide between true and false statements" (1996a, p.202. italics in original). But, as I indicate further in the second section of this chapter, statements about the social, human world "are rarely ever simply true or false" (Hall, 1996a, p. 202). The 'facts' themselves "do not enable us to decide definitively about their truth or falsehood", in part because "the very language we use to describe the so-called facts interferes in this process" (Hall, 1996a, p. 202-03).

For example¹, rural Haitians working to create local community organizations can be described as either 'underdeveloped' peasants, working for their full participation in the benefits of modernization and integration into the development of Haiti's economy, or as 'oppressed' peasants, resisting the imposition of foreign development models and claiming an alternative political space for local forms of development. It is a fact that they are forming community organizations, but what do these community organizations

¹ The format and structure of this example are borrowed from Hall (1996a, p. 203), while I have replaced Hall's example with a development example from Haiti. Where I have directly used his words, I have indicated this with a citation.

mean? “The facts alone cannot decide. And the very language we use - [‘underdeveloped’ peasants ‘embracing’ development, or ‘oppressed’ peasants ‘resisting’ westernized forms of development] - is part of the difficulty. Moreover, certain descriptions, even if they appear false to us, can be made ‘true’ because people act on them believing that they are true, and so their actions have real consequences” (Hall, 1996a, p. 203). Whether rural Haitians are in fact ‘underdeveloped’ or not, if we think they are, and act on that ‘knowledge’, in effect they become ‘underdeveloped’ because we treat them as such.

The language (or discourse) has real effects in practice: the description becomes ‘true’... [K]nowledge of the [problems of rural Haiti] is produced by competing discourses. ... and ... each is linked to a contestation over power. It is the outcome of this struggle which will decide the ‘truth’ of the situation (Hall, 1996a, p. 203).

Thus a key innovation of Foucault’s concept of discourse is that it ‘prioritizes’ the issue of power, placing it before questions of truth and falsehood, since it is power, rather than the facts about reality, which makes things ‘true’ (Hall, 1996a, p. 203).² As Flax (1992, p. 452) states, “This does not mean that there is not truth, but that truth is discourse dependent.” The difficulty of determining truth (i.e. the ‘problem of truth and falsehood’) can only be resolved by first examining questions of power and discourse. As Foucault (1980, p. 27) states, “We should admit that power produces knowledge... That power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without

² Hall suggests that Foucault’s use of the concept of discourse “is an attempt to side-step what seems an unresolvable dilemma - deciding which social discourses are true or scientific, and which false or ideological” (1996a, p. 203). Whether one considers Foucault to “evade” the problem of truth, or instead to conceptualize truth in a different manner, is perhaps a matter of one’s approach to post-modernism in general.

the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute ... power relations.”

Furthermore, discourse is not simply the *construction* of knowledge and meaning, it is also the *contestation* and *negotiation* over knowledge and meaning. It is through this contestation, the ability to construct and claim meaning, that relations of power are established. Power and knowledge become interrelated, for “the criteria of what constitutes knowledge, what is to be excluded and who is designated as qualified to know, involve acts of power” (Foucault, 1981, cited in Hobart, 1993, p. 9). Therefore, “not only is discourse always implicated in power; discourse is one of the ‘systems’ through which power circulates” (Hall, 1996a, p. 204). I will return to elaborate on Foucault’s analytical approach to power as ‘circulating’ and ‘discursive’ in the final section of this chapter. First, however, it is necessary to introduce a further aspect of Foucault’s notion of discourse.

For Foucault, an essential element of how discourses establish such powerful ‘regimes of truth’ is integrally linked to the ‘normalization’ and ‘discipline’ of human subjectivity and identity. The application of these discourses creates ‘abnormalities’ and ‘deficiencies’ in populations and individuals, which then must be treated and reformed (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 195-96.) Once these anomalies are identified ‘scientifically’, they are effectively removed from the “realm of political discourse” and “transformed into a technical problem”, recast “in the neutral language of science” (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 196). Foucault detailed the ways in which aspects of human subjectivity - the body, sexuality, morality - were ‘marked’, ‘attached’, and ‘imposed’ upon people, made into foundational elements of people’s conscience and self-

knowledge (Foucault, 1982, p. 212). Foucault “rejects the active subject” (Best and Kellner, 1991, p. 51), and states that the subject must be “stripped of its creative role and analyzed as a complex and variable function of discourse” (Foucault, 1977, p. 138).

Building upon this approach, post-development writers such as Escobar argue that the dominant discourse of development “operates as an arena of cultural contestation and identity construction” (1995, p. 15). Development proceeds by diagnosing deficiency in the ‘client’ people of the ‘Third World’ and prescribing the remedy of ‘development’. Escobar suggests that since the beginning of the development era after World War II, “a threshold of internalization” has been crossed, and people in the south who were once simply the objects of development “now come to see and define themselves in its terms. They began ... to fight ‘not against development, but about it’” (Crush, 1995, p. 11). Discourses of development form or shape individual and group subjectivities, “which in turn shapes the context for more visible forms of political participation” (Mohan, 1997, p. 313). I will argue in subsequent chapters that ‘identities of underdevelopment’, produced by decades of development interventions in rural Haiti, now strongly shape the forms of participation of rural Haitians in development programs.

As the above discussion suggests, and as numerous writers have argued, Western discourses of development have become extremely powerful ‘regimes of truth’ (Escobar, 1992; 1995; Sachs, 1992; Crush, 1995; Peet and Watts, 1996). The concept of development “is an enormously powerful set of ideas which has guided thought and action across the world” (Gardner and Lewis, 1996, p. 2), at least since the second part of the twentieth century, and arguably even before this (see Cowen and Shenton, 1996). It is associated with the ideas of modernity and progress, in the discovery and application of

'scientific' knowledge to 'lacking' and 'lagging' parts of the world. As Peet and Watts state, "... development [is] perhaps *the* main theme in the Western discursive formation; it is simply the case that, in the West, the passage of time is understood developmentally, that is, 'Things are getting better all the time'" (1996, p. 16, italics in original).

Yet, as I elaborate further below, Foucault also insists that discourses are always multiple and changing, always open to contestation and resistance. "[W]e must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies" (Foucault, 1978, p. 100). The multiplicity of discourses means that there are always opposing and resisting discourses and power relations. There are always people who hold alternate knowledges and identities. Thus, development practice based on the mainstream development discourses regularly fails because its 'monolithic assumptions' do not allow for the complexities of local social, cultural and political realities (Mohan, 1997, p. 318). Further, the active agency of local people regularly subvert development interventions, due to their various alternate discourses of development. From this has come an emphasis in postdevelopmentalist writing on contestation and everyday resistance by marginalized groups against state power and external interventions, in the name of local, indigenous, autonomous knowledges and identities (Peet and Watts, 1996, p. 10).

The Roots of Development Discourse

In the first section, I have described the concept of discourse, and how discourses operate through the manner in which they construct human knowledges and subjectivities (identities). As well, I have suggested how dominant (though contested) Western discourses of development have become powerful forces throughout the world. This dominance stems in part from the particular conceptions of knowledge and subjectivity that are foundational to Western modernist discourses. Therefore, in order to fully appreciate post-structuralist discursive analytical approaches, it is helpful to review (in a highly simplified manner) the theoretical progression of these two key concepts in the social sciences in the second half of the twentieth century. This discussion also lays some ground for my discussion of the development knowledges and development identities in subsequent chapters.

Enlightenment Knowledge and Subjectivity

With the advent of the Enlightenment, 'true' knowledge was seen as being based upon rationality and objective, empirical science. Rationality and science were seen as able to create a "cosmos of natural causality" (Weber, 1970, p. 355, cited in Bocoock, 1996, p. 170), and produce knowledge which had universal significance and value. Associated with the rise of science and technology was "the growth of western capitalism as a 'rational' form of economic life", and of a western political culture "rooted in legal-rational laws or rules and procedures" (Bocoock, 1996, p. 171). At the core of the modernist, Enlightenment hope was the conviction that rational scientific knowledge

would lead to human progress and emancipation - what today would be called 'development'.

The subject of this Enlightenment knowledge was a "fully centered, unified, [male]³ individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness, and action" (Hall, 1996b, p. 597). This was an individualistic and essentialist view of human subjectivity, "whose 'center' consisted of an inner core which first emerged when the subject was born, and unfolded with it, while remaining essentially the same ... throughout the individual's existence"(1996a, p. 597). This was the Cartesian subject, the 'I think, therefore I am' center and origin of knowledge, reason and being, whose identity was unified, continuous and stable.

Yet these views of knowledge and subjectivity soon became problematic, at least in theoretical terms. As Weber (1970) already saw, the increasing rationalization of more and more areas of life, and the increase in control and 'knowledge' associated with it paradoxically also resulted in reduced freedom and meaning in life. Rational knowledge was leading to an increasingly secular and materialistic culture, "instrumental rather than spiritual in its outlook" (Bocock, 1996, p. 172), and a resulting "disenchantment of the world" (Weber, 1971). The paradox of the Cartesian mind/matter duality remained.

Sociological Knowledge and Subjectivity

The concepts of a centered, 'modernist' subject and 'his' 'true', scientific knowledge have remained dominant ideas in many areas of life. Yet already by the late

³ Until recently, it was always assumed that gender was not a significant source of difference for this 'unified' and 'essential' subject, though of course this 'essential' subject was also always assumed to be male.

1800s, growing awareness that neither knowledge nor the human subject were autonomous or self-sufficient led to the development of more sociological or interactive approaches.

In these approaches, human knowledge is understood as always partial and changing, geographical (location-specific) and historical (time-specific). Knowledge is seen as social and contextual - generated, acquired and classified by active human agents, according to the particular cultural situation and relations in which they are located. Knowledge requires “the interpretation of appearances in order to uncover an underlying meaning, a reality distorted but not destroyed by the power of those able to construct the appearances in the first place” (Ferguson, 1991, p. 326). ‘True’ meaningful knowledge is still possible, but requires that “*communities of people intersubjectively* build up an understanding of how their local worlds ‘work’ (an understanding that is largely implicit but that is in a sense ‘represented’ in their practices)” (Cloke *et al.*, 1991, p. 89, emphasis in original). Knowledge cannot just be objective or scientific - the meanings and values of things to humans is what constitutes an essential element of any knowledge of that thing, and these meanings and values can vary greatly. Knowledge is hermeneutic, involving interpretation, and is therefore a creative, progressive and open-ended process in which there is no final knowledge or truth (Barnes, 1994, p. 245). Knowledge needs to be critical - based on critical public debate about moral and political values, which does not hide behind the illusion of value-neutrality of so-called objective reason.

In a similar fashion, a more complex conception of the human subject developed, particularly in sociological thought. This sociological subject was not autonomous and self-sufficient, but as Stuart Hall (1996b, p. 597) describes,

was formed in relation to 'significant others,' who mediated to the subject the values, meanings and symbols - the culture - of the worlds he/she inhabited. ... [I]dentity is formed in the 'interaction' between self and society. The subject still has an inner core or essence that is 'the real me', but this is formed and modified in a continuous dialogue with the cultural worlds 'outside' and the identities which they offer.

Humans project themselves into the various cultural identities available around them, at the same time internalizing their meanings and values, making them part of themselves, aligning their subjective feelings with the objective 'places' they occupy in the social and cultural world (Hall, 1996b, p. 598). While 'internalizing' the outside into their identity, the human subject also 'externalizes' 'his' internal identity (and social knowledges) through action in the social world, thereby sustaining social processes and structures (Hall, 1996b, p. 605).

Thus, while knowledge and identity are not fixed in this approach, they both have a relative "stability" (Hall, 1996b, p. 598). They both are the product of reciprocal and interactive processes between the structures and cultures of a stable, ordered world 'out there', and the functioning of human consciousness, interpretation and action.

Postmodernist Knowledge and Subjectivity

The increasing pace and scope of change in the world in recent decades has been described as the beginning of a 'post-modern' era. Social theorists have suggested that these rapid changes associated with late modernity are producing "dislocation" (Laclau, 1990), "ruptures and fragmentations" (Harvey, 1989) and "discontinuity" (Giddens, 1990) in social identity and understanding. Globalization and technology are transforming or "compressing" time and space, and causing the "disembedding of the social system" - "the 'lifting out' of social relations from local contexts of interaction and

their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space” (Giddens, 1990, p. 21, cited in Hall, 1996b, p. 599). In order to better understand the theoretical foundations and implications of the postmodernist approach, it is helpful to review what Stuart Hall describes as five ‘advances’ in intellectual thought which have combined to ‘de-center’ and fragment the modern subject and positive knowledge: Marxist structuralism, Freudian psychology, linguistics, Foucauldian notions of power/knowledge, and feminism (Hall, 1996b, pp. 606-611). I will only quickly mention the first three of these ‘de-centerings’, since they do not bear immediately on my theoretical approach (though they do represent important foundations for postmodernist approaches, and revealing the progression of postmodern notions of knowledge and subjectivity ‘out of’ its modern foundations clarifies these concepts.) I will elaborate in greater detail the approaches of Foucault and feminism, since they directly set the stage for my discussion of ‘post-developmental’ analytical approaches that follows.

The first major de-centering comes from Marxist structuralism, and its emphasis on structures of social relations and materialist (class) forces, rather than the individual human subject, as the determinants of history. The second de-centering comes from Freudian psychology, with its focus on the unconscious as the source of identity and desire. This Freudian subject “plays havoc with the concept of the knowing and rational subject, with a fixed and unified identity” (Hall, 1996b, p. 607). Knowledge and identity were not the process of conscious learning and interaction with the outside world, but of unconscious psychic processes, involving suppression, denial and rejection.

The third de-centering comes from linguistics, and its emphasis on the role of language in producing, rather than reflecting, meaning. “Language is therefore

constitutive rather than reflective of social reality. There is no necessary fixed relation between a signifier (sound or written image) and a signified (meaning)" (Pratt, 1994, p. 468). It is the regular practices of language that categorize and differentiate, thereby establishing knowledge and identity. Both knowledge and identity requires an 'other' whose absence defines - for example, 'male' identity is established as 'not female', and knowledge of 'developed' countries is defined in relation to other places that are 'underdeveloped.' Language, and therefore meaning and knowledge, is inherently unstable, always open and variable, carrying 'marginal' traces of different and alternative propositions and premises (Hall, 1996b, p. 609).

The fourth de-centering of knowledge and subjectivity occurred as a result of the work of Michel Foucault, which I have already introduced in the first part of this chapter. Foucault's work links the previous work on language with a 'new' approach to power, and applies it to human knowledge and subjectivity. Drawing on the previous ideas that language could never be neutral, but rather always involved power, Foucault described 'discourses' of power - "historical, socially and institutionally specific structure[s] of statements, terms, categories and beliefs, the site where meaning[s] are contested and power relations determined" (Parpart and Marchant, 1995, p. 2-3). Discourse is not simply the *construction* of knowledge and meaning, it is also the *contestation* and *negotiation* over knowledge and meaning. It is through this contestation, the ability to construct and claim meaning, that relations of power are established. Power and knowledge are closely correlated, for "the criteria of what constitutes knowledge, what is to be excluded and who is designated as qualified to know involve acts of power" (Foucault, 1981, cited in Hobart, 1993, p. 9). Thus, relations of power and knowledge are

articulated through discourse (Foucault, 1978, p. 101). Yet Foucault is insistent that power relations, operating through discourse, are not simply or only negative or repressive. "...[W]e must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies" (Foucault, 1978, p. 100).

Foucault also links his notions of power/knowledge and discourse to human subjectivity. As has already been discussed, Foucault rejects notions of an active or creative subject, instead seeing the subject as "a complex and variable function of discourse" (Foucault, 1977, p. 138). A major theme of Foucault's work is how 'technologies of power' shape and create human subjectivity and the human body. Power operates through discourse and knowledge, which at the local level, through specific 'disciplinary' and 'confessional' practices, shape and create the 'normal' human subject - medically, behaviourally, sexually, and ethically (Flax, 1990, p. 207-08). Power operates "through the hegemony of norms, political technologies, and the shaping of the body and soul" (Best and Kellner, 1991, p. 49). For Foucault, human identity and action do not spring from a 'sovereign' place within the human subject, but rather the 'normalizing technologies' of society have constructed and produced the human mind and body according to the dominant power relations. "The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, it is an element of its articulation" (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). The constitution of human subjectivity becomes the means by which power relations are reproduced and propagated - "the individual that power has constituted becomes the vehicle of that power" (Flax, 1990, p. 207).

The fifth de-centering of human subjectivity and knowledge that Hall identifies is the impact of feminism, both as theoretical critique and as a social movement (Hall, 1996b, p. 610). Feminism has arguably been the leading and most influential of a whole range of 'new social movements', (others include student movements, peace movements, ecological movements, rural peasant movements, indigenous people's movements) that have expanded the range of social identities and understandings that have begun to contest for political and social voice in recent decades.⁴ More directly, feminist theorists have demonstrated that women's experience and knowledge is not commensurate with modernist, 'objective' knowledge, which it has shown to be articulated from a particular 'patri-centric' point of view. Knowledge is fragmented and discontinuous along gender (and other) lines of difference. Feminist theory has emphasized the gendered nature of identity, and how this gendered identity is not 'natural', but the product of specific social relations within a culture. Feminism has not simply challenged women's social position, but included a challenge against the dominant social formation of women's *and* men's gendered identity (Hall, 1996b, p. 610). This revealed the ways in which a white, masculine, middle-class subject was established as the norm, and all 'others' were seen as departures or deviants (Gregory, 1993). Debate within feminism has further shown how gendered identities are themselves not 'centered', but intersected and fragmented by other dimensions of identity, such as class, race, sexuality, and ethnicity (e.g. Harding, 1992; Parpart and Marchand, 1995).

⁴ I will return later in this chapter to a discussion of new social movements and their importance for post-developmental approaches to investigating the practices of development.

As a result of these conceptual shifts, then, it is possible to identify the core elements of a postmodernist approach to the perceived fragmentation and dislocation of human subjectivity and human knowledge. In this postmodernist approach, all knowledge is seen as constructed, for there is no order 'out there' to be discovered, and there can be no fixed or exact correspondence between "an externalized reality and internal representations of that reality" (Peet and Watts, 1996, p. 13). Knowledge should be seen as "a matter of conversation and of social practice, rather than as an attempt to mirror nature" (Rorty, 1979, p. 171). There is no 'true' knowledge to be had, for the world is a place of flux and discord (Ferguson, 1991, p. 327). The postmodernist approach suggests that any attempt to reduce the infinite, irreducible complexities of the world into a unified and homogeneous system of knowledge or 'Truth' (a 'meta-narrative') inevitably leads to domination and oppression. Any belief in the ability of any epistemology (whether positivist or hermeneutic) to uncover a single meaningful 'Real' causes it to seek to enclose anything 'other' into its system of truth, and thus to violence and domination against that 'other'. Any 'will to knowledge' is inevitably and essentially a form of Nietzsche's infamous 'will to power'.⁵ As Kathy Ferguson states, the task for the postmodernist is "to deconstruct meaning claims (knowledge) in order to look for the modes of power they carry, and to force open a space for the emergence of counter meanings" (1991, p. 324).

⁵ In his *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (1966, p. 21), Nietzsche asserted: "A living thing seeks above all to discharge its strength - life itself is will to power In short, here as everywhere else, let us beware of superfluous teleological principles ..." (cited in Gay, 1998, p. 92).

In a related manner, the post-modernist approach de-centers and fragments human subjectivity. Instead of having a unified, stable, 'single' identity, the human subject is seen as composed of multiple, fragmented, at times contradictory or unresolved identities. The very process of identification with the various identities available in the social landscape "has become more open-ended, variable and problematic" (Hall, 1996b, p. 598). Instead of a fixed or essential identity, the post-modern subject is conceptualized as being "formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us. It is historically, not biologically, defined..... assum[ing] different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent 'self'" (Hall, 1996b, p. 598). Identities are formed at the intersection of multiple, competing discourses - powerful socially-constructed knowledges of ourselves which produce "permissible modes of being and thinking while disqualifying and even making other impossible" (Escobar, 1995, p. 5).

The link between subjectivity and knowledge

In the above discussion, the strong links between subjectivity and knowledge have been implied. The nature of these links and relations, however, bears brief elaboration and explicit discussion. At the most basic level, subjectivity and knowledge are linked by the fact that subjectivity is the ground for human knowledge, beginning with the knowledge of who we are - our identity - and then extending to knowledge of the world around us (Pratt, 1994, p. 604). Subjectivity can be defined as our understanding of ourselves, our consciousness of our being. This notion of our self-understanding is reflected in Descartes' famous dictum, "I think, therefore I am." Subjectivity also implies

the idea of being an active 'subject' in history, instead of merely the object of historical forces. It implies "the possibility of historical agency" (Harding, 1992, p. 186). As was suggested above, in the Enlightenment or modernist model, autonomous and individual human action is privileged. Most importantly, all individual human subjects were essentially the same, endowed with the same capacities for reason and action. As a result, all human knowing - and therefore knowledge - should also converge on a single 'truth' concerning ourselves and our world.

In both sociological and postmodernist approaches, subjectivity and knowledge are each interactive and flexible, though to different degrees. Both emphasize the impact of experience and the 'outside' on human subjectivity and identity, and the reciprocal impact of identity and subjectivity on human interpretation and understanding (knowledge) of our experience. Both our subjectivity and knowledge are the result of the multiple social relations in which each person is entwined, social relations that are deeply embedded in the structures of society (Harding, 1992, p. 179). In both of these approaches, subjectivity and knowledge become linked in what feminist writers have termed 'situated knowledges' (Rose, 1997, p. 305). This approach explicitly focuses on the manner in which ways of thinking and knowing are generated from various 'positions' of identity and subjectivity (Haraway, 1991; Rose, 1997). Yet because subjectivity itself is shaped by powerful social constructs around us, subjective positions in themselves do not provide reliable grounds for knowledge claims (Harding, 1992, p. 185). The impact of different forms of subjectivity on knowledge must therefore be explicitly acknowledged and subjected to scrutiny.

Here the two approaches diverge. Sociological approaches suggest that ethical and meaningful foundations (humanistic 'truth', if you will) can be arrived at through interpretation, dialogue and critique concerning subjectivity, knowledge, and the links between them. Such a hermeneutic approach retains a 'humanistic' foundation for subjectivity and knowledge, based on the reality of "human meaning and intentionality" (Barnes, 1994, p. 245), and on the ethics and responsibility inherent in such human meaning, agency and intersubjectivity (Gregory, 1994). The postmodernist approach - at least 'strong' versions of it (Rose, 1994, p. 24; Squires, 1993, p. 3, citing Benhabib, 1992) - moves to an 'anti-foundational' position, arguing that both subjectivity and knowledge must remain without foundations, and that both are the 'effect' of multiple and competing power relations operating in the world. In this approach, all that seems to be left is Nietzsche's 'will to power' (1966, p. 21). This position remains difficult and challenging for many who otherwise embrace much of the postmodernist approach as useful and necessary in current social analysis, including in postdevelopmental analyses. I will discuss my position in relation to this debate when I elaborate the specific theoretical and methodological approach of my research in Chapter Three.

Subjectivity, Knowledge and Development

So far, I have introduced the idea of the discourse of development, and reviewed the 'progression' of theoretical approaches to subjectivity and knowledge available for social analysis. Now I will review how these approaches relate to development theory and the study of development interventions.

Knowledge and Development

In the debates about both development itself and development assistance interventions, questions about knowledge and power have been central concerns. Knowledge, in mainstream development theory, is the means by which development is effected. Underdevelopment, in its broadest sense, represents the lack of knowledge. In earlier decades, this knowledge was conceived of as scientific and Western, and development implied modernization - change based on the application of this modern, scientific knowledge. Now most development theorists are more cautious and less ethnocentric concerning Western knowledge, having broadened their appreciation for 'indigenous' and local knowledge. Yet this appreciation for indigenous knowledge is largely limited to 'technical' knowledge domains such as agriculture, health and the environment. In these areas, a large literature has developed which documents and advocates the importance of these 'local' knowledges for development (e.g. Brokensha *et al.*, 1980; Uphoff, 1992; Chambers, 1993; Scoones and Thompson, 1994; Warren *et al.*, 1995; Nelson and Wright, 1995.) This emphasis on local understandings is also key in recent participatory and community development approaches⁶, particularly those employing participatory action research (PAR). These approaches are "based on people's participation in identifying their own problems, priorities and solutions" (Kelly and Armstrong, 1996, p. 246), in which knowledge generation and awareness for action become a cooperative activity between outside agencies and local people.

⁶ See Chapter One for a brief review of the evolution of participatory approaches in development.

However, in the more macro areas of development policy concerned with economic, political and social policy, Western knowledges concerning markets, institutions and democratization often continue to be applied with few attempts at local contextualization, or incorporation of alternative local experiences. As Kelly and Armstrong (1996, p. 245) write, “Western experience provides the template for social and economic processes which are then applied to developing societies.” Thus, though the assumption that the West ‘has’ the knowledge required for development has diminished somewhat in some domains, the basic faith that the ‘discovery’ of objective knowledge will lead to prosperity remains intact. Development continues to proceed from the Enlightenment assumptions expressed in Francis Bacon’s famous statement that “knowledge itself is power.” As Hobart (1993, p. 9) states, development “consists in no small part of knowledge, positivistically conceived as true propositions about the world, being treated as a valuable resource.”

This commitment to knowledge as the key resource in development is illustrated in two recent documents from official development agencies. In Canada, a government strategy document for promoting sustainable development in Canada’s foreign policy lists “strengthen[ing] Canada’s role as a knowledge broker in support of sustainable development” as the first item in its “action plan” for promoting sustainable development via “increasing economic growth and prosperity” (DFAIT, 1998). The World Bank has entitled its most recent *World Development Report* “Knowledge for Development.” It states: “Because knowledge is at the heart of economic growth and sustainable development, understanding how people and societies acquire and use it—and why they sometimes fail to do so—is essential to improving people’s lives, especially the lives of

the poor” (World Bank, 1998, p. 4). Clearly implicit in these illustrations are modernist concepts of knowledge as ‘innocent’, neutral, but powerful - “a tangible stock, body or store” (Scoones and Thompson, 1993, p. 12) that must be extracted, documented and transferred to those lacking it in order to produce development. Mainstream development practice appears to ignore the complex sociological, discursive and political nature of knowledge, elaborated in the critique of sociological and postmodernist approaches to knowledge discussed above.

Power and Development

In contrast to these mainstream knowledge-based approaches, there have always been alternative development theories which have focused on the key importance of power relations for development. In earlier decades, Marxist-influenced theories emphasized (economic) relations of dependency and domination between core and periphery (i.e. Frank, 1967; Cardoso and Faletto, 1979). Power was seen to reside in macro-level, structural, materialistic forces, and operate according to the logic of capital accumulation against the struggle of the working class (Escobar, 1995a, p. 217). With the decline of dependency theory since the 1980s (James, 1997; Slater, 1995), critical approaches which emphasize questions of inequality and domination have shifted to post-structuralist and post-modernist approaches to power. These approaches have shifted the focus to the ways in which imperial power and discursive representations are bound together in development practice and intervention (Mohan, 1997, p. 315). Development is interpreted as “a set of ideas and practices..., [which] has historically functioned over the twentieth century as a mechanism for the colonial and neo-colonial domination of the

South by the North” (Gardner and Lewis, 1996, p. 3). This is the ‘development as discourse’ approach that has already been introduced in the beginning section of this chapter, which diagnoses and normalizes the necessity of ‘development’. These poststructuralist approaches “increasingly come to see development efforts as ‘uniquely efficient colonizers on behalf of central strategies of power’ - the apparent ability to ‘make things better’ is *the* main way of achieving power” (Peet and Watts, 1996, p. 16-17, citing Dubois, 1991, p. 19, emphasis in original). Arturo Escobar, perhaps the most influential writer in this approach (Mohan, 1997, p. 314; Peet and Watts, 1996, p. 17), thus argues that “modern development discourse [is] the latest insidious chapter of the larger history of the expansion of Western reason” (Peet and Watts, 1996, p. 17).

Ideas about development ... [are] assembled with a vast hierarchical apparatus of knowledge production and consumption sometimes known ... as the ‘development industry.’ This industry is itself implicated in the operation of networks of power and domination that, in the twentieth century, have come to encompass the globe (Crush, 1995, p. 5).

In an attempt to counter the dominant power of ‘development’, post-developmentalists have turned to the local-level contest of power relations by various marginalized groups in ‘civil society’ in the South (i.e. Escobar and Alvarez, 1992; Friedman, 1992; Escobar, 1995; Routledge, 1996, Esteva and Prakash, 1998). Women’s groups, indigenous and ethnic minorities, ecological movements, peasant farmers’ associations, informal sector unions and other alternate social groups are seen as forming New Social Movements (NSMs) engaged in resistance and struggle for cultural, economic and community survival in the face of dominant developmentalist forces. In the view of these writers, these grassroots movements subvert the ‘linearity’ of

development programs through various acts of resistance which build up into an alternative politics outside of mainstream development (Mohan, 1997, p. 318).

Converging with the increasing emphasis on civil society in mainstream development theory, these new social movements are seen as the source of new, decentralized, practice- and identity-based alternatives to the traditional 'bi-polar' struggle based on universalist Eurocentric theories of either capitalism or socialism (Watts, 1995, p. 59). Anthony Cohen (1985) describes the key characteristics of these new social movements: They are based on alternative social identities, goals and modes of association, more diverse and diffuse than the traditional class-based oppositional movements of the past. They do not view themselves primarily in terms of socioeconomic class, or associate within the narrower structures of unions and political parties. Rather, "they focus on grass-roots politics, create horizontal, directly democratic associations that are loosely federated on national levels", and "target the social domain of 'civil society' rather than the economy or the state directly, raising issues concerned with the democratization of structures of everyday life and focusing on forms of communication and collective identity" (Cohen, 1985, p. 667).⁷ These new social

⁷ Cohen is writing about new social movements in general, not specifically those involved in development struggles in the South. Most of the theoretical work on new social movements originates in Europe, with the work of such social theorists as Melucci (1989), Laclau and Mouffe (1985), Offe (1985) and Touraine (1988) on the emergence and proliferation of feminist, peace, ecological and other local-autonomy movements in the West since the mid-1970s (Cohen, 1985). As Watts (1995, p. 59) suggests, there remains disagreement over the extent to which southern new social movements "have similarities to social movement and identity politics in the West". Escobar (1995a, p. 221) asserts that southern scholars' increasing reflection on the unique experience of southern social movements is "leading the way in the reformulation of social movement theory and methodology..." He suggests several of their particular insights: southern social movements' strong relation to crises of democratization and authoritarianism, their resistance against the social costs of economic restructuring, and their emphasis on difference, 'alterity', autonomy, self-determination and struggles against cultural and economic globalization (Escobar, 1995a, p. 225-26).

movements are local, pluralistic, concerned more with the creation of 'decentered autonomous spaces' than direct access to state power, "their economic concerns ... socially embedded and expressed in cultural terms which often rest upon local 'subaltern' knowledges (Watts, 1995, p. 59, citing Wamba, 1991). Escobar (1995a, p. 217) emphasizes the importance of every-day social practices in the analysis of these social movements, as their identity and motive for action is "located at the intersection of the micro-processes of meaning production and the macro-processes of domination". Similarly, Melucci (1988, p. 248, cited in Escobar, 1995a, p. 220) stresses the production of symbolic and cultural networks of meaning in these movements, claiming that "[w]hat nourishes [collective action in these movements] is the daily production of alternative frameworks of meaning, on which the networks themselves are founded and live from day to day." "The actions, of popular community-based organizations were seen to reflect the diversity of their subject positions, localized experiences and forms of consciousness" (Veltmeyer, 1997, p. 148). Control over the production of meaning and the constitution of new and diverse collective identities are the central features of these new social movements.

The importance of such grassroots social movements for contesting dominant patterns of power is illustrated in Haiti, where a number of analysts of Haitian politics and development have described the importance of these new social actors in challenging historically dominant structures of political and economic power. Smarth (1996) describes the key role of various types of popular organizations, including liberation-theology-inspired Christian base communities, peasants' groups, students' organizations, and urban workers' groups, in ending the Duvalierist authoritarian role and bringing

democracy to Haiti. Maguire (1990; 1991; 1995; 1997) has detailed the particular role of a decentralized and diverse range of grassroots peasant groups (called *groupman*) in Haiti's struggle for democracy, and their growing participation in local political leadership. Charles (1995) outlines women's groups' struggle for space in Haiti's civil society. Arthur (1997) describes the role of various peasant groups in struggling for alternative agricultural and environmental policies, which support local production and local control of rural land resources. None of these analyses is made explicitly within the theoretical framework of new social movements, and political participation and power are important elements of the agendas of Haiti grassroots groups. Yet Haiti provides a strong example of new ways in which 'ordinary people' have contested dominant power relations based on a range of localized social identities and action.

As is evident in the above discussion of new social movements, post-structuralist and post-modernist theories concerning power and identity are very influential in their understanding and analysis. This then leads me directly to the final section of this chapter, concerning specific post-developmental analytical approaches to the study of local-level processes in development interventions.

Post-developmental Analytical Tools

As I have sketched above, post-modernist approaches in the social sciences have brought together the concern for power and knowledge. These approaches have emphasized the inseparable relationship of knowledge to power - how relations of power are established through the practices of language and meaning, and through struggles over the construction of knowledge and identity. They argue for a new 'analytics of

power' based on investigation of the interrelations of discourse, knowledge, identity and power.

Post-modernist analytics begin with a unique conception of power. For Foucault, the contested and discursive nature of power means that it cannot be viewed as a 'thing' which a person either possesses or does not, and which is then repressive and wielded over another. On the contrary, Foucault argues that "power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere... Power is not an institution, a structure, or a certain force with which certain people are endowed; it is the name given to a complex strategic relation in a given society" (Foucault, 1978, p.93). Since power is relational, it "circulates" and is "exercised through a net like organization" (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). Thus, power is "capillary" and "polymorphous" in nature, circulating through the social sphere, rather than emanating from central sources (Fraser, 1989, p. 26; Opp, 1998, p. 25). Power is "immanent" in the multiplicity of relations found throughout the "entire social body down to even the tiniest and apparently most trivial extremities" (Foucault, 1979, p. 94). Power is "diffused through society", rather than located in any single body or structure such as the state, financial capital, or 'development' (Parpart, 1993, 440).

Foucault's objective is not theory - any definite description of what power is or who has power - but rather he aims to describe *how* power relations operate in specific circumstances. Because power/knowledge relations are multiple, complex, and changing, and are also 'subjectless', *a priori* definitions of their relations in any given situation are never possible (Byrne, 1992, p. 338). Yet power, though it has no *intentional* direction, is not *directionless*. For Foucault there is a "grid of intelligibility of the social order", and,

as has already been cited above, power “is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic relationship in a particular society” (1978, p. 93). “There is a push towards a strategic objective, but no one is pushing. The objective emerged historically, taking particular forms and encountering specific obstacles, conditions and resistances” (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 187). At the local level,

actors more or less know what they are doing when they do it... But it does not follow that the broader consequences of these local actions are coordinated. The fact that individuals make decisions about specific policies or particular groups jockey for their own advantage does not mean that the overall activation and directionality of power relations in a society implies a subject. (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 187)

This is a key aspect of Foucault’s notion of power, “as the idea of a subjectless power leaves the analyst with only the task of examining practices. The practices themselves, as the local, institutional and societal level embody what the analyst seeks to comprehend” (Opp, 1998, p. 27).

There is logic to the practices. There is a push towards a strategic objective, but no one is pushing. The objective emerged historically, taking particular forms and encountering specific obstacles, conditions and resistances. Will and calculation are involved. The overall effect, however, escaped the actors’ intentions, as well as those of anybody else. As Foucault phrased it, ‘People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don’t know is what what they do does’ (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 187).

From this relational, multiple, circulating, yet directional conception of power, Foucault emphasizes that power relations are productive rather than restrictive and exercised rather than possessed (DuBois, 1991, p. 5). At the human level, power relations, embodied in diverse discursive practices, construct and normalize the human subject, our ways of knowing ourselves and our world. Further, the ‘subjectless’ yet ‘directional’ nature of power relations means that they “build ‘strategies’ of power - the

weave of power relations that is the condition for macro-relations of power and more 'general' or 'global' forms of domination" (DuBois, 1991, p.5).

A powerful example of such an analysis of the effects of the operation of development discourses is Ferguson's *Anti-Politics Machine* (1990), which examines the 'development apparatus' of a World Bank/CIDA-funded rural development project in Lesotho. Adopting a Foucauldian 'analytics' of power as subjectless, de-centered, circulating, yet directional, Ferguson argues that

Whatever interests may be at work, and whatever they may think they are doing, they can only operate through a complex set of social and cultural structures so deeply embedded and so ill-perceived that the outcome may be only a baroque and unrecognizable transformation of the original intention. (Ferguson, 1990, p. 17)

Development program plans and outcomes, therefore, "cannot be interpreted simply as a production or consequence of the interests of the different parties involved, some of whom possess power, and others who are powerless" (Opp, 1998, p. 33). Though the World Bank-CIDA project fails to produce 'development', but rather expands state power and de-politicizes the causes of rural poverty in Lesotho, Ferguson argues that these effects are not intentional, in terms of either planning or conspiracy. Rather, they are the result of an "anonymous set of interrelations that only ends up having a kind of retrospective coherence" (Ferguson, 1990, p. 275). Ferguson shows "how the outcomes of planned social interventions can end up coming together into powerful constellations of control that were never intended and in some cases never even recognized, but are all the more effective for being 'subjectless'" (Ferguson, 1990, p. 19). Such an approach - seeing power as articulated through discourse and micro-practices - allows Ferguson therefore to make the analytical distinction between the *intentions* of those

implementing development programs and the *effects* of these interventions (Gardner and Lewis, 1996, p. 11).

Yet Foucault insists that these larger strategies of power are never monolithic, but always open to contestation and resistance. Since power is “employed and exercised through a net-like organization, .. not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in a position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power” (Foucault, 1980, p. 35).

This conception of power relations leads to a ‘micro-oriented’ methodological approach to the analysis of power relations. Since there is nothing inherent in the directionality of power, and its directionality “cannot be deduced.... [i]t is not a suitable object for a theory. It can, however, be analysed, and this is Foucault’s project” (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 188). Foucault’s project - the analysis of *how* power relations are created, resisted, transformed - centres around investigation of the local-level discursive struggles over the production and utilization of knowledge. Foucault calls for an “ascending analysis of power, starting, that is, from its infinitesimal mechanisms” (Foucault, 1980, p. 99). Analysis must look at the way in which the procedures of power are “displaced, extended and altered” at the local level (1980, p. 99). Analysis is required of exactly those local points of resistance where counter claims and discourses are expressed, for power and resistance are always connected. “Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (Foucault, 1978, p. 95-96). Foucault states that points of resistance can be used as a “catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used” (1982, p. 211).

Foucault aims to uncover and expose “subjugated knowledges,” and give attention to these “local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise and order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its object” (Foucault, 1980, p. 81, 83). These counterclaims can uncover multiple subject positions and multiple knowledges (truths), and affirm particularities and difference.

Increasing numbers of analysts of development practice are following these post-structuralist approaches to power/knowledge to break open a more critical and penetrating analysis of *how* development practices produce their effects. These studies attempt to explore the ‘micro-politics’ of development, the local-level development sites, resources and practices where meaning, knowledge and identity (and therefore also power) are contested. In so doing, they attempt to emphasize the complexity, variability and multiplicity of development practices, and how local actors both are shaped by and contribute to the shaping of such development practice. With this theoretical foundation, I now turn in the following chapter to the specific research framework of my thesis.

Chapter Three

THE ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT: THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I present the specifics of the research framework and methods utilized in the research. In the first part of the chapter, I present an 'actor-oriented interface' analytical framework, which integrates the conceptual concerns and approaches that were presented in the previous chapter. This analytical framework leads to a presentation of the original research questions that guided the actual field work. In the second part of the chapter, I present and discuss the methods and procedures followed in the field research and in the preparation of this thesis. In the final part of the chapter, I introduce and review issues of participation, research reflexivity, and research ethics.

An Actor-oriented Interface Research Framework

The previous chapters have pointed to the need for an analytical approach to development interventions (specifically, NGO community development interventions) that respects the multiplicity and heterogeneity of social reality, and that builds on dynamic and relational concepts of knowledge, power and identity. In particular, I have argued that an analysis of development interventions needs to be able to investigate how complex power and knowledge relations created by the encounter of outside interventions aimed at creating participation and empowerment are actually worked out in women and men's concrete, everyday struggles over representations, meanings, and resources.

The approach that will be used in this study is derived from Norman Long's (1989; 1992a; 1992b) actor-oriented interface approach to development interventions. The starting point of Long's approach (and therefore also the label it carries) is his emphasis on the active agency of social actors in all development situations. As Long states, "The concept of intervention needs *deconstructing* so that it is seen for what it is - an ongoing, socially constructed and negotiated process, not simply the execution of an already specified plan of action with expected outcomes" (Long, 1992a, p. 35, emphasis in original). Actors are "knowledgeable" and "capable" (Long, 1992a, p. 23), using their frames of understanding to interpret these interventions, to learn how to intervene in the events around them, to enroll others in their own personal 'development projects'. Importantly, people are *social* actors, and agency is composed of social relations. The social nature of agency involves two aspects: the social construction of agency and subjectivity, and the social relations (struggles and abilities to influence and make claims on others) required for the effective expression of effective agency (power). Thus agency is fundamentally involved with knowledge and power processes, being shaped and in turn contributing to the ongoing shaping of these processes.

The first aspect recognizes that people's subjectivity, agency and knowledges are shaped by larger frames of meaning and action. Development interventions are only one of many larger 'external' frames of meaning and action that operate and make claims through multiple 'nodal points' of interaction (Long, 1992a, p. 24). Long's approach thus incorporates the work in psychological, cultural and feminist studies which have problematised the modernist assumption of a universal, unitary human subject, having a single rationality, a single way of knowing, and thus a single 'source' of agency. Agency

instead can proceed from multiple subject 'positions' or identities, formed by a variety of 'internalized reference points' (Mead, 1974, cited in Villarreal, 1992, p. 249), such as gender, race, class and other (often more local and particular) types of social relations. Actors consciously and unconsciously draw on the variety of cultural forms, knowledges and discourses that are available to them.

The second aspect of the social nature of agency relates to the fact that effective agency involves using social relations to influence others. In order to exercise agency (power), it is essential "for social actors to win the struggles over the attribution of specific social meanings to particular events, actions, and ideas" (Long, 1992a, p. 24). Further, people use 'discursive means' in order to make these meaning and knowledge claims. Because of the range of subjectivities, discourses and knowledges held by different people, agency involves an encounter of discourses and knowledge. Development interventions in particular tend to bring together 'outside' discourses and knowledges that vary widely from those established locally. Thus Long and Villarreal stress the importance of exploring the 'nature of knowledge processes' at these 'development interfaces' (Long and Villarreal, 1993, p. 143). They suggest that in analysing such intervention interfaces, "[o]ur guiding notions ... should be, *discontinuity* not linkage, and *transformation* not transfer of meaning" (Long and Villarreal, 1993, p. 147, italics in original). Development intervention interfaces are

characterized by discontinuities in interests, values, [knowledge] and power, and their dynamic entails negotiation, accommodation and the struggle over definitions and boundaries. A detailed study of them provides insights into the process by which policy is transformed, how 'empowerment' and room to manoeuvre is created by both intervenors and 'clients', and how persons are enrolled in the 'projects' of others through the use of metaphors and images of development (Long and Villarreal, 1993, p. 143, 147).

Long's use of the concepts of discontinuities of knowledge and transformation of meaning emphasizes the gaps and disconnections between "different social systems, fields or levels of social order where ... differences of normative value and social interest are most likely to be found" (Long and Villareal, 1993, p. 147). Knowledges are not merely different. for this implies that simple linkage or transfer could overcome differences of knowledge or meaning. Thus Long's approach can be seen to relate to Foucault's concept of discourse and discursive formations, in which relations of power constitute 'fields of knowledge' (Foucault, 1979, p. 28).¹

In Long's approach, development interventions are social situations "wherein the interactions between actors become oriented around the problem of devising ways of 'bridging', accommodating to, or struggling against each other's different social and cognitive worlds" (Long and Villareal, 1993, p. 147). Men, women, farmers and local bureaucrats organize themselves individually and collectively in a variety of ways when faced with planned intervention by government, NGOs or other interests. "The strategies they devise and the types of interaction that evolve between them and the intervening parties shape the nature and outcomes of such intervention" (Long, 1992a, p. 35). It is through these local knowledge encounters, therefore, that power relations are established, contested, altered and resisted, and the overall direction of social change is established.

Long uses the concept of 'emergent structures' to understand the relationship between the local diffuse operation of power and larger-scale social change. For Long, "macro-structures should not simply be conceptualized as aggregations of micro-episodes

¹ Flax (1992, p. 452) suggests that "each discourse has its own distinctive set of rules or procedures that govern the production of what is counted as a meaningful or truthful statement."

or situations, since many of them come into existence as the result of the *unintended* consequences of social action” (Long, 1989, p. 228). Rather, they are “*emergent forms* that are not explicable (nor fully describable) in terms of micro-events” (1989, p. 228).

The interactions, reinterpretations and transformations of knowledge and power by various social actors involved in interface situations produce and reproduce in a dynamic and never-permanent way the larger social structures and forces of society.²

Methodologically, Long emphasizes the analysis of how power relations are created, resisted, and modified at the local level. As Villarreal (1992, p. 258) states,

if the intention is to understand the causes, connections and consequences of power processes, we have to look very closely at the everyday lives of the actors, explore the small ordinary issues that take place within different contexts and show how compliance, adaptation, but also resistance and open struggle are generated.

Only analysis of ‘small-scale interactional settings’ can provide an understanding of macro phenomena (Long, 1989, p. 226). Thus Long’s approach can be seen as supporting a view which rejects any overall theory of NGO development interventions, and supporting the necessity of analysis grounded in investigation of the complex encounter of women and men’s everyday lives.

Long’s analytical approach to development interventions is particularly appropriate for NGO interventions in community development programs, for several reasons. First, since NGO’s reputed advantages in development assistance interventions are their ability to ‘bridge’ the knowledge and power differentials between ‘outsiders’ and local communities, Long’s focus on the social processes that occur at the knowledge and

² This conception of Long has parallels with Foucault’s notion of power as having no intentional direction, yet also not being directionless, as was described in Chapter Two.

power interfaces created during development interventions is particularly useful. This focus allows analysis of the “types of discontinuities that exist and the dynamic and emergent character of the struggle and interactions that take place, showing how actors’ goals, perceptions, values, interests and relationships are reinforced or reshaped in the process” (Villarreal, 1992, p. 214).

Second, a defining characteristic of NGO interventions is that they are based on voluntary action, and unlike official programs based on bureaucratic control, NGOs “can only invite voluntary involvement in their activities and must therefore use discussion, bargaining, accommodation and persuasion” in their relations with local populations (Edwards and Hulme, 1996, p. 966). Therefore, the power relations associated with NGO interventions are *necessarily* based on discursive claims to meaning, truth and knowledge. Thus, “in development practice, the struggle to impose one version of reality as more legitimate than others has been one of the most important” (Opp, 1998, p. 5).

The interface approach also permits a critical new analysis of the ‘dilemma of empowerment’ inherent in many NGO community development and local organizational capacity-building approaches. These approaches emphasize ‘participatory’ development, validating local knowledge, strengthening local organizational capacities and developing alternative strategies from below. Yet they still seem to carry the connotation of power injected from outside aimed at shifting the balances of forces toward local interests, through the strategic intervention by the ‘enlightened experts’ of NGOs (Long and Villarreal, 1993, p. 160). The interface approach allows critical analysis of the unavoidable encounter of power relations between development practitioners and their local ‘partners’ in participatory projects.

The Research Questions and Objectives

Utilizing an actor-oriented interface approach, my research examined the specific case of the NGO Save the Children (SC), and its ongoing integrated, multi-sectoral development program with local community groups in the *commune* of Maissade (see the map in Figure 1 on the following page) on the Central Plateau of Haiti.

The general objective of my research was to move beyond past analyses of rural development in Haiti, which have utilized homogenizing and simplifying understandings of both rural Haitians' knowledge and agency, and the processes of development interventions. Instead, I set out to conduct a detailed examination of the impact of gender-focused NGO interventions in a rural Haitian community, by analyzing how different women and men interpret, negotiate and contest the knowledge and power interfaces created by these interventions.

Four specific research objectives are set in the research proposal developed at the beginning of the research process (Vander Zaag, 1996):

- a) To describe the multiple social identities, discourses, and struggles that women and men encounter in their everyday lives in Maissade, and how they negotiate and manoeuvre in this diverse social world.
- b) To describe and analyze how different natural and material resources (trees, gardens, credit, literacy programs) and 'organizational resources' (farmers' groups, women's clubs, regional associations) provided by the NGO intervention are used by different female and male social actors as sites of negotiation and struggle.
- c) To examine the effects of progressive NGO development discourses, such as 'empowerment', 'participation', and 'building on local knowledge', on local women

and men, and analyze how these local social actors manoeuvre, interpret and appropriate these discourses.

- d) To analyze the emergent forms and larger (intended and unintended) impacts that are being produced as a result of the knowledge/power encounters created by the NGO interventions with local actors.

These questions provided the basis for the fieldwork procedures and methods as that work was initiated. As the fieldwork progressed, these questions were significantly modified and sharpened, as particular, research-feasible 'sites' of encounter, described in Chapter One, were identified. In the following section, I describe the specific research procedures and methods utilized, and the specific 'sites of encounter' that emerged as the focus of my investigations and subsequent analysis in this thesis.

Research Methods and Procedures

The field research was initiated during a preliminary week-long visit to the research site in May 1996. During this visit, initial contacts were made and the broad outlines of the research project were shared with SC staff and community participants. Introductory visits were made to several communities, and background program planning and evaluation papers were obtained. This information provided the basis for the preparation of the research proposal.

The field research was conducted over an 11 month period in 1997. During this time, I lived with my family³ in a small rented house in the town of Maissade. During the

³ My family consisted of my wife and two children (aged 9 and 4), to which a third child was added near the end of the year.

first part of this time, we were the only non-Haitians living in the community. Two Peace Corps volunteers (associated with the SC program) arrived in the late summer, and two other (medical) researchers lived in the SC guest quarters outside town for short periods of time during the year. However, a number of foreigners had lived in Maissade previously, including the American SC program director from 1993 to 1996, an American SC agriculture program coordinator in the late 1980s, a missionary family who operated an orphanage in the mid 1980's, and numerous European Catholic priests up until the 1980s.

I began the research with a period of orientation and introduction to the program area. My entree into the field was facilitated by the fact that I spoke fluent Haitian *kreyol* and had previously worked for five years in an NGO community development program with rural groups in another region of the Central Plateau. I was introduced to SC staff by the program director, and arranged to accompany field staff (the *animatè* and *animatrisès*) as they conducted their regular community visits to the farmers' and women's associations. During these visits, I presented myself and my research interests, was sometimes given the opportunity to conduct short group or individual semi-structured interviews with community members about the history and activities of their association, and otherwise simply observed the regular association meetings and activities. Before and after meetings, I had informal discussions with the SC *animatè* or *animatris* about the particular community association we were visiting, about the SC program in general, and about the various social, economic and political aspects of life in the Maissade area. Also during this period, I finalized a research agreement with SC

management staff, which detailed mutual expectations and responsibilities, as well as procedures for sharing research results.

After visiting over 10 community associations, and consulting with SC field and management staff, I selected two communities, “Anwò/Timonn” and “Bòdlo/Savann”⁴, for further in-depth study. I had initially planned to select only one community for in-depth study, but SC staff encouraged me to select two sites, to spread the ‘risk’ if any unforeseen obstacles should arise in a particular community, and to increase the range of intervention dynamics observed. The two specific sites of Anwò/Timonn and Bòdlo/Timonn were chosen for a number of reasons: each had both a farmers’ and women’s association, so that gender dynamics and other comparisons could be investigated; one of the communities had been involved in the SC program since its inception, while the other was a more recent participant; and one was assured to be accessible from Maissade, even during the rainy seasons, while the other would potentially be inaccessible due to a deep river-crossing after heavy rains. After this, I concentrated my fieldwork in these two communities. Specific details and descriptions of the procedures and observations related to the research on the community associations are found in Chapter Six.

⁴ I have used double names, separated by a slash, because (as is common everywhere.) in rural Haiti multiple names exist for geographical locations of varying overlap. In each of the two locations where I concentrated my research, the farmers’ and women’s associations drew member *groupman* and *klib fanm* from a more-or-less similar area. But in both cases, this area was sufficiently large that they contained several ‘places’, each identified by a distinct name. In both locations, the farmers’ and women’s associations were each physically located in, and named after, the two different major ‘places’ in their larger community, some 30 minutes walk (1-2 km) from each other. Thus, the Bòdlo Farmers’ Association had its headquarters in, and was identified as, the Bòdlo Farmers’ Association, though it also included *groupman* that were from Savann. Similarly, the Savann Women’s Association had its building located in Savann, but also included women’s clubs from the Bòdlo area. I therefore use the double names ‘Bòdlo/Savann’ and ‘Anwò/Timonn’ when I refer to the broader community from which the farmers’ and women’s associations drew their members.

In addition to observations of the activities of the SC-associated farmers' and women's community associations, I also attempted to observe the activities of development groups and individuals associated with other development projects and programs in these communities. I decided to do this since my observations of events during the first months in Maissade indicated to me that the very concept of development itself was a significant 'site' of contestation and encounter in the communities. Thus I wanted to observe and analyze the differing practices, interpretations, and manoeuvres with and between different development programs. These observations of other non-SC development groups and activities were somewhat more difficult, since I did not have the official entree of being associated with the NGO partners with which these groups or individuals were associated. However, individuals from some of the SC groups were also involved in these other groups, and others were simply eager to share and discuss their activities with me. During the last five months of the research, I attempted to attend and observe as many community meetings and events of MPP-affiliated community groups as possible, and also conducted informal interviews with the MPP representative and members of MPP-affiliated groups. More details of the procedures and activities followed with these groups are found as part of the analysis in Chapter Eight.

During the last four months of the fieldwork, I engaged a research assistant. I intentionally recruited a female person for this position, in order to facilitate the gender aspects of the research, particularly with interviewing women and in helping this male researcher understand and interpret the resulting information. "Marie" was a former employee of the SC program, who had worked as an *animatrix* in the Women's Empowerment (WCI) component of the program for several years, until the end of that

component's grant funding had required the reduction of field staff from ten to five. Thus she was well informed of the dynamics of the program, and well qualified to assist me in understanding the actions and activities that we recorded. However, she had not previously worked directly in the two communities of Anwò/Timonn and Bòdlo/Savann.

In addition to the fieldwork conducted in these two communities, I also observed the ongoing activities of the SCF program itself. Most mornings I would initially go to the SC office and chat with the various staff who were gathered there, to find out what was going on that day, to discuss other events happening in town, or in the national or international news. When I was invited or when I was able to secure an invitation, I attended various staff meetings, ranging in 'importance' from formal quarterly program coordinator meetings to informal meetings of field staff regarding a timely concern. I also requested and obtained various program documents, ranging from quarterly section reports to annual planning documents and funding proposals.

Based on my observations during the first months of research, I decided to focus on home-yard gardens as a particular 'site' of encounter of program interventions and community understandings. Initially, data were collected on the general outlines and dynamics of these interventions and understandings during various interviews and observations of community activities. Following this, however, I conducted a specific series of focus-group interviews and exercises with women and men to deepen the analysis. A total of eight focus-group sessions were conducted in the community of Bòdlo/Savann, based on all possible combinations of 3 variables: adopting households vs. non-adopting households; female household members vs. male household member; the more distant region of the community vs. a closer-to-town region in the community.

For each session, participants were identified with the help of the local SCF agriculture promoter, who then extended the invitations. In one location, the sessions were held in a Catholic church chapel, a different location from the regular meeting place of the farmers' association. In the second location, the session was held in the women's association's building. A modified participatory research technique was utilized, as each participant in turn was asked to create a 'map' of her or his home-yard garden using cut-out drawings of house buildings, storage buildings, fence barriers, various types of trees and various types of field crops. While this map was being created, a series of questions was asked which attempted to probe the decisions and dynamics involved in the management of the home-yard garden. The guide list of questions is included in Appendix 1. The maps created by the placement of the cut-outs were traced on the large piece of paper on which they were laid, and this map was utilized for analysis and comparison with the map drawn by each participant's spouse.

In addition to these qualitative methods, I also undertook a survey on women's roles and understandings in development. This survey combined quantitative and qualitative data. The impetus for the survey was the availability of data from two previous surveys of female SCF program participants, concerning women's role in agriculture and the women's associations. In 1993, SCF commissioned A. White to conduct a survey of all female participants in all the 130 farmers' groups and 52 women's clubs then involved in the SCF program. A total of over 1,200 women were surveyed by project staff, and a random 10 percent sample was utilized in the analysis of the data. The results are contained in White's 1993 report "Study on the Role of Women in Agriculture, the Socio-Economic Status of Women, and the Status of SCF-Supported

'Groupement' and Women's Clubs in Maissade, Haiti.'" The names and data for the 10 percent sample of this survey were available, and formed the basis for an expanded re-survey.

In addition to this survey, in 1996 a survey was conducted of female members of the women's clubs, as part of the final evaluation of the WCI grant that had supported these activities for four years. This survey interviewed 148 women, selected as a random 5 percent sample from the membership lists of all the women's clubs. The results are contained in Narcisse's 1996 report "Women Child Impact Program Final Evaluation." The computer files containing the raw data for this survey were obtained, though this survey was done with participant anonymity, and so re-surveying was not possible. Using the questions from these two surveys, an expanded survey questionnaire was developed, and then field tested by the research assistant. The questionnaire is included as Appendix Two. The SCF *animatris* staff was engaged to conduct the surveys⁵, and the names of the 112 people to be re-surveyed was distributed among them. Each *animatris* was given the names of the survey participants who lived in the communities in which they were working. (One *animatris* was on maternity leave at the time, and the research assistant conducted the surveys in this region.) As expected, a significant number of original survey participants could not be located, due to moves, deaths, or other reasons. A total of 72 of the 112 original participants were resurveyed, a 64 percent re-survey rate.

⁵ The negotiations with the *animatris*es proved to be an interesting event, as remuneration became an issue. SCF management did not want to set the precedent of remunerating staff whenever 'extra' surveys related to program studies and evaluations were performed, while field staff encouraged me to work out an informal agreement directly with them. I discuss and analyze this incident further, in terms of an 'encounter of development knowledges', in Chapter 7.

All the data fields from the survey were entered into a standard spreadsheet software program. Quantitative data were analyzed by calculating means and frequency distributions (as appropriate), using the mathematical functions of the software program. Qualitative data (the descriptive answers to survey questions) were coded into categories that were judged appropriate, and the frequency distributions of the answers determined. The data from 1993 for the 72 women who were re-surveyed in 1997 were also analyzed, to determine comparative means and distributions for the same sample. The majority of the data from the survey is presented and discussed in Chapter Seven, in the discussion of gender roles in agriculture and households. However, the data are also utilized in other chapters where they are relevant to the analysis under consideration in that chapter.

The field research was funded by a Young Canadian Researchers grant from the International Development Research Centre in Ottawa. Further support throughout the proposal, field and writing stages of the thesis was provided by a Doctoral Fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and a Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research scholarship from Carleton University.

Participation, Reflexivity and Interpretation

The presence and identity of an 'outside' researcher in a cross-cultural setting raises significant issues of ethics, participation and reflexivity. As the discussion in the previous chapters has indicated, knowledge and processes of creating knowledge involve questions of power, interpretation and responsibility. In Chapter Nine, I discuss and develop these issues further in a specific and contextual analysis of the actual research experiences, dynamics and dilemmas that I encountered during my fieldwork.

The rise of the post-modernist critique of the disciplining, ethnocentric and often oppressive character of Northern/Western knowledge of 'other' cultures and societies has led to much concern for questions of ethics, participation and respect in social science research. This critique warns of the danger that any knowledge of an 'other' constructed by a researcher will tend to misunderstand them, construct a faulty knowledge of them, and in so doing perpetuate or promote domination or violence against them. This is particularly true if the 'knowledge' generated by the research is intended to be used to then act or intervene in the world of those 'others', as is quite potentially the case in 'development research' such as mine. At the other extreme is the prospect that my academic, theoretical and disciplinary points of departure cause me to produce 'knowledge' that is so far removed from the understandings and concerns of the field that this thesis becomes irrelevant.

In response to these concerns, many social scientists have argued for research that is 'symmetrical' (Latour, n.d., cited in Smith, 1998, p. 7) or 'participatory' with those who are its 'subjects'. Among other things, this usually includes at least partial attempts to establish the research agenda and questions in partnership or dialogue with those being researched. It may also include research that is 'action-oriented', that is linked with concrete initiatives to change the social situation under study. It necessarily involves following ethical guidelines that ensure research subjects give fully informed consent to their participation in the research, that confidentiality of identities and information provided is ensured, and that research results are shared in a suitable and potentially useful format with those who have been researched.

With the rise in participatory research approaches, critical and deconstructionist responses have also emerged. Approaching these research questions from a post-structuralist perspective (as outlined in the previous chapter), these responses have challenged the possibility of genuine participation and ‘sharing’ of power and knowledge in a world of difference and multiple truths. Even when researchers consciously attempt to reflexively examine and take into account their position, and that of the research participants (Rose, 1997, p. 305; McDowell, 1992, p. 409), many have found such attempts at creating ‘ethical intersubjectivity’ difficult or inadequate. For some, the only option is to “take responsibility ... to firmly situate ourselves within contingent and imperfect contexts, to acknowledge differential privileges...” in the production “of knowledge and truth claims” (Flax, 1992, p. 460, 458).

I struggled with these interrelated issues of participation and the possibility of genuine participation during the field research. In my research proposal, I planned to make the research somewhat participatory, by establishing ‘research agreements’ with the four local farmers and women’s associations that would be the focus of the study.⁹ These agreements would establish specific accountability and feedback/verification procedures for the information gathered from these groups. I also planned to use participatory appraisal exercises to elicit community understandings of the development process as they experienced it, and so to ensure that the words, categories and practices of local people would ground my descriptions and analysis. These all proved quite difficult. As I will describe more fully in Chapter Nine, I did not establish research agreements with the

⁹ As noted above, I did establish a research agreement with SC, which included procedures for mutual accountability and feedback, but oriented to the management level (not field staff level) of SC.

local associations, due to the disruption, attention and expectations I felt would be created by the extra meetings that would be required to do the participatory research. As a result, the research that is presented on these pages is less participatory than I would have wished or some may consider minimally appropriate. As I have already indicated in the introduction in Chapter One, this thesis is still very much the result of an encounter of my personal theoretical and analytical understandings with the events and people that I interacted with in Maissade. I have still largely extracted information and data from Maissade, and the analysis present on these pages is still very much my interpretation. In Chapter Nine, I attempt to discuss and analyze these issues in greater detail, in light of specific events and observations that I made in the field.

Confidentiality and Identities

Concerning the issue of confidentiality and identities, I have decided to take a 'middle road' that avoids excessive vagueness concerning the location of my research yet still protects the confidentiality of informants. Thus I have not attempted to keep the location of my research confidential, nor the identity of the NGO agency that graciously allowed me access to its program. I have, however, utilized pseudonyms and altered details for the specific community associations and for specific individuals (both SC staff and community members) who participated in the research,

I have come to this decision for a number of reasons. First, the 'geographical' aspects of the research means that the specific features of the place in which the program operated were essential to the analysis of what happened and how. It would have been very difficult to mask the research location without losing essential details and insights

into their analysis. It seems to me that making Maissade 'placeless', uprooted from the specifics of its location, would have meant going against the requirements of good current geographical research practice. Second, my presence in the community was quite visible and well-known. Anyone with a strong desire to determine the location of the research could do so with little more than a quick tour and a few interviews in the major towns of the Central Plateau. Third, despite possible academic optimism on my part about the impact of my research, I am quite realistic about the limited diffusion that this thesis will receive. Various copies and translated summaries are being shared and returned to the community in which it was conducted, but beyond this there seems to be little potential for persons with punitive intentions to access this research. Fourth, and most importantly, throughout my research I was given consistent permission to report my observations of the activities in Maissade. In particular, the leaders of Save the Children, the organization that might most readily be subject to negative reaction in response to this thesis, agreed to my presence and the reporting of the research in this thesis.⁷

However, since it is not the goal of my research to endanger, embarrass, praise or criticize any particular individual, I have protected the anonymity and the confidences showed to me by many individual people in Maissade. I have great admiration for most of the hard-working and dedicated people with whom I had the privilege of walking, learning and discussing, and I hope that they are able to recognize themselves despite the masking, and forgive my disguising their accomplishments.

⁷ In the research agreement that I established with them at the start of the research, I agreed to submit all articles or papers intended for publications in journals, books or at conferences to SCF for comment and discussion, and if so desired, to retain the anonymity of the program in those articles and papers.

Translation and Terminology

Throughout this thesis, I have used many Haitian creole (*kreyol*) terms, and occasional French names, which I indicate by placing them in italics. *Kreyol* terms are used directly in the text when using a translated English word would hide the fact that I am referring to a particular Haitian category or thing, or when I judge that no English translation can quite capture the specific meaning of the *kreyol* term. When I have judged that these terms are unfamiliar, I have defined or translated them in a footnote the first time they are used. I have also included the most important and frequently used terms in the Glossary and List of Abbreviations which precedes the bibliography at the end of the thesis. When the French roots of a *kreyol* term is recognizable, I do not provide a translation.

All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. I have followed the official “phonemic system” of orthography in writing *kreyol* terms, despite the persistence of other systems in some sources. When plural *kreyol* terms are used within English text, I have used an anglicized plural form (added ‘s’ or ‘es’ as appropriate) instead of using the plural *kreyol* ending ‘yo’, in the interest of ease of reading (i.e. I have written ‘*animatrisés*’ instead of the plural *kreyol* ‘*animatris yo*’.)

Chapter Four

SITES OF ENCOUNTER: A GEOGRAPHY OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN RURAL HAITI

In this chapter, I review in some detail the historical development geography of rural Haiti. I trace how Haiti's construction as 'underdeveloped' had its roots in its colonial period, continued to develop through its unique, comparatively early and lengthy post-colonial period, and now has evolved to its present integration into the realm of underdevelopment. While the goal of this thesis is to focus on the local-level practices, impacts and meanings of a particular community development program, these cannot be understood or analyzed outside of their historical and geographical context. Thus, my purpose in this chapter is to set the context for the events and activities of the community members and development programs described and analyzed in this thesis. This information will also begin to help determine to what extent this study's analysis of NGO development intervention in Haiti may be expected to apply to other places.

As I have introduced in the previous chapters, the practices, identities and knowledges of development that I observed in 1997 have all been constructed and shaped by that which has gone before in the particular place called Haiti and Maissade. I will argue that since the beginning of its history, Haiti has been the site of encounter of various political, economic and discursive forces, which have interacted with the geography of the Haitian countryside to produce what most people now call 'underdevelopment' in rural Haiti. I will focus on both the external, larger-scale factors

that have affected rural Haiti, as well as the struggles and strategies that the rural people have developed and employed in response.

Geography and Early History of Hispaniola

As numerous post-colonialist writers (i.e. Manzo, 1991; Mudimbe, 1988) have argued, the genealogy of 'development' extends back to the beginnings of European colonialism. Haiti was 'discovered' on the maiden voyage of colonialism to the Western Hemisphere, when Columbus landed on the island of Hispaniola in 1492 and claimed the island for Spain. The Spanish initially exploited the precious metal wealth of Hispaniola, and in so doing exterminated the native Arawak population through harsh enslavement in mines and deadly infection with new diseases. Soon Spanish attention turned to other more easily exploitable colonies in the Americas, and for over a hundred years Hispaniola was used primarily as a staging and provisioning base for Spanish fleets travelling to these areas. In the mid 1600s, the French king Louis XIV turned his attention to the economic possibilities presented by the *filibustiers* and *boucaniers* who alternately traded with and raided passing naval fleets from the shores of the western parts of Hispaniola (d'Ans, 1987; SACAD & FAMV; 1993a). In 1697, with the signing of the Treaty of Reswick, Spain officially ceded the western third of Hispaniola to the French. This was the beginning of a century of French colonial settlement based on plantation agriculture and slave labour, which saw Saint Domingue become the richest colony in the Americas. The colonial wealth of Saint Domingue rested on the export of sugar and coffee - in the 1780s, it produced three-quarters of the world's sugar, and had more revenues than all the thirteen American colonies (Francisque, 1986; Farmer, 1992). It is more accurate,

however, to say that Saint Dominique's wealth rested on the unspeakable cruelty and exploitation of its slave labour.¹ However, the cruelty of the slave labour system was also the colony's undoing, and resulted in a bloody, decade-long slave revolt which culminated in the establishment of the independent, black-ruled Republic of Haiti in 1804.

The Early Political Economy of Rural Haiti²

The rest of the Western world's slave-holding colonial powers did not welcome the first successful modern slave revolution, and decades of political-economic isolation followed for Haiti. Turmoil also continued within Haiti, as the uneasy alliance between the slaves and the *affranchi* (mostly mixed-blood or mulatto freed slaves) broke down. Though the black slaves were now declared free, the *affranchi* mulatto class attempted to rebuild Haiti's export economy by re-establishing plantation production using feudal-like arrangements with the former slaves (SACAD & FAMV, 1993a; Trouillot, 1990; Dupuy, 1989). In 1826, the Haitian government signed an indemnity agreement for 150 million francs with France as compensation for its lost possessions, in an attempt to gain international recognition, eliminate French threats of invasion, and facilitate trade. This

¹ So harsh was the treatment of slaves that its population is estimated to have been replaced every twenty years because of the high death rate (Lundahl, 1992, citing Rotberg and Clague, 1971). Between 1785 and 1789 alone (the period just before the eruption of the slave rebellion), 150,000 slaves were imported, due to high mortality and the expansion of plantation agriculture. In 1789, it is estimated that 40,000 white settlers owned over 500,000 slaves. Other historians who have documented this period include Fick (1990), James (1989), Nicholls (1979) and Dupuy (1989).

² The following section borrows in parts from the outline given by White (1994). For a variety of more in-depth treatments of the nature and history of the Haitian political economy, see James (1949), Trouillot (1990), Fass (1988), Dupuy (1989), Lundahl (1979), and Weinstein and Segal (1992).

debt further reinforced the elite's attempt to re-build an export-oriented economy (d'Ans, 1987; Fass, 1988; White, 1994).³ In the course of the next decades, resistance to this forced plantation system caused its slow decline, as former slaves escaped to squat and settle on abandoned coffee plantations and other 'state' lands in the more mountainous areas. The land-owning elite progressively was limited to small pockets around the urban centers, while most retreated to controlling positions in government and commerce in the cities. Thus the transition was made to small-holder peasant agriculture in Haiti, particularly in the less-favourable and isolated hills, mountains and interior plateaus (d'Ans, 1987; SACAD & FAMV, 1993a).

This was the beginning of Haiti's historical political, economic and cultural divide between the poor, rural peasant majority and a small urban merchant and political elite. The remainder of the 19th century was marked by the consolidation of the urban elite's control of the economic and political apparatus. Coffee, cacao and other exported agricultural products from the rural areas provided the base of Haiti's economy, and so even the most isolated rural peasant-producer was linked to the capitalist world-economy. While peasants for the most part controlled their own small parcels of land, they did not control the sale of their surplus crops. The merchant elite, through control of export

³ This early foreign debt amounted to ten times the annual government budget at that time. However, a subsequent treaty in 1838, in which France formally recognized its former colony and its independence, reduced the balance of indemnity owed by 60 million francs (d'Ans, 1987, footnote, p. 192). Sources differ on when the debt was finally fully paid - d'Ans indicates the year 1893, White indicates the year 1936 (d'Ans, 1987, p. 193; White, 1994, p.24). A third source, Weinstein and Segal (1992, p. 29) states that after the American occupation, U.S. bank loans were used to pay off the French debt in 1922, which were then repaid to these American interests through their 'custodial' control of Haitian customs collections. They report that in 1927, 40 percent of the Haitian budget was spent on debt repayment (1992, p. 31). Whichever it was, it can be remarked without doubt that Haiti was one of the first ex-colonial states to suffer an unsustainable foreign debt, debt restructuring, and the resulting imposition of an export-oriented 'structural adjustment program' on its masses by its ruling elite.

licenses and regional intermediaries called *speculateurs*, was able to extract the maximum surplus from the peasantry. They also imported manufactured goods and other products, and resold them nationally. The state, in turn, appropriated its share of rural wealth through taxes on the sale and export of coffee and other cash crops, and the granting of export permits to elite groups supporting the faction in power. Additional regressive taxes were collected directly from the peasants, either by the local tax office, or by otherwise unpaid rural section chiefs⁴ and their deputies. The former collected local sales taxes, land sales registration taxes, market taxes, and taxes on animals brought to market, while the *chef de seksyon* would both adjudicate and collect crop damage fees caused by animals which had become untied, collect 'inspection' and confirmation fees for the verification of such crop damage, impose 'complaint' and 'judgement' fees for the arbitration of disputes among individuals, charge for branding livestock, or levy a fee for writing out contracts between parties (Dupuy, 1989, p. 103, 104).

Thus, as Dupuy (1989, p. 108) describes, though the peasants won the struggle for land after independence, this victory was "illusive" as they did not escape subordination to a ruling elite who controlled the state and merchant economy. Interested only in maintaining their position, and considering the darker-skinned, illiterate peasants with little regard, the state reinvested precious few public resources in the countryside, either in the form of schools, medical services, transportation infrastructure, or productive investments in agriculture. The pattern was set for much of the twentieth century. As Mintz (1995, p. 81) states, "the Haitian rural masses expected little from their government

⁴ The rural section chiefs were officially part of the military, and their primary responsibility was to serve as the rural police. Up until the abolition of the Haitian military in 1994, the Haitian police have always been a division of the military, and not a civilian police force.

- and they got less.” Peasant agriculture remained ‘primitive’, relying on such cooperative labour practices as the *kombit* and *eskwad*⁵ to work their fields, and large families to provide labour and security. Combined with the pattern of bilateral, partible land inheritance, average peasant land holdings started to decline, starting a gradual spiral of deforestation, erosion and declining productivity that continues to this day. These conditions of exploitation, neglect and scarcity further consolidated the pragmatic peasant survival strategies toward external agents.

The American Occupation and its Effects

Though the elite controlled Haiti’s economic and political machinery, there remained much contestation within the controlling classes for dominance. Mintz (1966, p. 5) reports that, between 1807 and 1915, “of Haiti’s 24 executives ... only eight were in office for a period equal to their elected terms, and 17 were deposed by revolution”. The peasantry for the most part tried to avoid the predatory actions of the state, though at various times throughout the second half of the 1800s, ‘*cacos*’ (rural peasant militias) formed opportunistic alliances with particular elite factions to attack government institutions. This pattern of turmoil culminated in 1915 in a series of rebellions, short-lived governments and a presidential assassination, and provided the pretext for the American Marine Corps invasion. The invasion was clearly based on American geo-

⁵ The *kombit* and *eskwad* are two of the most common cooperative labour groups. Though their characteristics vary in different parts of the country, the *kombit* is generally a large, single-occasion work parties in which neighbours are invited to provide a day’s labour in exchange for future reciprocal considerations, food and a festive atmosphere. An *eskwad* is a smaller, permanent labour group of neighbours and family, who work cooperatively on each other’s fields on continual rotating basis. Smith (1998) provides a detailed examination of these and other cooperative labour groups.

political interests in the context of World War I (particularly American concerns regarding German commercial interests in Haiti), yet also occurred within that era's dominant neo-colonial ideology of 'civilization and progress' (d'Ans, 1987; Slater, 1995). As d'Ans suggests, the Americans understood their custodianship of numerous 'backyard' countries during this time as "bringing to those who had been deprived of them, the benefits of civilization and progress (translated into modern vocabulary: democracy and development.)" (1987, p. 201, my translation). The construction of Haiti within the discourses of development was firmly underway.

The American occupation lasted 19 years, until 1934. In the early years, the rural *caco* militias formed a strong guerrilla resistance to the American occupiers, and their ability to operate in the rural areas proved "that the Haitian countryside, the second world, was largely free from the control of Port-au-Prince" (Weinstein and Segal, 1992, p. 30). (The *caco* resistance and American response to it has some particular effects on the research study area, to which I will return below.) Though the Americans succeeded in crushing the *caco* rebellion by 1920, it shaped the remainder of the occupation period, and determined its major long-term impact. In line with the dominant themes of 'modernization' and 'governability' of the time, the Americans proceeded to strengthen and centralize government administrative power in the capital, 'professionalize' and unify the Haitian army, and construct new roads and communication systems into the countryside. Anglade (1982a; 1982b) describes how Haiti's regionalized economic geography of the 19th century, consisting of at least eleven important coastal cities serving as export/import gateways for their rural hinterlands, became centralized in the

capital, Port-au-Prince.⁶ Trouillot describes the impact of the occupation as reinforcing the divide between the 'State' and the 'Nation', and setting the stage for the Duvalier dictatorship:

The Occupation worsened the economic crisis by augmenting the peasantry's forced contribution to the maintenance of the State and of the urban parasites. It worsened the crisis of power by centralizing the Haitian Army and disarming [citizens in] the provinces. Of course, by putting in place the structures of military, fiscal and commercial centralization, the Occupation postponed judgement day for thirty years; but it also guaranteed that the finale would be bloody (quoted in Farmer, 1992, p. 177).

Besides the political-economic effects of the American occupation, another important effect was the beginning of the integration of rural Haitian labour into the hemispheric economy. Between 1915 and 1930, between 300,000 and 500,000 mostly rural Haitian labourers were recruited to work on sugar plantations in Cuba and the Dominican Republic⁷ (Anglade, 1982a, p. 91; Weinstein and Segal, 1992, p. 33; Dupuy, 1989, p. 137). As Anglade (1982a, p. 91) notes, this represented approximately one-fifth of the total Haitian population of 2 million, and had the dual impact of benefiting the large U.S. capital investments in the Cuban and Dominican sugar industry, and diffusing support for the rural *caco* rebellion. Thus it bears emphasizing that rural Haiti, even

⁶ This was accomplished by eliminating communal budgets and taxation in favour of a national budget and a centralized tax-collection system, closing regional ports to international commerce, establishing preferential tariffs in Port-au-Prince, improving roads and communications to the capital, and, with the help of a centralized military, gaining administrative control of regional public institutions (tax and customs houses) and suppressing existing regional authorities (Anglade, 1982, p. 91; Weinstein and Segal, 1992, p. 32-33).

⁷ These sources differ in the total number of migrants: Dupuy reports the figure as "between 300,000 and 400,000" (1989, p. 137), Anglade reports 250,000 each to Cuba and the Dominican Republic (1982a, p. 93), while Weinstein and Segal only report that "Haitian emigration to Cuba ... averaged more than 16,000 per year during the 1920s" (1992, p. 33). With the decline of the sugar industry during the Depression, hundreds of thousands were forcibly repatriated to Haiti, particularly from the Dominican Republic.

before the advent of official discourses of 'development' (to which I will now turn), was strongly connected with the larger political economy of the hemisphere, through both its commodities and its labour. As I will argue further below, these connections are also important historical elements of rural Haiti's connection to the larger political economy of identity.

The Arrival of Underdevelopment

After the American occupation, the increased Haitian nationalism and racial consciousness produced during that period resulted in the re-emergence of old divisive colour distinctions between the black and mulatto elite classes (Weinstein and Segal, 1992). Among the increasing black middle and elite classes, a *noiriste* movement developed, which promoted interest in black culture, peasant life and African origins, understandings of Haitian history in terms of race (colour) rather than class, and debate concerning the 'authentic racial identity' of Haitians (Weinstein and Segal, 1992; Dupuy, 1989; Nicholls, 1979). Whereas previously the lighter-skinned elite had always aspired to a 'French' (i.e. western, 'civilized') identity, Haitian writers, led by Jean Price-Mars, now argued that 'true' Haitian culture was a unique result of both French-European and African influences and values.

Despite the rise of this *noiriste* movement, the first two post-occupation presidents were still mulatto, however. They attempted to further enhance the political dominance of their class by favouring them for appointments in the state administration at the expense of the black middle class (Dupuy, 1989, p. 146, citing Labelle, 1976; 1978).

The cultural hierarchy between the ‘civilized’ lighter classes and the majority black peasant classes was further reinforced when,

[i]n collaboration with the mostly white and foreign hierarchy of the Catholic Church, the government attacked the cultural values of the popular classes by launching an anti-superstition campaign in 1942. Vodou practitioners were persecuted, and vodou temples and cult objets were systematically destroyed (Dupuy, 1989, p. 146, citing Labelle, 1976, p. 134-137).⁸

In 1946 the growing black middle classes rebounded, with the black leader Estimé coming to power, and a “nationalist black revolution” occurred, with blacks now being promoted within the civil service and into the cabinet (including Dr. Francois Duvalier in the Ministry of Health.) When Estimé attempted to extend his mandate in 1950, soldiers headed by Colonel Magloire, a black man backed by the mulattos, forced Estimé to resign, and Magloire himself was elected president later the same year.

d’Ans describes this period as the beginning of the ‘take-off’ of development in Haiti. His colourful (and Foucauldian) analysis bears quoting at length:

it is striking to note how much domestic and international discourse responded and complemented each other, and how, since its beginning, contemporary ‘*neo-noirisme*’ in Haiti has had its fate tied to the expansion of the international politics of ‘development’. In these years immediately following the end of the Second World War, President Truman came to invent this new notion... The United Nations (which itself came to be created) was completely seized by this notion, and made it its business. And all this concentrated itself immediately on Haiti: this former land of American occupation was now going to become the ‘laboratory’ *par excellence* of development. A horde of experts immediately swooped down on the country, coming to scrutinize, auscultate⁹, put in numbers, pronounce diagnostics and suggest miracle-solutions. And it is necessary to state that if there was ever a place where, upon hindsight, the false character of developmental actions showed themselves perfectly, it is assuredly in Haiti (d’Ans, 1989, p. 205-06).

⁸ It should be noted that this elite prejudice against vodou was not new. Nicholls (1979, p. 182) states that vodou practices had been illegal in Haiti for many years, and in 1935 the penalties had been increased. However, these laws had not been enforced in most areas.

⁹ Meaning: to sound or listen with a stethoscope.

Magloire strengthened Haiti's ties with the U.S., and American and UN support started the construction of a dam and irrigation canals on the Artibonite River. New factories opened, tourism expanded, bridges and roads were built, and "the economy as viewed from Port-au-Prince prospered" (Weinstein and Segal, 1992, p. 38; d'Ans. 1987). When Hurricane Hazel struck in 1954, American food aid was added to its assistance program, and total American assistance reached almost \$US 10 million per year (English, 1984, p. 24; DeWind and Kinley, 1988, p. 40). Magloire's administration, however, was also noted for its corruption and mismanagement of public funds, and much of the development investment only benefited the government and business classes.¹⁰ Publicly discredited yet attempting to extend his term in office, Magloire was forced into exile in the United States in 1956, reportedly with between \$US 12 and 28 million in stolen public money (Dupuy, 1987, p. 155).

Five provisional governments followed in quick succession during the subsequent seven months, with the instability further marked by violent confrontations between supporters of the main candidates in the scheduled presidential election (Dupuy, 1987, p. 155). Francois Duvalier, supported by the black middle classes and elements in the military, was declared the winner and took office in October 1957. The history of Francois Duvalier's dictatorship is well known, as "the terrorism of the state reached new heights" (Dupuy, 1989, p. 161) and the "Duvalier dictatorship distinguished itself from all the previous ones in its unlimited and indiscriminate use of violence" (Pierre-Charles,

¹⁰ The annual government debt rose more than ten-fold during this period, to \$US 40 million in 1957 (Weinstein and Segal, 1992, p. 51, citing Manigat, 1964).

1973, p. 46, cited in Dupuy, 1989, p. 161).¹¹ Initially, Duvalier was able to use American fears of communist expansion from nearby Cuba to maintain aid levels, but finally in 1963 high levels of mismanagement and corruption (reported by some to be reaching 80 percent of total aid) caused the suspension of American assistance (Dewing and Kinney, 1988, p. 40).

The Duvalier dictatorship produced a number of important impacts in the countryside. Primary among them was the extension of political control to the countryside through his infamous *Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale (VSN)*, better known as *tonton macoutes*.¹² In the countryside, the *tonton macoutes* were recruited from among the section chiefs, vodou priests and other slightly more affluent peasants, and formed an informal and decentralized paramilitary force that reported directly to the President's office. In exchange for loyalty and the suppression of any perceived opposition to Duvalier, the *tonton macoutes* were given free and arbitrary power to extort, intimidate and engage in all manner of corrupt practices.

Secondly, Duvalier's reign of terror also initiated a second era of large-scale emigration. Between 1959 and 1985, an estimated 500,000 Haitian emigrated, primarily to the United States, but also to Canada, the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas, Martinique and Guadeloupe, and France (DeWind and Kinley, 1988, p 8). In addition to legal migration channels, many followed various illegal channels, as boat-people, using forged documents or staying overseas once entry had been gained with a tourist visa. As

¹¹ Writers who have covered this period in Haiti's history include Nicholls, 1979; Trouillot, 1990; Heint and Heint, 1978; and Abbott (1988).

¹² The term *tonton macoute* comes from the figure in Haitian folklore who carries off wicked children at night in a basket (*macoute*) (Nicholls, 1979, p. 217).

several writers have pointed out, 'investing' family resources in financing the emigration of a son or daughter became an important 'familial development strategy' for lower-middle and middle class families during this period of few other opportunities. In addition, I would suggest, this increasing 'transnational' experience in many Haitian families, established through remittances, visits and stories from expatriate family members, also served to reinforce an increasing sense of 'underdevelopment' among those who remained living in Haiti.

Yet despite the terror and rising identity of 'underdevelopment', Nicholls (1979) points out that the power of the Duvalier era should not be viewed as a purely repressive or entirely controlling force. There remained "considerable areas of personal liberty for the vast majority of the population; only those interested, or thought to be interested, in political power and those who attempted to thwart the ambition of local Duvalierists found themselves persecuted or killed" (Nicholls, 1979, p. 213). Smucker, an anthropologist who did fieldwork in a rural northern community in the mid-1970s, adds that "the authoritarian character of the Haitian state is not to be confused with effective control over rural areas" (Smucker, 1986, p. 103) Thus, while the elite groups in the cities and the wealthy and powerful in the countryside were inevitably caught up in the terror of Duvalier's reign, the mass of the rural peasants did their best to remain 'below' the operation of power.¹³ Furthermore, as Dupuy (1989, p. 163) notes, the patterns of authority were different from previous forms only in quantity, not quality. Many rural people continued to cultivate patronage linkages with local *tonton macoutes*, and as

¹³ In Chapters Five and Seven I describe and discuss in more detail examples from my fieldwork which illustrate rural people's aversion to anything perceived as 'political'.

Nicholls (1979, p. 215) states, “Duvalier’s government enjoyed the support or the benevolent neutrality of a large part of the population who were shrewdly aware that their lot under a succeeding regime would probably be not better and might possibly be worse.” Smucker notes that state power relations were not highly rationalized, but had “a quality of chaos, a functional confusion which allow[ed] freedom to manoeuvre the prerequisites of office to personal advantage” (1983, p. 70). What is clear from these descriptions is that rural people learned to develop quite pragmatic and personalized strategies to attempt to deal with the relatively arbitrary, unpredictable and ruthless nature of power relations confronting them. Nor can simplistic notions of ‘oppressive’ power be used to understand this situation, but rather Foucault’s notions of power as circulating, reversing, resistance-producing, and net-like are applicable.

Finally, this paradoxical combination of neglect and arbitrariness produced an openness to outside missions and NGOs in the countryside, and began the early ‘privatization’ and ‘NGOization’ of much development assistance in rural areas. The suspension of most official aid, combined with the weakness and indifference of government channels, meant that responding to the many social needs fell to the localized and uncoordinated efforts of expatriate Catholic priests, Protestant missionaries and other voluntary agencies.¹⁴ Duvalier tolerated and even encouraged the proliferation of these

¹⁴ Up until the 1970s, many Catholic priests in rural regions were French, Belgian or French-Canadian, particularly on the Central Plateau, where priests from the Schutt order were assigned in many parishes. In most Catholic parishes, a parochial elementary school was established, and larger parishes also installed a medical dispensary, both often run by a Catholic sister. Through these priests and sisters, parishes had access to sources of support from overseas parishes and from Caritas, the Catholic relief agency, which they used to support these educational and medical activities, as well as other developmental projects. Protestant missions and mostly North American NGOs (often also associated with a church) also were involved in similar efforts, providing support to local church-run schools, promoting literacy efforts and primary health care, and implementing agricultural projects. Thus many rural towns had one or more

small international missions and NGOs in the countryside, since these agencies did not have the stature or interest in development policy or politics to challenge his position. As a result, NGOs and missions had a disproportionate role in rural development efforts, with two important results. First, the conservative nature of these agencies, combined with the unpredictable ruthlessness of the Duvalier regime, ensured that these outside interventions remained small-scale, personalized, and a-political in character, yet disproportionately important in each locality as one of the few sources of outside social assistance. Second, outside agencies and personnel were allowed direct access to the Haitian countryside, unmediated by government and national representatives that otherwise would have been expected to deliver development and social services.¹⁵ In many communities, these foreign representatives held considerable influence, as bearers of attractive cultural, financial and social resources. As I will discuss later, both the relationship of NGO programs to national and local politics and the cultural impact of the pervasive NGO development presence are two important aspects of the development enterprise in Haiti, one that shapes both NGOs themselves, and local responses to their programs.

'blans' (literally, 'whites', meaning foreigner) living in them, usually with their attendant vehicles, generators, and other artifacts of western convenience, providing an important cultural window to 'development' overseas and the reality of 'underdevelopment' locally.

¹⁵ My previous work experience on the Central Plateau provides two anecdotal examples of the extent outside NGOs and missions came to be directly involved in state functions. A nearby mission agency, which worked with over 40 daughter churches throughout the central and north-east of Haiti, actually imported its own road grader to construct and maintain passible roads to some of the communities where these churches were located. They would also grade the stretch of the principal (and only) (gravel) road serving the Central Plateau, where it passed in front of their mission compound. An NGO working in the region installed wells and handpumps in local communities without any coordination, cooperation, supervision or approval from SNEP (*Service Nationale d'Eau Potable*), the government agency responsible for water services.

The Return of 'Development' in Rural Haiti

The effects of the historic structure of the Haitian political economy, culminating in the terror and neglect of Francois Duvalier's regime, are clearly illustrated in the following statistics on Haiti's social and economic situation: in 1960, life expectancy was 42 years, infant mortality was 182 per 1000 births, and the adult literacy rate was 15 percent (World Bank, 1982; UNDP, 1994). From 1950-51 to 1967-68, per capita GDP declined from about \$US 80 to \$US 74 (Dupuy, 1989, p. 165).

Significant levels of official foreign aid did not return until several years after the death of Francois Duvalier in 1971, when his son Jean Claude had proved a somewhat more humane and restrained approach to governing. The U.S. resumed its official aid program in 1973, and was soon joined by both other bilateral donor such as France and Canada, and multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the InterAmerican Development Bank. The result was a veritable flood of 'development'. d'Ans (1987, p. 214) again provides a colourful description:

...with the *jean-claudienne* relaxation [in oppression], the country became again a veritable field of manoeuvre for development cooperation, as it had once been before 1956: public or private, bilateral or multilateral, secular or religious (and in this case, of all possible confessions), international aid swooped down on Haiti, disproportionately and anarchically, eliminating any possibility of evaluating its total amount, ignoring all national planning which might eventually desire to articulate its initiatives, and assisting imperturbably to the monstrous failure of most of its actions.

Total assistance levels increased tenfold from the last year of the Duvalier *pere* era to the fourth year of the Duvalier *fils* reign, from \$US 6.2 million in 1971 to \$US 59.3 million in 1975. It almost doubled again in the following 6 years, to \$US 107 million in 1981 (English, 1984, p. 25). This aid became very important to the government budget - by 1981, foreign aid financed two-thirds of public investment, and one-third of total

(current and capital) central government expenditures (English, 1984, p. 31). Further evidence of the skills of government authorities in “managing Haiti’s reputation” (d’Ans, 1987, p. 215) as the ‘poorest country in the Western hemisphere’ to attract foreign assistance is found in the fact that the government budget doubled between 1975 and 1980 from \$US 90 to 180 million, yet the country’s general balance of payments remained positive in an era when most other southern countries began amassing large foreign debts.

This massive infusion of foreign assistance, with their constituent discourses and practices, had a major impact on the organization and ‘construction’ of Haiti’s social ‘space’. As Georges Anglade, a critical geographer of Haiti, writes, these assistance projects resulted in “an overload of foreign presence” throughout the country which “should be recognized as a trusteeship and de facto occupation” (Anglade, 1982b, p. 68). The “national scale” of these many projects and programs, writes Anglade, extended beyond “the level of individual good intentions to attain a presence whose total signification created, by its size, a fearsome apparatus of foreign domination and national dependence” (1982b, p. 68). Though Anglade does not explicitly employ Foucauldian concepts of discourse, his analysis of development interventions creating an ‘fearsome apparatus of domination’ beyond ‘individual intentions’ clearly echoes Foucault’s conceptions of power as described in Chapter Two. The impact of discourses of development, through the construction of development knowledges and identities, will also be an central theme of the analysis of the fieldwork data collected in Maissade.

The avalanche of ‘development’ during Jean Claude’s era, suggests d’Ans (1987, p. 212-16), produced severe “indigestion” and contributed to the ending of the Duvalier

dynasty in 1986. As Weinstein and Segal (1992, p. 44) argue, greed came to replace terror as the means of governing, and this greed eventually undermined the regime. By the mid-1980s, Haiti had become much more sensitive to international criticism, due to its dependence of foreign loans and grants, “and without bilateral government-to-government assistance the Haitian state could not operate in the manner to which the ruling elites had become accustomed”(Weinstein and Segal, 1992, p. 47). Yet “entrenched government corruption and inefficiency” increasingly pushed aid agencies to turn to the private sector to implement development programs (DeWind and Kinley, 1988, p. 68). Multilateral financing for infrastructure projects was subcontracted to private companies. The U.S. Congress stipulated that “development assistance for fiscal year 1982 should be provided through private voluntary organizations (PVOs), in order to bypass generally ineffective host country agencies and to emphasize grassroots development”¹⁶ (DeWind and Kinley, 1988, p. 68). In fact, DeWind and Kinley report that by 1983 over 50 percent of American assistance was administered by NGOs, making the Haiti U.S.AID mission the most dependent on NGOs of all large AID country programs in the world (DeWind and Kinley, 1988, p. 69, citing AID 1984, p. 27).¹⁷

¹⁶ The implication that PVO (NGO) implementation of development programs would “emphasize grassroots development”, expressed here by Congress, corresponds with my previous discussion of the perceived advantages of NGOs.

¹⁷ The role of food aid in the American assistance program reveals important aspects of both the worsening political ecology in the Haitian countryside, and American development policy for Haiti. DeWind and Kinley report that, in 1982, an estimated 45 percent of U.S.AID’s \$US43 million budget was used to provide food aid under Public Law 480. Of this food aid, approximately half was provided at concessional rates to the Haitian government, to be sold on the domestic market and the revenues to be used to finance government policy reforms and development investments. The other half, approximately \$US 10.5 million, was provided for free distribution through school and health service channels by four large American NGOs. The UNDP estimates that already by 1991, national food production had declined to a per capita average of only 1145 calories per person per day (from the 1981 level of 1500 calories per person per day.) Imported food aid increased during the same 1981 to 1991 period from 430 to 820

English (1984, p. 47) reports that over 20 percent of CIDA's disbursements to Haiti went through its Partnership Branch to Canadian NGOs in 1982-83, and increasing amounts of Canadian bilateral aid bypassed the Haitian government, instead being subcontracted to NGOs for implementation.

The resumption of official development assistance to Haiti, largely through non-governmental channels, produced the incorporation of previously mostly small-scale NGO programs into the development industry (as also occurred in many other countries - see Powell and Seddon, 1997). The completion of the 'NGOization' of development assistance in Haiti, created a distinct domain of development practice, separate or removed from the politics of government. Development programs and projects came to be understood as a separate 'a-political' field of outside intervention and practice, functioning with its own 'professional' norms.¹⁸ Local people responded and adapted to this new 'field' of outside intervention, learning how to participate and manoeuvre within it, developing what I will describe as specific 'local development knowledges' in subsequent chapters. The 'NGOization' has strong parallels to the 'anti-politics machine' which James Ferguson (1990) has described in his study of a rural development program in Lesotho. The 'development apparatus' in Haiti has operated as an anti-political

calories per person per day (UNDP, 1996). There remains, of course, a long-standing debate about the relationship between food aid and domestic agricultural production. DeWind and Kinley (1988) argue that the American development policy of promoting export-led agriculture and industry and supporting this 'transition' in the Haitian economy through increased supplies of food aid had severe detrimental effects in Haiti, and as the title of their book states, "aided migration" of Haitians both internally from the countryside to urban areas and internationally to North America.

¹⁸ This does not mean that development programs did not remain 'political' in the generic sense of involving competition and manoeuvre for access and control, as I repeatedly describe in subsequent chapters. With the return of 'legitimate' government in late 1994, government and development project politics started to become intertwined again, as I also describe in Chapter Eight.

machine in Haiti, a “counterpart to dysfunctional government institutions...” (Trouillot *et al.*, 1997, p. 75), transforming largely political development problems into bureaucratic problems of knowledge and technological transfer. While this development apparatus has not necessarily strengthened state presence in rural Haiti, it has strengthen and solidified the grip of western discourses of development on local peoples’ imagination.

Riddell (1987) included Haiti as one of a number of country cases in a study on the impact of foreign development assistance in situations of both extreme poverty and ineffective and corrupt government. Drawing on a range of studies (English, 1984; Zuvekas, 1978; Prince, 1985; Fass, 1982), he concludes that these programs had disappointing and limited results, both in alleviating poverty and changing the government’s general orientation of neglect. Interestingly for this present study is his diagnosis of one of the central causes of development assistance ineffectiveness:

A central problem... is the absence of local grass-roots organizations and a tradition of local democracy which could provide, and in other circumstances has provided, a catalyst for mass mobilization of the poor peasantry. What the Haitian case appears to show is that the lack of grass-roots organization is not only a primary cause of aid failure but a principal reason why aid withdrawal would have been unlikely to lead to a mass political movement resulting in either substantial reformist or revolutionary socio-economic change. (Riddell, 1987, p. 259)

Riddell concludes that while foreign aid has had “extremely limited value, ... the nature of the government and its administration [corruption, absence of political commitment to the poor] lies at the root of aid’s effectiveness” (Riddell, 1987, p. 262). Yet withdrawal of aid would also not likely have had much impact on these ‘internal’ constraints, since “it is precisely these inhibiting factors [political and institutional factors inhibiting aid effectiveness] which would have been likely to frustrate the benefits anticipated from donors adopting a policy of withdrawal or external intervention” (Riddell, 1987, p. 262).

Perhaps Riddell was premature in his analysis of the weak potential of the Haitian grassroots. In 1985 and early 1986, opposition protests from students, unions, and others in the popular classes, emboldened by their participation in the expanding liberation-theology-inspired base-community church movement, expanded throughout the country. Combined with international pressure and increasing reserve among the business classes, Jean-Claude Duvalier was pushed into exile. Yet despite the celebration and optimism that erupted after Duvalier's departure, little changed during the next four years. A national governing council was selected, headed by Henri Namphy, the army chief. Hopes for a democratic government were crushed when paramilitary groups attacked and killed dozens of voters on election day in November 1987. Even Leslie Manigat, the compromised president elected several months later in a widely boycotted election, was soon deposed by General Namphy. During 1988 and 1989, rival generals then proceeded to stage a series of coups d'état against each other. People came to realize that Duvalier's removal had in fact simply been "the first in a series of desperate coups d'état staged by Duvalierists who realized the present Duvalier was undermining their system" (Weinstein and Segal, 1992, p. 50).

During this period of political turmoil, local efforts to produce change and 'development' continued. Immediately following the departure of Duvalier, the population "set about trying to *dechouke*, or uproot, the traditions of corruption and abuse that had so chronically and thoroughly permeated the government" (Smith, 1998, p. 32). This involved the dissolution of the *tonton macoute* system of political intimidation in the countryside, and the dismantling of the politicized *konsey daksyon kominote* [community

council] structure.¹⁹ These openings initially caused an explosion in the organization of popular community groups. Public debate about the government and politics became possible. Optimistic and full of good intentions to support the increased participation of rural people, NGOs supported by official aid agencies expanded their programs throughout the countryside. When the military backlash came after the aborted November 1987 elections, many leaders of the more politically engaged community groups, many of them associated with the Catholic base-community movement, were arrested, beaten or went into hiding. International NGO programs and community groups associated with them, already more cautious of 'political' involvement, redoubled their efforts to remain 'apolitical'²⁰. With the military take-over of the government, even more bi-lateral programs were contracted to NGOs as executing agencies, particularly social service programs in health and education, and rural development programs. By 1989, for example, all of CIDA's bilateral programs in Haiti were implemented by Canadian NGOs as contractors.

Continued domestic and international pressure continued during this time, and eventually resulted in the surprising election of a populist, liberation theology-inspired priest, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, as president in December 1990. International observers had helped ensure a free vote, and record numbers of Haitians participated in what many called the first 'free, democratic' elections in Haitian history. Many of the rural

¹⁹ These community development councils were instituted by François Duvalier in the 1960s, as part of a national community development policy. I will describe the history of rural development in Haiti further below.

²⁰ For descriptions of how the SC program and the community groups associated with it in Maissade negotiated this period, see my review of the project history in Chapter Five.

community groups actively supported Aristide's candidacy, and following his election, the mobilization of these groups continued. However, the 'chaotic' nature of political power in Haiti soon reasserted itself, and Aristide was deposed in a bloody military coup d'état in September 1991. Many leaders of progressive community groups again were arrested, beaten, or forced into hiding. At least several thousand people were killed, a leaky and half-hearted economic embargo was declared by the Organization of American States (OAS), and over 65,000 refugees took to small boats sailing for the U.S. in attempts to escape the oppression and misery (Lundahl, 1998, p. 29; Morley and McGillon, 1997). The United States, attempting to justify the interdiction and return of the majority of these boat-people as 'economic' refugees, switched the majority of its aid to 'humanitarian' relief, in order to alleviate the worsening social conditions within Haiti.²¹ Other donors also suspended regular development cooperation assistance, with the exception of humanitarian relief funding (UNDP, 1996), and again NGOs and other private channels were called upon to deliver food aid, maintain basic medical services, and implement other short-term post-coup projects.²²

²¹ During the post-coup period (1991-1994), the Haitian GNP dropped by 30 percent. The sharp drop in public revenues caused the largest ever budget deficit, which was financed by the central bank, leading to a devaluation of the local currency by 46 percent from 1990-91 to the end of 1994. The inflation rate reached 50 percent at the end of in 1994 (UNDP, 1996). Basic health and nutrition indicators also declined during this period.

²² Two examples illustrate the nature of these projects: CIDA established a \$4.5 million Canada-Haiti Humanitarian Alliance Fund in 1993, which funded 36 projects planned and implemented by Canadian NGOs and their local Haitian partners (Coupal and Simoneau, 1998). The *Coopération Française* instituted a food distribution project channelled through various NGO community development projects. In Maïssade, this project provided over 1400 bags (70,000 kg) of donated corn to the SC-associated farmer's associations, which sold the corn to members at below-market prices and used the capital to establish revolving credit funds. These credit activities are discussed further in Chapter Six.

In October, U.S.-led multilateral forces secured the departure of the ruling military leaders, the return of President Aristide, the demobilization of the army, and the establishment of a new civilian police force. In the words of the annual UNDP report on Haiti,

With the return of constitutional government, the international community decided to support the consolidation of democracy and the process of development of the country. ... In spite of difficulties of the Haitian government in absorbing aid, the international community disbursed, from October 1994 to December 1995, a little more than \$US 534 million, while external aid only totalled \$US 138 million in 1990 and \$US 136 million in 1991 (UNDP, 1996, p. 31).

In total, over \$US 2.1 billion in financial assistance was pledged for the coming four years by international donors. This massive influx of aid was targeted to all sectors of the economy and society - balance of payments support, structural reform of the economy, reform and training of the police and judiciary, regional development, agriculture, health and social development (UNDP, 1996). Development was definitely big business again in Haiti.

Initially, large amounts of this aid were targeted at efforts to "prevent[] a relapse to political, economic and social instability" (U.S.AID, 1996, p. 1), and to support the transition to democracy, and therefore a variety of programs were implemented which attempted to provide immediate and direct benefits to local communities. U.S.AID, the largest donor²³, provided funding for a 'local governance transition program' which provided support for over 1,900 local 'self-help' projects, ranging from maintenance of local water services, road repairs, flood prevention and sanitation; a short-term jobs

²³ The U.S. provided \$US 235 million of the \$US 534 million in aid in 1995 (U.S.AID, 1996. UNDP, 1996).

program, which created over 500,000 person-months of employment in labour intensive road repair, irrigation canal repair, farmland rehabilitation, and sanitation projects; intensified food aid programs that reached 1.2 million beneficiaries per day with a meal and imported a total of \$US 52 million in food; and an intensified tree-planting program (U.S.AID, 1996, p. 3).

As might be expected, this wave of local development efforts created a range of effects. Local leaders jockeyed to secure projects for their community, and local people manoeuvred for the jobs and resources available through them. When I visited Haiti in 1996, rarely would I travel more than 10 kilometers on a provincial road without seeing a prominent sign declaring one development project or another, along with the source of the financial support, often the 'Office of the President', in 'partnership' with some international donor. The promise of 'development' was everywhere.

Aid levels, however, have declined considerably in subsequent years, due to the fading of the initial international good will following the coup, continuing problems in government aid absorptive capacity, and internal government wrangling concerning the acceptance of structural adjustment conditionalities. This last factor was particularly important, as significant portions of the overall assistance promised was contingent upon the acceptance of an Emergency Economic Recovery Plan (EERP). This plan was signed by representatives of the exiled Haitian government in Paris in 1993 (under pressure to accept the deal in order to maintain international support for efforts to 'restore democracy') with the IMF, the World Bank, and western donors. This plan called for the implementation of a strict structural adjustment program (SAP) involving government downsizing, privatization of state enterprises, trade liberalization, the maintenance of low

wages, and financial deregulation. The issue of privatization became especially politicized, and was one of the factors in the split in the governing *Lavalas* coalition. Total aid levels dropped to \$US 418 million in 1996 (UNDP, 1997), and dropped again to \$US 351 million in 1997 (UNDP, 1998).

The Nature of Development Assistance in Rural Areas

In the above section reviewing the historical evolution of Haiti's politics of development, I have already introduced some analysis of the effects of the particular character of development assistance in rural areas. In this second shorter section of the chapter, I will review some of the available literature which analyzes the specific nature and character of rural social relations as they were impacted by the history of development reviewed above.

A good way to introduce this review of rural social relations is to cite another colourful description from André-Marcel d'Ans, the French sociologist, who has written perhaps the most penetrating analysis of the construction of rural Haiti at the intersection of culture, geography and development (d'Ans, 1987). d'Ans calls the struggle of the rural populations as "*une gestion imaginative de la pénurie*" - 'an imaginative management of shortage', as rural Haitians have survived and endured despite compounding shortages of available land, government services and investment, human rights and democracy, and appropriate international support. d'Ans and others, in their investigations of the adaptations and manoeuvres of rural Haitians, convincingly demonstrate the falsehood of any image of Haitian 'peasants' as a 'traditional society', agrarian and illiterate, "fatalistically condemned to the obstinate reproduction of tradition,

a reproduction that assures its community solidarities and historic rituals, but also a profound reluctance toward 'progress' or adaptation to changing conditions" (d'Ans, 1987, p. 232). As the following writers show, and as I will attempt to demonstrate in detail in subsequent chapters, rural Haitians have indeed managed to survive, adapt and influence the conditions in which they have found themselves, though certainly in more pragmatic and multiple ways than that imagined by outsiders and experts.

Rural Politics and Community Development

As I have noted above, the majority of Haiti's poor live and work in rural areas, and so rural development and community development programs²⁴ have always been important components of development assistance efforts. Yet, in Haiti as elsewhere, rural development programs have had a low degree of success, due to their "failure to reach down to the poorest groups in rural areas and the frequent inability to achieve their stated objective, particularly those related to raising living standards" (Riddell, 1987, p. 235).

²⁴ Integrated rural development and community development programs are similar but not identical. Integrated rural development programs, as their name suggests, attempt to address the complex and integrated nature of the 'constraints' on rural development, and generally attempt to increase rural agricultural productivity and incomes by "bringing a basket of goods and services, consisting of production, social and infrastructural components to rural areas" (Lacroix, 1985, p. 15). These programs often consist of: the provision of rural credit, the supply of inputs, marketing services or structures, agricultural extension training, rural infrastructure, community health services, and other community development services (Lacroix, 1985). Community development programs, the dominant rural development model during the 1950s (Holdcroft, 1980), have tended to remain smaller-scale and more focused on principles of self-help and local institutional development. Smucker (1986, p. 94, citing U.S.AID, 1962) provides the definition of community development long used by USAID:

it is a process of social action in which the people of a community .. organize themselves for planning and action; define their needs...; make ... plans to meet their needs and solve their problems; carry out these plans with maximum reliance upon community resources; supplement these resources when necessary with services and materials from governmental and non-governmental agencies outside the community.

Despite the differences in these two types of programs, they face many of the same constraints, and for the purpose of the present discussion I will treat them as a single category.

Behind these failures, Riddell observes, lie the more fundamental (and interrelated) constraints in any attempts to promote rapid change in rural areas: the “high degree of complexity” of the process of rural development, and “widespread ignorance” of these complex processes (Riddell, 1987, p. 240).

Smucker (1986) provides a good overview of the history of community development efforts in Haiti. Smucker notes that the origins of these efforts date from the 1930s and 40s, in both the literacy campaigns of missionaries and the promotion of rural cooperatives. By 1961, the government had created the *Office Nationale d'Education Communautaire (ONEC)*, which merged its existing community development bureau and adult education program. In 1963, Francois Duvalier announced community development as a national policy devoted to integrating rural communities into the “rhythm of national progress” (CONADEP, 1963, cited in Smucker, 1986, p. 99), and instituted *conseils d'action communautaire* [kreyol: *konsev daksyon kominote*; community action councils) as the official organs for rural development. In 1970, the government planning council (CONADEP) announced a ‘decade of development’, and called for the creation of community councils throughout the territorial limits of the republic - using the services of ONAAC (the reorganized ONEC), foreign aid and NGOs. However, there were very few government resources or control directed toward the community councils. Many functioned only to the extent they were able to secure material aid and services from NGO and church sources, and entrepreneurial community leaders took to forming them in their locality as a means to access these resources and local political influence. During this time, large amounts of U.S. PL480 food aid were channelled to community councils through ‘food for work’ projects (DeWind and Kinley,

1988, p. 53). Community councils were responsible for planning and executing local labour-intensive projects, usually tertiary road improvements and soil conservation measures, paying workers with food aid. Various disaster relief food distributions, after hurricanes or drought, also promoted the evolution of community councils as local institutions. Since all of these projects inevitably involved large amounts of patronage and skimming, they became “tangible incentives for peasant farmers to organize new councils” (Smucker, 1986, p. 101). Meanwhile, workers often resold their food ‘wages’ in the local market.²⁵ As DeWind and Kinley report, independent U.S.AID-supported evaluations found that these relief efforts “tended to reinforce local elite-dominated power structures and to stifle [self-help] initiatives among peasants”, and that the community councils were “not likely to serve as the institutional basis for authentic rural development” (1988, p. 53, citing U.S.AID, 1979).

Smucker (1986, p. 100) notes that “a pivotal feature of the community council movement was the unusual role played by private voluntary organizations - mostly foreign in origin.” Some NGOs served as intermediaries between international sources of food aid and local community councils. Others utilized the community councils as the channels for the execution of their community development efforts. As Smucker notes, this created a “tendency for foreign agencies and community councils to be viewed as purveyors of relief goods, public services, and daily wage labour” (1986, p. 101). In

²⁵ During my residence on the Central Plateau from 1985 to 1990, and again in 1997, we regularly would buy household supplies of oatmeal or rolled enriched wheat in the local market. However, supplies would dry up during the summer months, when school vacation halted distribution of supplies to local school canteens. For a time in the late 1980s, people would come to our door trying to sell bags of surplus California raisins distributed to local schools, which local tastes did not appreciate, at least not as much as we were willing to pay for them.

1982 the government finally implement requirements for NGOs to register with the Ministry of Planning, and so recognized NGOs' convenient yet ambivalent role as major service providers in the countryside. NGOs

have become clients of local governments and foreign aid bureaucracies, providing public services that would be provided directly by government institutions in another context. ... [They] have been virtually institutionalized as permanent, or at least long-term, features of the Haitian political landscape. Nevertheless, this outward convenience masks an inner ambivalence in relationships that occasionally flares up into open conflict. It is not difficult to establish a coherent critique of the PVO network as an effective neocolonial system with remarkable access to remote areas of peasant Haiti.... Yet PVOs do provide essential services to the rural masses in a cost-effective and highly decentralized manner (Smucker, 1986, p. 101).

In the 1980s, after a period of relative freedom of the press, Jean Claude Duvalier moved to establish political control over the community councils, creating CONAJEC, the *Conseil National d'Action Jean-Claudiste*, as a political watchdog over local council leadership, limiting the number of councils to one per *section communale*, giving this council legal status as a official organization charged with local development, and establishing a hierarchy of community council federations at the *commune* level and confederations (made up of several federations) at the *arrondissement* level (Smucker, 1986, p. 104). As Smucker notes, CONAJEC "was commonly perceived as laying the foundations for an official political party of the government" (1986, p. 104). The leadership of the councils and local committees of CONAJEC was made up of local *notables*, VSN leaders, and others connected to the ruling authorities. Politics and conflicting interests, both within rural communities and with the larger national scene, were an essential feature of the councils.

As the community councils became increasingly politicized during the 1980s, growing numbers of NGO programs stopped working with them, and instead began to

encourage the formation of smaller and less formal *groupmans*, who then identified themselves principally in terms of the NGO project to which they were affiliated. In response to the increasing influence of liberation theology within the Catholic church, many parishes also took to organizing alternative community groups based on principles of *animation rurale* and Freirian *consientization*. Several Catholic-based *animation* training centers were established, at which parishes and NGOs sent field staff and/or community leaders for training in group formation and facilitation techniques.²⁶ As subsequent chapters will show, this was also the case in Maissade, where various *groupmans* and other community groups formed in affiliation with Save the Children, the Catholic-associated *Mouvman Peyizan Papaye* (MPP), and other smaller NGO programs.

The Politics of Community

The anthropologist Smucker provides an insightful description of the nature of politics in rural Haitian communities. While other well-known studies of rural societies, such as James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (1985), provide similar analyses for other contexts, Smucker's description of the particulars of the politics of rural Haitian communities is worth reviewing and citing in some detail. Smucker (1986, p. 106) states that:

²⁶ As Smith (1998, p. 228) explains, and as will be illustrated further in the discussions on the community associations in Chapter Six, training as an *animateur* or *animatrice* involved learning to a) motivate residents of a locale to organize into small groups; b) guide these groups in a process of reflecting together on social problems; and c) teach group members ways to work together effectively for positive social, economic and/or political change. Animators were also often trained to give more specific or technical training in areas such as literacy, sustainable agricultural production techniques, preventative health strategies, income generation, finance management, human rights, civic education, and women's empowerment.

a proper assessment of community development should take into account its political character at all levels, including relationships internal to the community. This issue calls into question the very existence of community in peasant Haiti. ... The peasantry is not a homogenous class. It is characterized by factionalism and subordination to outsiders. A clearer understanding of these issues helps to explain how community development works, and why it doesn't work as intended.

Smucker enumerates a number of reasons why the 'assumption of community' is inadequate: peasants "are not isolated from factors outside their community"; the simple existence of population aggregates "does not imply unity of purpose or commonality of interests"; and the "very notion of community is ideological" - a form of rhetoric (or discourse) intended to promote 'democratization', 'self-determination', or new ways of integrating rural communities into the national life. Smucker (1986, p. 106) states: "These are matters of particular interest to peasant farmers in a rural context where the political process is viewed with a combination of cynicism and opportunism." Though these words were expressed before the self-proclaimed populist governments of President Aristide and Preval, the events of the past few years would only seem to reinforce Smucker's assessment of rural attitudes to the political process. This 'combination of cynicism and opportunism' also extends to the politics of development programs, as I will illustrate in subsequent chapters of this thesis as I analyze numerous 'encounters' between NGO development programs and local 'participants', and community association leaders and association members.

Smucker goes on to describe the nature of community in rural areas. The lack of community cohesion does not mean there is not a sense of locality among neighbours, yet even a neighbourhood orientation would not provide a basis for solidarity for community organization. "Neighbours are in abundance but not all neighbours are equal" (Smucker,

1986, p. 106). Some are Protestant, others are Catholic. Some are family relatives, others are not. Some are larger land owners, others need to rent or sharecrop land in order to produce enough to survive. Some have family in the city, others do not. Some hire day labourers, others are looking for such employment. Throughout, a variety of levelling mechanisms mediates inequalities, jealousies and disputes among neighbours and neighbourhoods. "In short, the Haitian peasantry is not a homogeneous class. It is composed of various peasant classes whose interests are frequently at odds with each other" (Smucker, 1986, p. 106).

Any attempts at creating community organizational structures, such as those of Save the Children in Maissade that I describe in subsequent chapters, have been inserted into this complex and contested social arena. New institutions (whether the community councils of the 1970s and 1980s, or the 'grassroots' community associations of the 1980s and 1990s that are part of my study in this thesis), enter into and disturb existing patterns of social respect and obligation. These councils and associations are "intended to be organized along the lines of abstract equality rather than special ties" yet in practice "a relatively more well-to-do farmer may find it unseemly to work on a project supervised by a council president he does not respect, or on land of someone to whom he has no special ties and obligations" (Smucker, 1986, p. 107). A woman may not want to attend a health meeting led by a neighbour whom she perceives as a threat for the attention of her husband. Younger people, by virtue of their literate skills, tend to occupy more important offices in community organizations than they would otherwise play in traditional community structures.

Beyond internal local politics, community councils and associations, by virtue of their access to material resources and services from outside agencies, have been able to gain a “certain room for manoeuvre independent of traditional government institutions in nearby towns” (Smucker, 1986, p. 107). Leaders of these community organizations have gained a new source of power via control of these goods and patronage - for example, in the execution of ‘food for work’ projects utilizing American food aid, or in the allocation of credit to local group members. Thus, they may serve to reinforce existing power relations, create new dependencies toward the outside, or even exacerbate local tensions. Yet none of these processes is guaranteed - the effects may also be ‘beneficial’ and levelling. What can be said is that the promotion and activities of new community organizations provide new opportunities, new encounters between social actors, employing new (and old) knowledges, discourses and identities.

Smucker provides a quote he recorded from a peasant farmer which reveals rural conceptions, understandings and attitudes to development: “Development is aid from foreigners. It is another nation which comes to develop the country and create work for us. Community councils are a movement under government orders. It comes by government decree. The president sent it” (Smucker, 1986, p. 109). Based on such local understandings, Smucker ends his discussion of community councils with a rather negative and pessimistic assessment:

The political and cultural context accounts for the failure of local councils as representative local groups. In general they are unable to sustain themselves with any degree of local solidarity or political autonomy. As a rule, community councils do not mediate upward the political interests of peasant farmers. Rather, they serve primarily as downward channels for foreign social services in rural areas. The service role of councils is not without its virtues, [given that] there are few government services. Theoretically, community councils have this possibility [to function politically as pressure groups], but in practice they do not

generally function this way. They tend to be defined in terms of the agencies that funnel goods and services in their direction. In the absence of such agencies, the role of community councils is ambiguous at best. Under these circumstances they are more likely to be the empty forms of modern collectivities, without a life of their own but ready to spring into action at the first signs of outside agencies (Smucker, 1986, p. 109).

Though Smucker's comments were made of the community councils of the 1970s, my past work experience in Haiti and the research presented in this thesis suggest that much of his assessment remains valid. *Groupmans*, community associations, women's clubs and other community groups that frequently are formed in response to community development programs remain, to a significant extent, "groups of symbolic participation" (Kaufman, 1996, p. 10). A similar conclusion was made in a recent study of the rapid spread of these various types of community organizations by Smucker and Noriac (1996). Referring to this study, Trouillot *et al.* (1997, p. 75) report that

rural people's access to services depended upon their *groupman* membership status. In the past 10 years, *groupmans* funded by NGOs expanded into all regions of Haiti and took on community service roles previously carried out by community councils, which were disbanded with the fall of Duvalier. Motivated by dissatisfaction with government and collective activism, these cooperatives took on the responsibility for the betterment of their communities.

Thus the organization and maintenance of these groups has become an important part of local 'development knowledge' concerning the management of outside development interventions, which local people draw upon in their day-to-day struggles to obtain or retain access to scarce resources. As Li (1996, p. 503) describes, "Identifying sources of power and leverage is an exercise in which relatively powerless people are, of necessity, particularly adept. It is part of their daily work." This "indigenous micro political-economic knowledge is every bit as important as the indigenous technical and agroecological knowledge that has won international acclaim" (Li, 1996, p. 503). I will

describe numerous examples of such local development knowledge in subsequent chapters.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the manner in which Haiti has been shaped by the dominant discourses and practices of colonization, neocolonialism and development, creating its current state of 'underdevelopment'. In particular, I have emphasized how these interventions have created the character of Haiti's rural political economy, including particular features such as the state's neglect of the countryside, the dominance of NGO development programs, the dysfunctional yet widespread implementation of various community groups, and the strong pragmatic approach of many rural people to the resources of development programs as one of the few sources of outside investment in rural areas. In the following chapter, I will describe and analyze the specific features of this development political economy in Maissade, the region of the research.

Chapter Five

SITES OF ENCOUNTER: THE GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT IN MAISSADE

This chapter will outline the physical (geographical), social and development history of the Maissade region, in order to provide the backdrop for the events and practices analyzed in this study. Geography has intertwined with history to produce the particular economic, political and social features that are found in Maissade today. Thus, the physical and social aspects of its history will not be treated separately - rather their interconnectedness and mutual influence will be emphasized. This history then provides the context for the recent history of development practice in Maissade. The description of past development program efforts in Maissade will emphasize the pervasive impact of these programs - the manner in which they have become dominant social forces, shaping (constructing) social relations and community structures.

Regional History and Geography

The recorded history¹ of the Central Plateau begins soon after the beginning of the Spanish colonial period in 1492. Doura (1995, p. 47) reports that as early as 1502, the Spanish had established a settlement at Hinche (the current departmental capital - see the map in Figure 1 in Chapter Three). Yet, as on much of Hispaniola, Spanish exploitation

¹ The pre-history of the Central Plateau begins much earlier, of course, but little is known about the particular nature of indigenous life on the Plateau. More general information about the indigenous Arawak peasant culture in Haiti can be found in the beginning chapters of Andre-Marcel d'Ans' *Haiti: Paysage et Société* (1987).

did not flourish, and on the plateau focused on using the abundant grasslands for cattle-raising. In 1724, Hinche was described by Moreau de Saint-Méry as “reduced to a state of excessive mediocrity”, with a regional population of only 4,500, though it “remained the residence of the commander of all the western part of the Spanish colony” (1984 [1796], cited in Doura, 1995, p. 48, my translation) The above quotation also points out the fact that Spanish control of the Central Plateau continued after the French colony of Saint Domingue was created in 1697. French plantation settlement concentrated on the richer coastal plains, and the configuration of the mountain ranges surrounding the Central Plateau blocked easy French access, instead promoting transportation links to the east.

The integration of the Central Plateau into Haiti only dates from the time of Haitian independence. Both Toussaint Louverture (1794) and Henri Christophe (1808) led successive campaigns to secure the important regional towns such as Hinche and St. Raphael, and Haiti gained permanent control in 1844 while the Dominicans were occupied with their struggle for independence (Doura, 1995, p. 48). With the breakdown of plantation agriculture after independence, freed slaves began to settle and claim the abundant land in the more remote regions of Haiti, including the Central Plateau.

Physical Geography of Maissade

The current *commune* of Maissade is located in a transition zone from drier plateau on its northern edge to highlands in the south, and can be roughly described according to three landscape types. The northern *savann* occupies approximately 40 percent of the commune, averaging 200 meters in elevation and 800 to 1400 mm of

rainfall, and consists of deeply dissected plateaus made up of relatively poor, sandy soils. The central foothills occupy another 40 percent of the commune, range in elevation from 150 to 700 meters and 1400 to 1800 mm of rainfall, and consist of variable soils, some alluvial and quite rich. The southern highlands in the south are the most isolated parts of the commune. They cover 20 percent of its area, range between 700 to 1500 meters in elevation and 1800 to 2500 mm of rainfall, and are steeply sloping (White, 1994; OAS, 1987; GRET-FAMV, 1990). The commune covers a total area of 27,000 hectares, and extends approximately 20 kilometers from north to south, and 17 kilometers from east to west. The climate is classified as humid sub-tropical, and precipitation is seasonal with a bi-modal distribution - spring rains (April to June) are usually more intense and reliable than the fall rains (August to October) (White, 1994). Importantly for agriculture, a long dry season occurs from November to March. Average temperatures are 26°C, with daily highs averaging approximately 35°C in the summer and 25°C in the winter (GRET-FAMV, 1990).

History of Maissade

According to older residents interviewed in Maissade, the settlement of Maissade began as a market-meeting-place, where traders of corn and tobacco coming from the east and west exchanged goods. According to one such source, Maissade was proclaimed a '*commune*' in 1880, and the first local *magistra* [mayor] was named. Small-holder agriculture was the base of the local peasant economy, as peasants produced what their limited labour and other input supplies allowed. Animal husbandry remained important, with richer farmers who could control sufficient grazing land producing cattle, while

poorer farmers raised pigs and goats. Food crops of corn, sorghum, beans, plantains, and manioc were raised using mostly manual tillage, for consumption and trade. Sugar cane was grown for the production of unrefined sugar and locally distilled rum. Trade with the exterior was difficult, as overland transport depended on animal power, and was primarily with the northern coast at Cap Haitien or the west at Gonaives.² Land was relatively abundant and available, for as one older man recounted to me (with a slight sense of exaggeration, no doubt), “You would sell a piece of land to be able to go to (bet at) the cockfight.”

The isolation of the Central Plateau caused it to be impacted in a unique manner during the period of the American occupation of Haiti (1915-1934). Charlmagne Peralte, the guerrilla leader who resisted the American Marines, operated from various hideouts on the Central Plateau. In response, the American established military camps throughout the Plateau, including in Maissade.³ According to local sources, Peralte attacked the Marine camp in Maissade in 1919, and throughout the period local people had to negotiate between the demands and abuses of both the Americans and their local supporters, and those of Peralte and his *cacos*. Peralte was eventually killed, and the Americans proceeded to build a strengthened, centralized Haitian state. The Central

² A historical map in the *Atlas d’Haiti* (CEGET-CNRS, 1985) for the period 1880-1890 shows the only transportation link to the northern Central Plateau as a ‘trail’ extending from Ennery and St-Michel in the west through Maissade, terminating in ‘Hincha’. Somewhat paradoxically, this ‘road’ is still shown on most current maps of Haiti (including the map in Figure 1), even though it is no longer passible due to the absence of any maintenance, particularly at the river pass across the *Riviere Guamouc* several kilometers northwest of Maissade.

³ The concrete foundations of their tents are still visible today. The impact of this contact with American culture was illustrated by one town elder, who described with enjoyment the fact the Marines would organize ‘dances’ on the ‘main street’ of Maissade, where the young people learned to dance the ‘foxtrot’. This is already an early example of the ‘othering’ or ‘hybridization’ of local Haitian culture as it came into contact with the West.

Plateau was further integrated into the Haitian political economy which was increasingly oriented toward and dominated by Port-au-Prince (Mintz, 1995; Trouillot, 1990), as the Americans built the first (and only) road linking Maissade to Hinche, and Hinche to Port-au-Prince (using forced labour), and the Haitian army was 'professionalized' and installed in each communal centre.⁴

Yet the Central Plateau remained relatively less populated, more agricultural and more 'archaic' (Doura, 1995, p. 155) than other parts of Haiti. Its isolation resulted in high transportation costs and merchant controlled marketing systems, which limited prices for export crops or surplus domestically-consumed crops sent to urban markets beyond the Plateau. The neglect of the countryside by the state ruling classes in Port-au-Prince meant little investment was made in rural infrastructure, social services such as health and education, agricultural extension services, or other rural economic alternatives (Dupuy, 1989). The lack of economic alternatives, and medical and education services, meant that events such as sickness or land-division upon inheritance⁵ often prevented the accumulation of significant household wealth (GRET-FAMV, 1990; d'Ans, 1987).

Agricultural production continued to depend on mostly manual labour and an

⁴ Further evidence of the U.S.'s continued quite literal 'mapping' of Haiti's landscape into its controlling sphere is found in the fact that the only detailed (scale 1:50,000) topographical maps of Haiti were produced by the Army Map Service of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1962 from aerial photography conducted in 1956. Though copies of these maps are now available for purchase in Haiti, they are all marked with the declaration: "For Use of Officials of the Governments of Haiti and the United States Only." During one of my first visits to the community of Anwò, the SC animator showed me a small bronze survey marker embedded in concrete on outcropping rock at the top of the highest point in the community. It was enscribed with the words 'U.S. Geodesic Survey'.

⁵ Land inheritance in Haiti is bi-lateral and partible, meaning that all offspring (both male and female, whether legitimate or illegitimate) receive an equal share of each parent's land upon the parent-owner's death. However, inherited land is often not officially re-titled in the name of children, and often remains 'undivided' and subject to informal division among family members. This system is a remnant of French colonial practice (White, 1994; SACAD & FAMV, 1993b, p. 18).

increasingly intensively used land-base. Two export crops had some importance - coffee in the southern highlands and cotton on the drier plains to the north (Doura, 1995).

After the American occupation, the local agrarian economy was influenced by a series of factors that shaped it to its present character. During the middle part of the century, coffee and cotton provided significant cash-crop revenues, due to favourable world-market prices. Local people recall 'Arab' traders coming to Maissade on a weekly basis in the 1950s during harvest periods to buy coffee and cotton. They also recall that, in the 1950s, the *Banque Nationale pour le Développement d'Agriculture et Industrie* provided input loans to encourage cultivators to switch to new market-demanded, long-fibred American varieties of cotton, and indigenous varieties were abandoned. But soon thereafter buildups of insects pests made cotton production uneconomical (Doura, 1995, p. 418). The area available for coffee production declined as treed plots were cleared for fuelwood and to open land (Doura, 1995, p. 418; d'Ans, 1989). As population pressure on the land increased (due in part to the failure of the state to provide the conditions for alternative economic opportunities or appropriate agricultural extension services), more and more land was required for food. By the 1970s, most land was devoted to local domestic food crops (Doura, 1995).

Peasant Livelihoods in Maissade

The population of the commune of Maissade was approximately 50,000 inhabitants^o in 1997, with a population density of approximately 185 people per km². This is considerably higher than the average on the Central Plateau of approximately 130 people per km² (extrapolated using the 1980 UNDP population and annual growth rates for the Central Plateau reported in Doura, 1995, p.101), but less than the national density of 264 inhabitants per km² (UNDP, 1997). The higher density in Maissade reflects the commune's relatively more fertile and productive agricultural resources.

Approximately 90 percent of the total population in the commune live in the rural areas outside the town itself. (The only other 'village' in the commune is the community of Madame Joa, a market and parish town of perhaps 500 people serving the western part of the commune.) The vast majority of households are composed of landholding peasants, including the majority of the town residents. As in other parts of rural Haiti, the lack of formal land titles and sale/lease contracts, combined with a weak and ineffective judicial system, means that land tenure and investments are subject to challenge by neighbours, loan-holders and distant family members, and therefore relatively insecure (White and Jickling, 1992; White, 1994). As well, the practice of bilateral, partible land

^o This figure comes from the Community Health Information Management system maintained by SC in Maissade. It is based on a commune-wide household enrollment undertaken by the SC health program in 1987, which was updated by a commune-wide census in 1991. Census data were entered into a computerized Management Information System, which has been continually updated since then by a network of community health agents who report births, deaths and migrations. The system reported a total population of 51,500 people at the end of June 1997, but a review of names on printouts from the system suggest that perhaps 2.5 percent of the names registered were duplicate entries. Thus the rounded figure of 50,000 is suggested as approximating the commune's population. It is relevant to note that the Haitian Institute of Statistics estimates the 1995 population of Maissade at 42,800, based on projections from its 1982 census data (Communication Plus, 1996). This discrepancy illustrates the weakness of much statistical data on Haiti, and suggests that the overall population of Haiti may be considerably higher than the 7.3 million estimated by UNDP in 1996 (UNDP, 1997).

inheritance has caused the fragmentation and reduction of land-holding size in each successive generation. In the commune of Maissade, the average land parcel is approximately 0.7 hectares, the average household has three parcels, and thus the average household land-holding is approximately 2.1 hectares (Clerisme, 1989). White's study of micro-watersheds in the central part of the commune found average landholding to be 2.5 hectares (White, 1994). This study also found that approximately 50 percent of land parcels were owned,⁷ 33 percent were inherited lands that had not been formally divided between offspring, 10 percent were rented, and 5 percent were share-cropped. An 1987 OAS study in of five sub-watersheds on the Central Plateau included two sub-basins in the western mid-section of Maissade, and this study (which surveyed 340 households) found 40 percent of land parcels were owned (purchased), 26 percent were inherited, 23 percent were share-cropped, and 6 percent were rented (OAS, 1988). The relatively equal base of land-holding is illustrated in the government census of 1971, which reports that 97 percent of the population of the Central Plateau which were part of households owning less than 5.2 hectares (4.0 *carreaux*) own a total of 85 percent of the total land (IHS, 1973, cited in Doura, 1995, p. 118).⁸

⁷ As White (1994, p. 15) points out, "although the term 'owned' is used to describe the most unattenuated forms of tenure, it does not necessarily confer that the holder has an official or legally binding title. On only rare occasions do peasants have legally enforceable titles to property or written contracts specifying rights of use." 'Owned' land can refer to purchased land for which the holder has some formal written description of the sale, inherited land that has been formally divided, surveyed, and deeded, and inherited land that has not been formally surveyed or titled. Murray (1977), Smucker (1983) and Zuvekas (1978) provide more in-depth descriptions of rural land tenure arrangements in Haiti.

⁸ The difficulty of establishing accurate income and land distribution statistics in Haiti, and the inaccuracies of available statistics (due to methodological weakness) are discussed in Lundahl (1997).

Despite the variety of topography found in the commune, the high population density means that all regions are utilized for agricultural activities. A study conducted in 1985 by the OAS found that approximately 30 percent of the Maissade *commune* was suited for agriculture yet approximately 70 percent was intensely cropped (White, 1994, p. 12, citing Erlich, 1986). Seventy percent of lands were subject to severe erosion and 45 percent of all lands sloped between 30 and 60 percent. Aerial photos taken in 1986 showed that approximately five percent of all lands were forested (White, 1994, p. 12, citing Erlich 1986). Yet, almost all landscapes include trees, and trees are a valued and important part of Haitian peasant cultivation systems. Both timber species (e.g. mahogany, oak) and more valued fruit species (e.g. mango, citrus, avocado) are found around the homestead, along property boundaries as part of living fences, in dispersed intercropping with field crops, in ravines and along rivers, and in fallow and pastoral systems (White, 1994, p. 27).

A corn-sorghum relay crop, intercropped with beans or pigeon peas, is the predominant cropping pattern in the area. Sugar cane is the most important cash crop, though this crop is still recovering from a decimating anthracnose fungus outbreak in the 1980s (White, 1994, p. 13). Sorghum, cassava and sweet potatoes, which are more drought resistant crops, are important in the northern plateau, while rice is grown on some heavy soils that become water-logged during the rainy season in the wetter mid region. Plantains are planted in fertile micro-sites, particularly in ravines and in houseyard gardens where they receive the benefits of household wastes, and are an important cash crop (second only to sugar cane, according to a SC report (SC, 1993). Field beans are an important cash crop in the cooler mountains in the south of the commune, while yams

and taro are grown in moisture-rich pockets such as ravines. Hoes are the primary cultivation tool, though more well-to-do farmers will either own or hire a plow pulled by draught cows for primary field tillage. Other agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides are rarely used.

Men and women are both involved in agricultural production, though men traditionally are seen as being responsible for agriculture, while women are almost exclusively responsible for marketing household production and the household 'domestic' sphere (Lowenthal, 1984, p. 18). Yet as Lowenthal emphasizes, such a broad generalization oversimplifies a complex situation. Women are traditionally responsible for the gardens surrounding the home-yard, and many manage fields they have inherited or purchased, though husbands or purchased male labour almost always provide the heavy physical labour for land clearing and primary tillage. Approximately 10 percent of adult women are single heads of household, due to male outmigration and conjugal breakdown (White, 1993; Maynard-Tucker, 1996). In all households, as crops mature and are harvested, control of the produce generally falls to the woman of the household, who is then responsible for managing it for market sale or domestic consumption. Women also often control the household cash that results from crop sales, as they are generally considered to be less likely to 'waste' money on cockfights or drink. However, this is an area of contestation, as I discuss in Chapter Seven. Women (and children) also provide important weeding and harvesting labour on 'men's' plots, and often raise their own livestock, particularly smaller animals such chicken, goats and pigs.

A study of women's role in agriculture in the Maissade region by White (1993) confirmed that women have important, and perhaps increasing, responsibilities in the

agricultural domain, particularly those areas that assure family nutrition and economic security. This study reported that women directly manage⁹ an average of 1 *karo*¹⁰ of land, several head of small livestock (chickens, goats, or pigs), and were the primary decision makers in the management of small livestock, the home-yard 'kitchen' garden, fruit trees, family marketing (commercialization) activities, and family food consumption. The complexities of gender relations in agriculture, as well as the results of White's study, will be discussed in much greater empirical and conceptual detail in Chapter Seven, as part of my investigation of agriculture, household 'kitchen' gardens, and men's and women's roles in agriculture.

There have been no major changes in the structure of the local agricultural economy in recent years, either in terms of innovations, new crops or new markets. According to most reports, agricultural productivity and per-household incomes are slowly declining, due to decreasing soil fertility, continued erosion, land sub-division, and the resulting decline in average land holdings. Because of the limited potential of agriculture, many families invest heavily in (some of) their children's education, which, beginning at the secondary level, usually takes place in urban centers. Their hope is that such education will enable their children to obtain off-farm (and almost always non-local) employment. Yet few urban employment opportunities are available, and finding these opportunities requires extensive social networks. For many rural youth, particularly after

⁹ Because inherited land is often not re-titled, or remains 'undivided' among family members, as well as the generally poor state of Haiti's cadastral system, it is extremely difficult to determine the gendered division of land 'ownership'. Neither I nor White (1994) found statistics regarding this in the literature.

¹⁰ A *karo* [Fr. *carreaux*] is a old French unit of land, equalling 1.29 hectares or approximately 3.2 acres.

some schooling, farming is not considered a desirable or viable future, and the result is a rising generation of 'unemployed' youth. The following description by Rocheleau *et al.*, though made of an African context, applies equally to rural Haiti:

The next generation of youth brings rising expectations to a very limited, finite area whose natural capital (land, soil fertility, trees) has been heavily mined They are typical of rural youth [in many rural areas of the world] whose future depends on reconciliation of urban values and rural realities and of commercial gain with subsistence security (Rocheleau *et al.*, 1995, p. 145).

Yet despite this pessimistic scenario, quantitative data from various sources indicate that the SF project has had a significant impact on social and economic conditions in Maissade. In 1997, the SF health information monitoring system indicated that the under-age-5 child mortality rate was approximately 70 per 1000. This compares favourably with data from a 1989 study in Maissade, which reported an under-age-5 child mortality rate of 118 per 1000 live births (Menager and Tamari, 1989), and an average national figure of 130 per 1000 for the years 1990 to 1994 (EMMUS-II, 1995, Table 9.1). The national EMMUS-II study found that acute diarrhea (40 percent), malnutrition (36 percent) and acute respiratory infections (28 percent) were the leading causes of infant deaths (allowing multiple causes) (EMMUS-II, 1995, Table 10.8). Similar figures were found for Maissade in the 1989 study by Menager and Tamari.

However, the nutritional and health status of children in Maissade (and throughout the country) remains fragile and quite sensitive to changing economic conditions. This was demonstrated during the economic sanctions following the 1991 coup. A team from the Harvard University School of Public Health conducted a study in Maissade in 1993, which showed that the prevalence of moderate and severe malnutrition in children aged 0-5 years increased from the range of 8-16 percent in the pre-coup years

of 1990-91, to 28 - 34 percent following the coup d'état and imposition of economic sanctions in 1992. Infant and child mortality rates also increased by 32 percent during the same time period (Harvard, 1993, cited in Levinson and Iannotti, 1996, p. 18).

A 1992 survey of farm production estimated that the net, annual, household income of landholders averages 7100 Gourdes (or \$405 USD at the average 1993 exchange rate) (Jickling and White 1992, cited in White, 1994, p. 13). Households average five individuals (White, 1994, p. 13). These sources do not give any indication of income distribution or differentiation among rural households.

The Save the Children Program in Maissade

Save the Children Federation¹¹ (SC) initiated preliminary field studies and project design for its program in the commune of Maissade in 1985 (Cherubin *et al.*, 1985), and began field operations in January 1986. The initial activity was a pilot integrated watershed management project, funded through an institutional cooperation grant from the United States Agency for International Development (U.S.AID). This project utilized two innovative intervention strategies: 1) the formation of *groupman*¹²

¹¹ Save the Children Federation is the American affiliate of the world-wide network of Save the Children organizations. It is a non-profit, non-sectarian development agency, founded in 1932, with headquarters in Westport, Connecticut. It has international development programs in 38 countries of the world, with a total international program budget of approximately \$75 million in 1997. Its mission statement reads: "To create lasting, positive change in the lives of disadvantaged children." Though it continues to utilize a 'child sponsorship' model of private donor fund-raising, it has been among the most progressive on these 'sponsorship' NGOs in channelling resources and programming to entire communities (instead of only individual families of sponsored children) and attempting to address systemic causes of poverty.

¹² The Haitian Creole term *groupman* is pronounced the same way as the French term *groupement*. A *groupman* is a self-directed, self-selected, pre-cooperative group of farmers, usually numbering between 6 and 20 members. They are often established upon traditional social (kinship or exchange) linkages, and engage in collective economic and social development activities. The *groupman*

for peasant mobilization; and 2) economic-benefit-oriented tree planting, following the strategy of a nation-wide Agroforestry Outreach Program (White, 1994). The *groupman* were “promoted not as ends in themselves, but as the organizational means by which social, economic and ecological problems would be addressed” (White and Quinn, 1992, p. 3).

During the first year, local animation field staff were recruited and trained, and they began the organization of *groupman*. Public meetings were held, in which peasants (both men and women) were encouraged to critically assess the nature of their livelihoods, identify local environmental problems, consider group organization as a means to achieve individual and social goals. In 1987, responding to these ‘consciousness-raising’ events, SC began to provide technical assistance to the *groupman* in agriculture, soil conservation, animal husbandry, agroforestry and small-scale infrastructure development. Peasant leaders received training in basic practices, and began testing and adapting techniques on their farms. The project attempted to promote only simple techniques that required no additional financial investment, had low labour requirements, were culturally similar to existing practices, and yielded significant economic returns (via increased agricultural productivity) (White, 1994; White and Quinn, 1992). In contrast to some other programs in Haiti, no direct external incentives

has its origins and antecedents in an number of traditional rural social structures: the *kombit*, the traditional Haitian communal working party used for labour-intensive land preparation; the *eskwad*, a smaller, more stable work group based on stricter reciprocity; and the *sangue*, a rotating credit association. Peasant mobilization via *groupman* was initiated by progressive Catholic organizations in the 1970s. *Groupman* became a widespread phenomenon during the 1980's, particularly after the fall of Jean-Claude Duvalier, as many NGOs encouraged their formation (Lundahl, 1983; Maguire, 1991; Vander Zaag, 1995; White, 1994).

(i.e. payments) were provided to induce adoption of conservation techniques (White, 1994; SC, 1988).

Within several years, approximately 200 *groupman* had formed in the project target area, which was confined to the middle foothills section of the commune of Maissade. These groups averaged 8 members, and were active in a range of economic and social activities (e.g. from building schools to raising pigs). Approximately 30 percent of the total membership of these *groupman* was female, though some groups were male only and none were female only (White, 1994; SC, 1988). In early 1989, SC initiated a pilot project to encourage peasants with land in the same micro-watershed (ravine system), whether *groupman* members or not, to cooperate to control erosion that crossed property boundaries. By the next year, 22 watersheds and 300 individual farmers were involved, and over 300,000 linear meters of contour soil conservation structures (crop residue barriers, living barriers, etc) and 1500 gully plugs¹³ had been constructed (White, 1994).

White and Quinn (1992) describe a number of key program themes that guided the SC project. First was a long-term commitment to the program site. In addition to U.S.AID funds, SC began investing 'private' funds¹⁴ in other local community development efforts such as education and community health (see below). The availability of such private funds (though relatively small in total amounts) and their

¹³ Gully plugs are small 'check dams' located at intervals along in the base of a gully. They are constructed of either woven barriers (wattling) supported by stakes, or rocks, and are often planted with 'hedges' of sugarcane, *leucena*, or other grasses (White and Jickling, 1992, p. 27).

¹⁴ SC referred to funds it raised itself from sponsorship donors in the U.S. as 'private' funds, since they could be expended without the usual restrictions of U.S.AID grant funds.

long-term availability enabled SC to commit to a long-term presence in Maissade. This facilitated the utilization of slower-paced methods and strategies than otherwise possible with only short-term grant funding such as from U.S.AID. SC's intention was to use this long-term commitment to "build local capabilities to manage future development and to gradually transfer the management of existing development activities to local institutions" (White and Quinn, 1992, p. 3; SC, 1989).

The second program theme was an attempt to keep a low level of external investment in materials. SC did not invest heavily in project-maintained infrastructure such as centralized tree nurseries, training centers, credit programs, or project vehicle and building, and expatriate assistance was used judiciously. SC tried to ensure that they would not be perceived as the provider of subsidies, material goods or answers to local development problems.¹⁵ Rather, they attempted to encourage a sense of local responsibility and capacity in local people for their own development, and so tried to maintain a role as educator, catalyst and liaison between peasant groups and external agents (White and Quinn, 1992, p. 3; Gaddis and Smucker, 1988).

Proceeding from this was the third theme of using participatory development approaches. SC encouraged peasants, as *groupman* representatives, to play important roles in program decision functions: program planning, execution and evaluation. Peasant participation in the project was voluntary - no external incentives were provided for their investment of time and materials in the various watershed management and agriculture activities. Peasants also regularly volunteered as local extension agents in

¹⁵ However, as Jickling and White note, "... though their program rhetoric calls for slow and thorough methods to achieve sustained impacts, in reality these goals are regularly compromised for want of funding authority" (Jickling and White, 1992, p. 16).

agroforestry, soil conservation, animal husbandry and tree-nursery management (White and Quinn, 1992, p. 3).

In the analysis in subsequent chapters of the encounter of SC program interventions with local people's development understandings and manoeuvres, a key element of my argument will be the contrast and 'discontinuity' between SC's understandings and intentions (represented in the above program 'themes' of long-term commitment, minimal material investments and subsidies, and beneficiary participation) and local people's understandings of how NGO development programs operate.

Though the U.S.AID-funded project was scheduled to be a 3-year project (August 1985 to July 1988), the pacing of project activities to local capacity, the emphasis on minimizing external provision of materials, and the upheavals associated with the popular overthrow of the Duvalier dictatorship meant that the project disbursed funds much more slowly than anticipated. As a result, the project was granted two no-cost¹⁶ extensions of a total of 36 months by U.S.AID. At the end of this funding, SC continued to receive some local-currency U.S.AID funding for sustainable agriculture/natural resource management activities through PL 480 funding to the Haitian Ministry of Agriculture (White and Jickling, 1992). This funding ended, however, with the suspension of bi-lateral aid after the coup d'état of September 1991.

An economic cost-benefit analysis of the watershed management project (including the peasant organization component) was conducted by White and Quinn in 1992. They found that the aggregate project had a cost-benefit ratio of 1.5, and an

¹⁶ A no-cost extension means that SC was granted permission by U.S.AID to extend the project for another 36 months using the undisbursed funds from the original budget.

economic rate of return of 19 percent. Investment in hillside soil conservation treatments yielded by far the highest return, while the forestry, ravine treatment and group organization investments were not economically efficient (White and Quinn, 1992).

Shortly after the beginning of the Watershed Management project, SC also began interventions in the areas of community health and primary education using private SC funds. In 1986, SC also obtained a 3 year project grant (from an U.S.AID block grant for Child Survival activities to AOPS (*Association des Ouvriers Privé en Santé*), an umbrella association of NGOs working in the community health field) to begin community health activities targeted towards children and their mothers. Rural vaccinations posts, community health trainers, mother's clubs and 4 rural health clinics were implemented. In 1989, funding for these activities was renewed under the U.S.AID VACS (Voluntary Agencies for Child Survival) agreement to community health NGOs.¹⁷ An important progression in the VACS project was the broadening of the basic child survival objectives to encompass more preventative and "other-than-physical-health facets" of mother/child

¹⁷ U.S.AID has provided significant funding for community-health based child survival activities to NGOs during the past several decades. Though the funding is provided via 3-4 year block grant agreements, these agreements have been consistently renewed (with appropriate revisions and adjustments based on preceding evaluations and the latest public health wisdom). By 1994, U.S.AID was on the 10th iteration of its Child Survival block grant funding. This funding is provided as specific project sub-grants to individual NGOs, and an informal group of NGOs who have successfully implemented these projects have seen their project funding consistently renewed. By 1996, SC had received its fourth Child Survival sub-grant.

Many of these same NGOs have signed 'partnership' agreements with the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP), which in effect makes the NGO responsible for managing and implementing the health system in their region. This is a de facto recognition by the MSPP of its financial and managerial inability to provide health services throughout the country, and donor unwillingness to fund the government ministry directly (based on past performance and political considerations.) In Maissade, SC has such an agreement with MSPP. MSPP provides a recently-graduated doctor (who is doing a required year of 'social service' in return for his or her medical education), several nurses for the rural clinics, and a laboratory technician), while SC manages the health clinic in town, provides additional staff for the clinic, and tops-up the salaries of MSPP-seconded staff.

well-being (Tamari, 1992, p. 29). Thus, the larger socio-cultural context of women's position in the household and community began to be addressed. This transition was symbolized in the renaming of the former 'mothers' clubs' as 'women's clubs' in 1990, and the hiring of four female field staff to work as 'social workers' in addressing broader women's issues. By September 1991, 53 women's clubs were in existence, and the first commune-wide 'Women's Club Congress' had been held, resulting in "heightened interest in women's activities" and the opportunity for women to "publicly voice their concerns and hopes for further organizational development of regional women's clubs to give them more power" (SC, 1992, p. 7; Tamari, 1992). Thus, as a SC planning document stated, the women's clubs were organized for both practical and strategic gender interests (Moser, 1993) - as both a "locus for health education and a means to empower women" (SC, 1992, p. 2)

During this time, two other small grant-funded projects were undertaken. An U.S.AID-funded Vitamin A project, begun in 1988, provided supplementary funds for promoting 'kitchen gardens' in which Vitamin A-rich vegetables would be grown. This grant also initiated SC work with promoting mango-drying among several of the women's groups, as a means of supplying Vitamin A-rich foods. (The mango-drying activities were subsequently supported by a series of additional grants from U.S.AID and UNICEF, as will be discussed below.) The second project was a U.S.AID water project, funded through its Child Survival initiatives. From 1990 to 1993, this project financed the construction of a number of piped water systems, as well as numerous spring cappings and rain-water storage tanks, all in communities where SC was providing its core education, health and community development activities.

The major recent SC Maissade program in the immediate period preceeding the field research was a five-year U.S.AID funded 'women's empowerment' project. In 1991, the American SC head office signed a major five-year institutional cooperation grant with U.S.AID for Women - Child Impact (WCI) projects in five SC country fields, including Haiti. This project's focus on 'woman - child impact' - the key role of enhancing women's status in "break[ing] inter-generational cycles of poverty ... and assur[ing] a better quality of life for their children" - represented the new 'organizing approach' that SC had just adopted throughout its overseas development programs (SC, 1997, n.p).¹⁸ The SC Haiti program was included as one of the project countries, with funding of \$US 358,000 (matched 1:1 by SC) over the five years 1991 to 1996, with the intention that this funding would allow the Maissade program to build on its existing and evolving activities in women's development.

The SC Maissade WCI program had a number of components: specific activities targeted towards 'women's empowerment' (women's club formation, women's leadership training for club delegates, formation of associations of women's clubs), as well as 'gendered' activities in 3 sectoral areas: sustainable agriculture/natural resource management (continued agroforestry, grain storage, soil conservation and kitchen

¹⁸ It is worth citing the full text of SC's description of its new strategy: Since 1991, Save the Children, recognizing the vital role of women in child development, has made Woman/Child Impact its organizing approach to development. While children are the ultimate beneficiaries, women must be a major focus because of their multiple roles as economic producers, primary caregivers and community managers. Empowering women and increasing their options break inter-generational cycles of poverty and assure a better quality of life for their children and their children's children. ... Save the Children's experience suggests that no single initiative benefits children and contributes to sustainable development as powerfully as the enhancement of women's status (SC, 1997, n.p.).

gardening activities); economic development (women's credit and small-scale mango drying activities); and education (training and support of primary schools, women's literacy training, early childhood development training for women's club members.) In fact, the 'gendered' nature of these sectoral activities was uneven, as only the economic development, women's literacy, early childhood education, and kitchen gardening activities were specifically targeted to women. The remaining agricultural activities were targeted to farmers' associations, and thus only benefited women and children indirectly, through their own or their husband's membership in local farmers' *groupmans*. This project thus allowed continued SC agricultural extension activities with its existing farmers' associations, and also the formation of new farmers' *groupmans* and associations in the dry northern and mountainous southern areas of the *commune*, which had not been prioritized by previous agriculture and nature resource management activities.

The key to the implementation of the 'women's empowerment' theme of the WCI project was the hiring of 6 additional female *animatrice* staff to organize and train new and existing clubs. The goal was to have 200 functioning women's clubs at the project's end. The *animatrice* staff delivered training to women's club delegates, on topics such as group process, leadership skills, and women's rights. Existing, on-going training and agriculture activities (fruit tree grafting, household gardens, women's participation in soil conservation and animal husbandry) with farmers' *groupmans* were re-oriented to promote increased women's participation, status and benefits. The SC animation team (both the 10 *animatris-s* and the 5 *animatè*) also facilitated the organization of both *groupman* and *klib fanm* into regional associations 'recognized as cooperatives' in order

to 'ensure sustainability of these groups' (SC WCI DIP, 1992, p. 8). SC also used the WCI grant to support the salaries of a number of program management staff - the agriculture, education and economic opportunities sector coordinators - as well as four primary education trainers and two literacy trainers. In total, almost 90 percent of the WCI funding went to salary support for SC staff.

At the end of the WCI program grant, the final U.S.AID evaluation report¹⁹ indicated the following major accomplishments:

- the formation of 162 women's clubs, with approximately 2,500 members.
- 'empowerment' (animation) training completed for all 162 women's clubs.
- the organization of these clubs into 9 umbrella women's associations.
- literacy training for 130 of the women's clubs, with 1,050 of 1,880 passing the first-cycle year-end examination, and 425 of 849 passing the second-cycle year-end examination.
- 70 elementary school teachers trained in new curricula.
- agricultural extension training provided by 30 community agriculture agents.
- group-guaranteed loans and savings activities with 39 women's clubs, with 687 members (Boyle, 1995, pp. 38-46).

In addition to the U.S.AID evaluation, an impact survey was conducted in November 1996 (Narcisse, 1996). This survey consisted of quantitative questionnaires conducted with 148 women randomly selected from women's clubs and the *groupmans*. Qualitative information from 13 focus group discussions held with the same women, and additional quantitative information gathered from the clubs, *groupmans* and women associations. This impact survey reported the following important program impacts:

- strong interest in group membership among local women,
- increases in the overall socio-economic conditions of women club members, as evidenced by:

¹⁹ This 'final' evaluation was conducted in late 1995, despite the fact that the program still had almost 12 months (out of a total of 60 months) before its scheduled September 1996 end date. This timing likely reflects both U.S.AID and SC desires to be able to plan follow-on proposals and funding. It also reveals somewhat the impact of NGO dependency on donor funding and donor project-proposal time-lines on local program management.

- an increase in the number of livestock owned by women.
- an increase in the number of plantain plants and the number of grafted fruit trees in their home gardens,
- a decrease in the percentage who worked for daily wage labour.
- a reported increase in the sharing of household responsibilities with their male partners.
- opportunities for women to participate in organized community development groups.
- increased access to credit through the women's clubs,
- increases in women's literacy (Narcisse, 1996, pp. 4-12).

However, the impact survey also found that few women had risen to leadership roles within the previously male-dominated *groupmans*, and that it appeared that women had concentrated their leadership efforts within the women's clubs and club associations. Thus it seemed that the WCI program had tended to segregate women's 'development' activities in these new and separate local organizations. It is also significant to note that among the most important benefits reported by women participants themselves was the opportunity to participate in organized community development groups, and that the evaluator found that "women's big interest to [sic] group membership" (Narcisse, 1996, p. 1) was in itself an important program impact. This valuation of 'participation in development' will be an important point of discussion in Chapter Seven.

In addition to the WCI project, three other somewhat less important projects were part of SC's program activities in Maissade. The first of these was another U.S.AID funded project, entitled Women's Action for Nutrition and Development (WAND). This project was a three-year grant (1994-97) to a partnership of 3 community-health NGOs operating in different regions of the Central Plateau²⁰, with SC providing the lead project management function. In SC's program in Maissade, the project delivered most of its

²⁰ The other NGOs involved were: International Child Care, whose interventions were in the areas around Cerca la Source and Hinche, in the eastern part of the Plateau; and MARCH (Management Resources for Community Health), whose interventions were in the area around Mirabalais in the south of the Central Plateau. The project had a total 3-year budget of \$US 980,000.

activities through the women's clubs, with the goal of "reduced infant, child and maternal mortality and morbidity through empowering women's club members to train mothers in the practice of behaviours that improve their own and their children's nutritional and health status" (SC, 1994a, p. 4). The major intervention of the project was "nutrition demonstration foyers" (NDF), two-week (ten-day) feeding and training sessions conducted by trained health agents and women's club leaders, to which mothers with malnourished children were invited. These foyers consisted of the provision of balanced meals (using locally-grown foods), growth-weight monitoring, and most importantly, training in a range of topics such as breastfeeding, the food groups, preventative health care, maternal health care, kitchen garden promotion, and family planning. The project also included other activities, including the continued promotion of vegetable production in women's kitchen gardens, micro-nutrient supplementation, family planning promotion, disease prevention (malaria, pneumonia, diarrhea, etc.) and leadership development. The final evaluation report found that the project was "very successfully implemented" (Delisle, 1997, p. 6). However, it noted that project sustainability - the ability of local community groups to continue the nutrition intervention activities - was difficult. It suggested that the women's clubs could "take over" these foyers, and that they should be "tied" to credit programs or "other income generation schemes" that women's club members could use to raise the financial resources required to support them (Delisle, 1997, p. 9-11). The 'gap' between this 'outside' expert knowledge of how development should proceed and the perspectives of women's club members themselves will be discussed further in Chapter Six. The gender dynamics of SC interventions promoting kitchen gardens will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

The second project consisted of the fourth iteration of SC's Child Survival community health funding from U.S.AID. This U.S.AID block to Haitian and international NGOs was managed by an American consulting agency, Management Sciences for Health. SC's participation in this grant provided funding for its child vaccination activities, the staffing and operation of the four out-lying health clinics, as well as the doctors, auxiliaries (nurses) and operations of the main health dispensary in the town of Maissade.

The third project involves the promotion of mango-drying activities in the women's clubs. This project was less discreet, involving a series of smaller-scale and shorter-term funding from several sources. As already mentioned above, in the late 1980s SC received funding for Vitamin A micro-nutrient activities, which were used in part to promote mango-drying activities with existing women's groups. Support for mango-drying activities continued through the mid-1990s from several sources, though now the focus shifted from an emphasis on the micro-nutritional benefits of preserving mangos to the income-generation aspects of sale of dried mango products. By the mid-1990s, UNICEF had adopted local dried mangos as its preferred method of Vitamin A supplementation in its nutrition programs through the country, and thus created a 'sympathy market' for the supply of dried mangos produced by a small network of NGOs (and their local partner organizations.) UNICEF also provided technical support to this informal NGO network. In Maissade, by the spring of 1996 five of the newly formed women's associations had undertaken mango-drying projects, using SC-supplied credit to obtain SC-supplied (but locally made) solar dehydrators. Spoilage was a problem in 1996, and association members and SC staff identified the lack of a proper building in

which to prepare the mangos as a major constraint (in each association, the processing had been done outside and a member had volunteered her house for overnight storage of the processed mangos and equipment). In late 1996, UNICEF provided funding for the construction of workshop buildings for four of the associations (including the two women's associations in Bodlo and Anwo where I focused my research.) These buildings quickly became the 'headquarters' of their associations, and an important physical manifestation of their identity. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the associations themselves, their meetings and ongoing activities, became another 'site' of contestation and manoeuvre between SC field staff, women's club leaders, and club members.

In addition to these larger projects, SC had also used its connections with other NGOs and bilateral donors to secure a number of occasional, short-term small projects. In the early 1990s, SC secured funding from Water for Life, an American NGO, for the capping of a springs and the construction of rain-water catchment cisterns in several rural communities. Through the intermediation of SC, several of the farmers' associations received credit from HAVA (the Haitian Association of Voluntary Agencies) in 1992, in order to construct galvanized-steel grain silos. During the embargo period following the coup d'état which deposed President Aristide, SC worked to obtain 'emergency humanitarian' supplies of corn from a French government program. Three shipments of corn were received, in 1992, 1993 and early 1995, totalling approximately 250,000 kg. Most of this corn was given to the farmers' associations or women's clubs, which sold ('monetized') it at reduced prices to their members, and used the capital generated from

these sales to augment association and club capital funds for credit or other group activities.

All told, Save the Children was clearly the dominant social service provider in Maissade. As described, SC was effectively running the health dispensary in Maissade for the Ministry of Health, as well as four rural health posts. Through grant-funding from U.S.AID to its WAND and WCI programs, SC was providing community and maternal health services, and implementing significant 'women's empowerment' activities. From these and other previous grants, it was maintaining on-going, privately-funded activities in education (literacy, primary education), economic opportunities (mango drying, group credit) and organizational development (training and support for farmers and women's club associations). In comparison, the Haitian state was providing very few development resources or social services. As described for the national level in Chapter Four, development and social services had also become 'NGOized' in Maissade, with development practice becoming a separate field from government and the state. As I will describe in subsequent chapters, local people had also developed quite pragmatic development 'identities' and 'knowledges' for negotiating this field of NGO development practice.

Other Development Programs in Maissade

The SC program was by the far the largest and most important development program in Maissade. However, a number of other programs either had operated in the commune in the past or continued to do so during 1997. One in particular, the program associated with MPP, played an important role in local politics and manoeuvres around

development. In this section, I will briefly describe the activities of the different other development programs in Maissade, as they comprise part of the larger landscape of 'development' on which the activities, identities and knowledges of local people were played out during 1997.

Earlier Development Projects

Local residents reported to me that in the 1960s, the American NGO Church World Service had started to implement an irrigation project to the southwest of the town. This was in a relatively flat section of the commune where the Rio Frio offers possibilities for developing a gravity canal irrigation system. At that time, a primary irrigation canal was dug and cemented, as well as an intake gate on the river itself. However, this project was never completed, as the local project manager (a former *député*, or member of the Legislature under Duvalier) reportedly embezzled project funds and caused its closure. This project is noteworthy, however, since another irrigation project targeting the same area was the source of considerable conflict during 1997 (see below.)

During the 1970s and 1980s, various small projects were attempted in Maissade. The Ministry of Agriculture implemented a series of activities in the area, including a coffee-seedling nursery during the 1970s, and the distribution of 'improved' North American pigs in 1985 after the eradication of the indigenous pig population in an attempt to control the spread of African swine fever.²¹

²¹ This 'swine-aid' program was highly controversial, and remains a favourite example of inappropriate and imperialistic American aid programs. While there is little doubt the epidemic was causing significant losses to Haitian farmers, critics accuse that this program was motivated mostly by

From 1988 to 1995, the Christian international NGO World Vision also funded a program in the Maissade area. This program consisted of a core program activity of 'child sponsorship' of children enrolled in local Protestant elementary schools, and provided these children with school supplies, support for medical care, and grants for teacher salaries. In addition, parents of sponsored children were organized into participant groups, which were assisted through three types of income generation activities - grain storage, animal traction and individual loans. The grain storage activities were initially done in a group member's home storage depot, and then at a central storage depot built by the project in town. The animal traction activity gave two cows and a plow to an initial group for use in rotation on group members' fields, but poor financial management of member fees caused this activity to be cancelled before it was extended to other groups. The credit program provided loans of between \$US 400 to 700 to each group, for distribution among its members. I was not able to determine why the program was halted in 1995, though the former staff person I interviewed stated that it simply had not been 'renewed' for a third 'mandate' or phase, and the NGO had consolidated its program activities in fewer regions. He also stated that none of the groups formed by the program had continued their grain storage or credit activities after the program had ended, and the storage depot was now rented out to another group.

American self-interest in preventing the disease from jumping into the American pork population. They point out that the rugged and resistant indigenous Creole pig that was exterminated was the most valuable single element in the rural agricultural economy (the pigs foraged for their own food, and served as a saving 'bank' for peasant accumulation in times of need), and that the U.S.-funded 'repopulation' program using American breeds accustomed to high inputs of feed and veterinary care was colossally inappropriate. For more information and analysis see Abbott (1988), Diederich (1985), and Smith (1998).

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC)

Starting in the mid 1970s, a community development program centered in the neighbouring commune, implemented by a North American NGO named CRWRC²², began supporting the organization and training of agriculture (farmers') groups and health (women's) groups. Since these groups were established through local congregations of a regional mission-supported Protestant denomination, these groups were also formed in several communities within the *commune* of Maissade, including the congregation located in the communities of Anwò and Timonn.²³ Local volunteer agriculture and health promoters²⁴, trained by the program, organized and trained these groups. In the early 1980s, out of a concern for 'local sustainability' and 'local organizational development', the groups in each community were encouraged to join together to form a *komite santral* ('central committee'), which would become a local community organizational structure to manage and coordinate continued community development initiatives among the member groups in that community. These *komite santral* were in

²² Christian Reformed World Relief Committee. This agency is the relief and development agency of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, a Calvinist denomination founded by Dutch immigrants to North America, which currently has about 300,000 members in 900 congregations. CRWRC has worked overseas for over 30 years, and has programs in over 25 countries. I worked for CRWRC in Haiti for eight years, from 1985 to 1993.

²³ Anwò is located on the limit of the *commune* of Maissade, while Timonn is about 1.5 kilometers closer to Maissade. There is a dry-season dirt road from Anwò to the main town of this neighbouring commune. The communal boundaries are mostly administrative, poorly defined, and largely irrelevant to local people, except when they need to register land or access the judicial system. Anwò also has an important local market which operates on Wednesdays. Anwò and Timonn lie in the opposite direction from Maissade as Bòdlo/Savann, the two communities described in Chapter Six.

²⁴ These promoters were also called *animatè* and *animatris* by the CRWRC program. However, these promoters were not as qualified as the *animatè* and *animatris* field staff of SC, nor were they employed directly by CRWRC. Each promotor in the CRWRC program only worked with one to three groups, and was only paid a small annual stipend, called the Education Fund, of approximately G200 or \$US 30 per group.

effect very similar in purpose and structure to SC's subsequent 'associations'. Anwò became one of the first communities to form such a *komite santral*, in 1982. The number of agriculture and health groups had expanded rapidly in the mid 1980s, beyond the church and community of Anwò. This was due to a combination of participant interest, the implicit monetary incentives for promoters to form additional groups (since the annual 'Education Fund' stipend was based on the number of members each promotor had enrolled in his or her groups), and the distribution of free pigs to organized community groups (as part of the national pig repopulation program in 1986- see Chapter 5). By 1987, the Anwò *komite santral* regrouped at least 15 local agriculture and health groups, and a new *komite santral* had formed in Timonn, with 5 member groups. The *komite santral* members received considerable training in planning, administration and management, in order to create 'organizational capacity', and all were put on a timetable towards 'graduation' from the CRWRC program. Credit funds were made available to each *komite*, in order to fund local income generation activities. At the same time, CRWRC was attempting to spin-off its Central Plateau program into an independent Haitian NGO called 'AKED'. CRWRC began reducing its funding and support to AKED, with the expectation that AKED, through its board and senior staff, would be able to secure other NGO funding partners.

As described above, SC expanded its program to the Anwò/Timonn area in 1992. (Previously, its natural resource management and health programs had been concentrated in the southerly regions of the commune.) Two SC *animatès* were sent to Anwò to work with the local community to organize *groupmans*. They contacted many of the community leaders involved in the CRWRC/AKED-associated *komite santrals*, and

encouraged them to form an SC-style farmers' association so that they could 'participate' in the SC program. During this time, SC has just begun an emergency program of corn distribution (in response to the economic crisis precipitated by the international embargo imposed on Haiti after the fall 1991 coup d'état that ousted President Aristide), and it appears one of the immediate incentives for joining the SC program was the possibility of benefiting from this donated corn, as well as other hoped-for program resources. As one member in Anwò stated, "They sent the project of [donated] French corn. They said that for us to benefit from what was coming in the project, we had to form an association with a committee in order to benefit that which the project had." Another member of the Timonn *komite santral*, when asked how they had joined the SC program, stated: "When they came into the area, they found us already formed. They proposed a project. They gave a sugar cane project²⁵. ... After that, they gave a donation of French corn. They gave the corn 3 years, during the time of the embargo. ... All the groups here joined the association in Anwò." A third person declared that the SC *animatè* had made local people understand "that if they had a project they wanted to bring, there had to be an association for the project [ie. SC]." The former president of the Anwò *komite santral* explicitly connected the joining of the SC program with the 'graduation' of the Anwò *komite santral* from the CRWRC/AKED program: "All the *komite santral* became organizations. They could look for any organization to come work with them. So they contacted SC in Maissade."

²⁵ SC distributed cuttings of a new variety of sugar cane that was resistant to a fungus that was seriously reducing sugar yields in existing varieties.

Each group contributed G100 as its membership share to form the initial capital fund of the Anwò farmers' association. In the elections that were organized in May 1992 for the selection of the executive committee of the new association, the president and treasurer of the Anwò *komite santral* were also elected as the president and treasurer of the Anwò farmers' association. Almost all of the agriculture and health groups involved in the Anwò and Timonn *komite santrals* (a total of 23 local groups, including 8 women-only groups which had been 'health' groups in the CRWRC/AKED program) joined the Anwò farmers' association.

During the next few years, both the CRWRC/AKED-affiliated *komite santral* in Anwò and Timonn and the SC-affiliated farmers' association in Anwò functioned side-by-side. The CRWRC/AKED program had a credit program available to all its affiliated *komite santral*, and both the Anwò and Timonn committees received loans from this program, which were then distributed to individuals in member groups. These loans were quite large, reported to be approximately G50,000 (\$US 3,300) for the Anwò *komite santral*. As already mentioned, the Anwò farmers' association received several deliveries of donated French corn, which was sold to members at half the market price. The capital generated from the sale of this corn was then also used to establish a credit fund for member *groupmans*, starting in 1993. A grain storage silo was also constructed in 1993 (provided on credit by SC), and grain was stored for the following two seasons. In addition, SC sent one of its *animatrisés* to facilitate the organization of women's clubs, as part of its WCI program of women's empowerment.

As might be expected, however, there were conflicts and difficulties between the two NGO programs, at least from the perspective of the NGO themselves. A 1993 SC

agriculture program quarterly report stated that its field staff were confronting 'problems' in Anwò, where "[AKED] has a whole system of agriculture and health promoters, of leaders with their own method of working, different from that of SC. Even the president of the Anwò association is a promoter for [AKED]. The local groups are caught between two NGOs with different philosophies. One can expect eventual conflict at any moment. A meeting is urgently needed between the leaders of the two institutions" (SC, 1993b, n.p.). From this quote, and from my interviews in Anwò/Timonn and with current and former SC field staff, it is clear that the participation and membership of the same 'base' community groups (whether called 'agriculture' or 'health' groups by the CRWRC program or *groupmans* by the SC program) in both the CRWRC-affiliated *komite santrals* and the SC-affiliated associations, and through them in the different programs of the two NGOs, was causing confusion and conflict. My informants indicated that one of the causes of this confusion and conflict was problems with the two credit systems being accessed by the community groups, and accusations of mismanagement of this credit by the people who were the leaders of both of the two community organizations. (These problems with credit continued, as I will describe below.) I was not able to determine the exact nature of these problems, since I was told differing accounts of the exact nature of the conflicts (due in part to the fact that I interviewed some of the people implicated in the mismanagement, and other people had ongoing relations with these people). One former SC *animatè* for the region told me that the loan amounts available to the Anwò *komite santral* were considerably larger than that offered by SC (since the CRWRC program had been in existence much longer), and so people were not very interested in the SC credit. Further, he suggested that some of the Anwò *komite santral* leaders had

personally reloaned, at higher interest, some of the CRWRC-supplied credit, instead of distributing it to member groups, and that now people who owed them personally were reluctant to participate in either *komite santral* or association activities. When I interviewed these former *komite santral* leaders, they denied any involvement in such credit mis-management.

SC records show that a meeting between the managers of the two NGO programs was finally held in March 1995. A 1995 SC quarterly report summarized the conclusion of this meetings as follows: “In effect, the two institutions conduct agricultural activities in [Anwò] with different strategies. This meeting was an occasion to discuss the problems that can result from such a situation. At the end of the meeting, everyone was in agreement that the two institutions can continue to intervene in the area. But more regular meetings are envisioned for a better collaboration in the field (concerted interventions)” (SC, 1995, n.p.). In an interview, a community member from Timonn described the ‘resolution’ to the conflict in a considerably different way:

Respondent: There was discussion between the two organizations concerning this area. ... Either AKED should keep this area, or else AKED should stay [within the commune it is centered in.] But nobody was in agreement with this.

Question: Why weren’t people in agreement?

R: AKED is giving you, AKED is doing training, it has health promoters, it is protecting you more, there were literacy classes, it gives loans each year if people are stuck ...

Clearly, local people were reluctant to give up any of the benefits they were receiving from either program.

As it turned out, the rivalry and conflict between the SC and AKED programs was quickly fading, due to the decline and retraction of AKED programming during 1994 and 1995. As mentioned above, CRWRC had been working to establish AKED as an

independent Haitian NGO since the early 1990s, hoping that its national board and senior staff would be able to secure other NGO funding partners while it reduced its support. However, other funding proved difficult to obtain²⁶, and AKED slowly had to reduce its programming. In 1994, it had already ceased providing the direct annual stipends to its agriculture and health promoters, and its literacy program ended. By mid-1995, AKED had ceased all programming support for its affiliated *komite santral*, and AKED field staff ceased making community visits to facilitate *komite santral* meetings. AKED intended and hoped that the *komite santral* and local groups would continue to function as independent local community organizations, utilizing local resources to engage in various local projects. However, the *komite santral* in Anwò and Timonn soon stopped meeting regularly. As one of the former health promoters in the CRWRC/AKED program stated, “We were giving our time, they never said anything to us, the little salary they used to give us they didn’t give to us anymore, in spite of the fact we sent reports each period.” Without the incentive of further program resources from AKED, without the presence of AKED field staff to help ensure the proper management of the *komite santral*’s affairs, and with the likely participation of its leaders in the mis-management of its resources, it is easy to understand why the *komites* ceased functioning.

By the time of my research in 1997, though the CRWRC/AKED program had effectively ceased operations in Anwò/Timonn and the AKED groups had ceased meeting, community leaders in Anwò and Timonn continued to insist that these groups

²⁶ Though it is impossible to provide a definitive reason why this was so, my experience in Haiti during this period suggests a number of reasons, including reluctance of funders to make commitments during a period of ongoing political turmoil, and the fact that AKED was likely too large and static a program to be attractive to new funders.

still 'existed'. I do not devote much space in subsequent chapters to an analysis of the different local understandings and manoeuvres by men and women concerning these different types of community organizational resources, for it will not add significant new analytical insight from my research in Bòdlo and Savann presented in Chapter Six. Yet the interviews I conducted in Anwò and Timonn did firmly support the analysis of the SC-affiliated community associations I will be presenting in Chapter Six, and where appropriate I will include supplementary supporting evidence from my fieldwork in Anwò and Timonn.

MPP - *Movman Peyizan Papay*

The most important development program working in parallel with SC in Maissade during 1997 was related to an important regional (and aspiring national) 'peasants' movement' named MPP - *Movman Peyizan Papay*. MPP has been strongly involved in regional and national struggles in politics and development, and therefore it is necessary to present some of MPP's broader background and history in order to understand its involvement and impact on the politics of development in Maissade.

MPP originated in the 1970s, in an *animasyon rural* program sponsored by the Catholic development agency Caritas and the local Catholic bishop in Hinche. The program trained *animatè* and *animatris* to form small *groupmans* using a Freirian conscious-raising approach and a socialist class-based analysis of the social and economic marginalization of Haiti's rural peasantry. These *groupmans* also received training in soil conservation and improved production techniques, and undertook group projects in grain storage, animal husbandry and crop production. During the 1980s, a

training center was established to train *animatè* and *animatrisès*²⁷ from other parishes and NGOs, as the *groupman* approach to rural community development spread throughout Haiti. The MPP leadership, particularly its founder and director, Chavannes Jean-Baptiste, became increasingly active and vocal in their political opposition to the Duvalier regime, and in return was quickly labelled as 'communist' and subjected to oppression by Duvalier's military. Because of this oppression, the level of activism of the graduating *animatè* and *animatrisès* varied once they returned to their communities.²⁸ Though constrained during the Duvalier regime, MPP expanded rapidly after Duvalier's fall in 1986, and then many of its leaders were forced underground (to go *maron*, in local parlance) during the military repression following the aborted November 1987 election.

During the 1980s, MPP did not have direct programming outside of the immediate region around its headquarters and training centre in Papaye (where it established quite a large cooperative with over 5000 members.) Instead, it relied on each local Catholic parish to recruit and send *animatè* to its training program, and then maintained an informal network with these alumni. An important aspect of this network was a large 'congress' hosted each year at the MPP training center in Papaye, when *animatè* and *animatrisès* would return for encouragement and training. This resulted in

²⁷ The trainees were predominantly male. When I worked in another part of the Central Plateau during the 1980s, our program also sent staff for training to MPP's training center. From my visits and contacts at that time, I would estimate that at least 80 to 90 percent of the trainees were male. However, I found no specific data on this.

²⁸ Such oppression was not new, however, as political criticism had been dangerous business in Haiti for a long time, particularly under Francois Duvalier. This awareness was also reflected in the reluctance of many community members to join the *groupman* that the *animatè* and *animatrisès* returned to organize. This split between so-called 'politicized' and 'apolitical' *groupmans* became an important distinction and tension between various community development programs, including SC and MPP in Maïssade. This topic will be discussed further in chapter seven in the context of the encounter of differing understandings of 'development'.

the late 1980's in the formation of a self-described national peasant's movement:

'*Movman Peyizan Nasyonal Kongrè Papay*' (MPNKP).²⁹ When the populist Catholic priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide entered the 1990 election, MPP and its associated *animatè* network in MPNKP were key campaign workers and supporters in the countryside.

Animatè held meetings throughout the countryside, describing Aristide's populist political platform, repeating his party's hopeful campaign slogan that "*ansanm nou fö, ansanm ansanm, nou se Lavalas!*" ["together we are strong, together together, we are a flood!"] After Aristide's election, MPP's leader, Chavannes Jean-Baptiste, became one of his principal advisors for agriculture and rural development, and MPP officials and supporters were selected to fill many local municipal positions on the Central Plateau. (Because Aristide entered the presidential race on the day before the candidate deadline, few candidates directly affiliated with his coalition party ran for local offices during that election.) A range of rural development initiatives were announced by Aristide's government, and on the Central Plateau, most of these projects began to be channelled through the network of MPP-associated *groupmans*. Many peasants joined MPP *groupmans*, to ensure their 'eligibility' to participate in these projects. The annual MPNKP congress in March 1991 brought together *animatè* and other *groupman* leaders who reportedly represented over 100,000 peasant *groupman* members (Arthur, 1997, p. 157).

However, after the military coup d'état toppled Aristide in September 1991, MPP and many of its associated *animatè*-s were attacked again, and many were arrested and

²⁹ Translated: National Peasant Movement of the Papay Congress.

beaten, or fled underground to the anonymity of Port-au-Prince or other regions of the country. The headquarters of MPP were ransacked by the military and members of the para-military group FRAPH³⁰, and most *groupmans* ceased meeting, given the ban on public meetings. Some members in some areas attempted to carry on some limited clandestine activities, but most members abandoned identification with MPP as too dangerous and simply turned to the daily struggles of surviving the tough economic times induced by the embargo. After three long years, Aristide returned in the fall of 1994, and MPP and its *animatè* network again emerged and quickly began to rebuild their organizational base of *groupmans*. They again became actively involved in electoral politics, both the combined legislature and municipal elections that were held in the summer of 1995, and the presidential election held in November 1995. MPP and its *animatè* network actively supported President Aristide's renamed party, *Oganizasyon Politik Lavalas* (OPL). MPP-affiliated candidates were elected to most local municipal offices (including the three member *Conseil d'Administration Section Communale* in each of the three rural 'sections' of the commune, and the *Conseil d'Administration Municipale*, the commune-wide *magistrate* office)), and the national upper Senate and lower House of Deputies, while Rene Preval, Aristide's chosen successor, was elected national President. MPP and its associated *groupmans* also again became important channels for the wave of short-term rehabilitation projects that were implemented in an attempt to quickly revive the Haitian economy.

³⁰ FRAPH is the French acronym for *Front pour l'Avancement et Progres d'Haiti*, which was formed by Duvalierist military forces after the September 1991 *coup d'état*. FRAPH was at the forefront of attacks and intimidation against pro-Aristide groups. There is also evidence that the CIA financed FRAPH during this period, in an attempt to discredit President Aristide and forestall the return of his 'leftist' government (Morley and McGillion, 1997, p. 365).

In Maissade, relations between MPP and SC have always been somewhat tense and suspicious. This pattern had its roots already at the beginning of the SC program in Maissade in 1985, when MPP animation training staff were contracted by SC to conduct a baseline socio-economic survey on the feasibility and requirements for a rural community development program in Maissade. (At the time, MPP did not yet have associated groups in Maissade.) Though MPP provided a favourable report and SC utilized a *groupman*-based approach, the specific *animasyon* training techniques adopted by SC followed that of another somewhat rival *animasyon* training center located in the north of Haiti.³¹ Since then, relations between MPP and SC appear to always have been 'competitive', with MPP regularly criticizing SC's lack of political activism and its American connections, particularly its extensive use of U.S.AID funding and its child-sponsorship program.

As mentioned, when SC began its program in Maissade, MPP did not have any direct programs in Maissade. The Catholic priest in Maissade during this time did send several local people for *animasyon* training to MPP in Papaye, and then supported their work in several small-scale projects in literacy and community development in the parish. The *groupmans* created through these efforts did identify with MPP, and their *animatès* were involved in promoting support for Aristide during the 1990 elections. During the

³¹ I do not know the exact nature or dynamics of the differences between these two rival *animasyon* training centers. One difference that was explained to me concerned how *groupmans* were formed. The MPP training program insisted that *animatès* follow a more prescribed and rigid group formation procedure, which included group savings, grain storage projects, and joint work in members' fields. The other training center encouraged a more flexible approach, in which individual groups were encouraged to engage in whatever group project they decided. Though I have no specific evidence for this, it seems to me that there were other 'political' factors within the Catholic institutional culture also involved.

post-1991 coup d'état period, the development activities of the local Catholic parish ended, due to the turmoil of attempting to promote community development, the politicization of MPP-affiliated *groupman* activities, and the arrival of a less-interested parish priest. After the return of Aristide in 1994, MPP began to work directly in the Maissade region, assigning a representative to work with the re-emerged *groupmans*. MPP secured rehabilitation funding, which was used for a controversial labour-intensive road-building project in which MPP *groupman* members were paid to transport rock from a river-bed to the tertiary road from Maissade to the outlying community of Madam Joa. The initial groups that worked were paid per pile of rock, at a relatively high wage-rate, but this then attracted scores of people who also made their piles by the road-side. This occurred shortly before the June 1995 elections, and MPP critics felt it was a bald attempt at voting-buying for MPP-affiliated candidates. Once the election was over, payment for the second wave of rock-carriers was delayed, with some claiming they were never paid.

A second MPP activity with its affiliated *groupmans* consisted of a 'saving and loan' project, named *sere pou chofè* (SPC) in *kreyol*. In this project, *groupman* members could join this credit union-like project by paying an membership fee, and then continue to make regular monthly (or less frequent, as their means allowed) deposits. People who accumulated a minimum level of savings would then be eligible for loans from the SPC office. Many people paid the initial G7 (approx. \$US0.45) membership fee, yet few had either the means or confidence to commit larger amounts of savings. Similar schemes had been promoted in the area in the past, and many joiners appeared simply to hope that their membership fee would make them eligible for any credit or loans that might emerge from the project. By the beginning of 1997, the MPP representative claimed that there

were over 2000 SPC members in Maissade, yet very few had yet received any loans from the SPC office. In addition to the SPC scheme, MPP representatives had also collected a five *goud* (approx. \$US0.35) membership fee from many of the same *groupman* members for their 'annual' membership in MPNKP. At least in 1997, many MPP members complained that they had not received their 'membership' cards. As with the SPC membership, many viewed this payment as means to gain access or participation in anticipated development resources and services that MPP implied they would soon be bringing to the area.

A third MPP project was initiated in 1996, and consisted of the rehabilitation and completion of the irrigation canals that had been started back in the 1960s. A number of controversies again dominated the project. First, only MPP *groupman* members were given work digging the canals. People complained that even when the required routing of the canal necessitated the destruction of some of a farmer's plantain grove or other crop, if he was not an MPP member, he was not even compensated by being given several weeks work on the project. Then a large amount of cement for the project was reported stolen, and several MPP critics were arrested for the theft, even though popular rumour held that several MPP project staff had themselves skimmed the cement. Finally, the project ran out of money without coming anywhere near completing the project, and the majority of the newly-dug but still un-cemented canals soon began to fill in again with dirt. Again, many felt the project was a attempt by MPP to curry votes and political support for OPL/MPP candidates in the upcoming elections for the *Asamble Seksyon Kominal (ASEK)*, the Communal Section Assembly.

During this time, at the national level, divisions began to develop within Aristide's political coalition, *Oganizasyon Politik Lavalas (OPL)*, around a complex and confusing range of issues, including Aristide's selection of political advisors, his management of the 1995 electoral process, his economic policies, his personal integrity, and other issues. OPL deputies and senators split into two factions, one remaining within OPL, which now opposed Aristide, and others joining Aristide in a new political coalition named Lavalas. Neither controlled a majority in either house of the Parliament, and by 1997 there was political deadlock. President Preval's Prime Minister was unable to move forward any significant legislative program, and resigned in the summer of 1997. In the 18 months since then, even the ratification of a new Prime Minister by Parliament has been blocked, and the political paralysis continues.

In parallel to the rising frustration and disillusionment with Aristide and his affiliates in power at the national level, opposition also quickly rose to the local monopolization of political power by OPL and MPP leaders in Maissade. (OPL and MPP were viewed by many local people as essentially the same). Residents complained that only MPP members were allowed to participate in the rehabilitation projects, that MPP was interfering with the local office of the Electoral Council in the administration of the succession of elections being held, and that MPP/OPL appointed judges and other officials were not administering their functions with integrity. On January 31, 1997, right at the beginning of my research in Maissade, there was a violent clash between MPP supporters (mostly rural folk) and townspeople opposed to MPP. A group of MPP-affiliated *groupman* leaders were in town for a literacy teachers' training session with MPP staff, and upon the encouragement of these leaders (so it was claimed), they decided

to march on the *Biwo Elektoral Kominal (Bureau Electoral Communal)* (BEK) in order to protest the bias MPP leaders felt it was showing against MPP-supported candidates in the upcoming ASEK elections. A group of townsfolk were watching their actions, and when the MPP crowd approached the BEK office, the townsfolk confronted them. Someone threw a tear-gas canister (no one seems to know which side possessed it or threw it), and bedlam erupted. The rural MPP supporters were outnumbered, and many suffered cuts and bruises as they were assaulted while running and scattering to the safety of private homes or onto back paths out of town.

This turbulent history of MPP activities in Maissade clearly indicates that it too was a site of encounter, or interface, where power relations between actors with strong differences concerning politics and development were contested. In Chapter Eight, I describe and analyze aspects of the ongoing encounter of development discourses within MPP, in order to expand my analysis of the operation of development discourses beyond the individual case of SC.

Association des Volontaires pour le Developpement de Maissade - AVODEM

In addition to Save the Children and MPP, a third small 'NGO' working in Maissade during 1997 was AVODEM. In the burst of 'development' activities that occurred after the return of President Aristide in 1994, several 'quick response' or 'rehabilitation' projects of the type discussed earlier in this chapter were implemented in Maissade. The largest of these was a labour-intensive road reconstruction project, which used manual labour to improve the gravel road linking Maissade to Hinche and the rest of the Central Plateau. This project, funded by U.S.AID and managed nationally by an

intermediary American NGO, was implemented locally by AVODEM, a local 'NGO' formed in 1995 by the exiting *depute* for Maissade (who did not stand for re-election in the 1995 legislative vote).³² This project employed hundreds of local residents for 2 week periods during 1995 and early 1996, shovelling out ditches along the side of the road and filling in the large mudholes and numerous potholes that had resulted from 4 years of non-maintenance. AVODEM had subsequently also obtained a small project grant to construct approximately one hundred improved latrines in rural areas outside Maissade. Beyond these two projects, AVODEM did not have on-going funding or programming. On several occasions when I talked to one of the members of its executive committee, he told me that they were still actively 'searching' for donors to support several project proposals they had prepared. He also indicated that their organization 'had' dozens of community groups in the *seksyon*-s around Maissade, though they were not active, since AVODEM did not have any funding to support their activities. During community interviews, some SC program participants reported also belonging to an AVODEM group, but all stated that these groups were not active in the past year.

Conclusion

The above description of the recent development history in Maissade makes clear the pervasive influence of development programs in shaping interrelated local political, social and economic (power) relations. The various discourses of development employed

³² This *depute* was a relatively rich merchant and landowner in town, and was associated with a more conservative political party. According to local people I interviewed, he decided not to run because he calculated that his chances of winning were slim in the face of the widespread popularity of Aristide's *Lavalas* party. In the 1990 elections, Aristide had entered the presidential election at the last minute, and thus few affiliated candidates had time to submit their candidacy for legislative posts.

by these programs, in the context of the dominant national discourse of Haiti's 'underdevelopment' (described in Chapter Four), allowed these programs to become major actors in the local political economy. International NGOs such as SC and CRWRC utilized mainstream development discourses related to 'empowerment', 'community participation', and 'local organizational capacity development' to organize various types of community organizations - *groupman*, women's clubs, farmers' and women's associations, fledgling credit unions and even a new regional NGO. More politically active NGOs such as MPP have utilized similar development discourses, though with stronger and more critical meanings attached to them, to form populist community bases from which to actively challenge dominant state and politico-economic power relations. All of these community structures represent significant new forms of social organization, and offer new ways for social relations (including strong traditional social relations) to be contested and negotiated. In the following chapters, I will turn to the focus of my thesis - the practices, negotiations and contestations that occur at the 'interface' between such outside development discourses and local understandings and identities, in order to analyze how such power relations are established and contested by development discourses.

Chapter Six

SITES OF ENCOUNTER: THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS IN BODLO/SAVANN

The community development associations were one of the most evident sites of encounter of different development discourses in the Save the Children (SC) program. As has been introduced in the previous chapter, both the farmers' and women's associations were key elements in SC's goal of promoting local empowerment (particularly 'women's empowerment') and sustainable community development. For many community members, the associations represented one of the few opportunities to participate in 'development', and to work for improved livelihoods. Yet as the events examined in this chapter will show, the promotion and development of these associations remained difficult and contentious, marked by the competing interests, different understandings, and variable identities of the different social actors involved.

The statements and practices of community participants and SC staff concerning the associations reveal the different understandings and identities concerning development held by these different actors. Paraphrasing Escobar (1995a, p. 216), examination of the practices and strategies of different actors at the site of the community associations 'makes visible' the contests of meanings and values that cumulatively shape power/knowledge relations within the discourses of development. Analysis of the daily practices of various association members, association leaders, and SC field staff, as they interact at the 'site' of the associations, reveals the encounter of discontinuous 'knowledges' and 'identities' at the development intervention interface. These daily

practices reveal the 'fields of meaning' in which their actions are 'inscribed' (Escobar, 1995a, p. 217). Analysis of the interpretations, self-understandings and identities of these actors reveals how the various discourses of development are embraced and resisted, reproduced and subverted, deployed and internalized.

In this chapter, a series of statements, practices and activities related to the farmers' and women's associations in the community of Bòdlo/Savann is examined in order to reveal the multiple power relations established through development discourses. The chapter is outlined as follows: The first section presents and discusses the 'dominant' program discourse concerning the community development associations. I demonstrate how both SC and association members' statements show the extent to which 'official' yet simplistic and managerial discourses have been adopted, yet also reinterpreted in alternative, pragmatic ways. In the second and third sections, I describe how the farmers' and women's associations in the community of Bòdlo/Savann have actually evolved. The second section reviews their recent history prior to the research period, as reconstructed from project documents and interviews, in order to show the roots of local development knowledges and identities, and so provide the context for the third section. In the main third section, I analyze a series of specific practices and events which I observed during the field research in 1997, in order to reveal the variety of ways in which the power/knowledge relations are contested and negotiated in the course of actual development practice. The practices analyzed include: association grain storage activities, local group activity, attendance and participation at the monthly association meetings, and the role of the SC *animatrix* and *animatè* in the functioning of the associations.

Discourses Concerning Community Associations

For the SC program in Maissade, the creation and promotion of the farmers' and women's associations was a key program strategy. This strategy was SC's implementation of the current focus in development practice/discourse on strengthening civil society through local organizational development (see Chapter One). The following three statements, taken from SC programming and evaluation documents, convey how SC conceptualized this strategy:

The Haiti field office has identified specific objectives to be achieved in women's empowerment, that will result in the cumulation of activities in several sectoral activities, and focused attention on empowering women to act and organize on their own behalf. ... 200 clubs will be formed... Local consultants knowledgeable about women's empowerment will design the leadership training for club delegates. [A]nimators will focus sustainable agriculture/natural resource management activities on improving women's status either directly or indirectly. Local staff development and organization of peasants into formal groups (associations of *groupman*, regionally-wide [sic] women's association) will be the cornerstone of [SC Haiti Field Office's] sustainability strategy. (SC Detailed Implementation Plans, 1992, p. 7-8.)

The creation of multi-purpose peasant associations, grouping 150-300 farmers (about 10-12 farmer groups), is part of the effort to leave viable, sustainable local organizations after the 'phase-over' of Save the Children in four or five years. ...The associations will be assisted by [SC] to take responsibility for current and future development activities, involving revenue generation, credit programs, health centers, agricultural activities and support for primary schools. [SC] is now focusing attention on the creation of a network of local organizations capable of obtaining financing to sustain regional development activities in the future (Boyle, 1995, p. 49).

... SC has fostered community empowerment and action through the formation and support of women's and peasants' associations.. The staff felt that continuing this type of programming support is vital to SC's mission to make *lasting change*. (SC Strategic Planning Conference Report, 1997b, p. 7, emphasis in original)

Two points bear discussion concerning these statements. First is the manner in which SC implicitly constructs rural Haitian society as ‘disorganized’ and ‘disempowered’. As Escobar (1995a) and many other development analysts have demonstrated, this ‘diagnosing of deficiency and delinquency’ is a key practice of development assistance agencies, as it establishes and legitimates the power relations required for outside intervention. Through their implicit portrayal of lack and weakness, the above statements legitimate SC’s programs in Maissade.¹

Second, these statements clearly show how the associations are constructed, within the development discourse of SC programmers, as the key to achieving a powerful interrelated series of development goals and norms. These goals and norms include, explicitly or implicitly, an array of the current buzz-words in community development practice: ‘local institutional capacity’, local ‘participation’ in development initiatives, the ‘empowerment’ of previously marginalized women, and assurance of the ‘sustainability’ of SC’s interventions after the eventual end of its Maissade program. Furthermore, the statements have a paternalistic and ‘managerial’ tone, focusing on SC’s interventions - SC will ‘create’ and ‘organize’ the local associations, ‘foster’ empowerment, and ‘assist’ local people to ‘take responsibility’ for their future ‘development’. The result of this

¹ Escobar (1992; 1995a; 1995b) and others also argue that such diagnoses of deficiency are **required** by mainstream development discourse, since the “foundation of the theory and practice of the international aid industry is the modernist premise that the causes of ‘third world’ poverty reside not in the forces which enrich and empower a few of the world’s people and immiserate the rest, but lie instead in the deficiencies of poor people and the communities in which they live” (Smith, 1998, p. 46). In the present case of SC, I would argue that SC planners recognize the interdependent global causes of poverty, and therefore also that the ‘disorganization’ and ‘disempowerment’ that it diagnoses in Maissade have global as well as local causes. However, given the required ‘a-political’ nature of international NGO programs, SC can ‘treat’ these deficiencies only at the local level, and hope they ‘trickle up’ to have national and even international effects. I will discuss some of the relationship of politics and development programs in Maissade in Chapter Eight.

managerial confidence is that SC can optimistically proclaim that the implementations of these interventions will lead (have led) to the desired goals.

The impact and ‘power’ of this official development discourse at the local level in Maissade is revealed in statements made by various associations leaders and members. As can be seen in the following statements, local people clearly understood and appreciated the associations as being important for promoting development in their community. The first statements are excerpted from the resolutions presented by the combined women’s associations of Timonn, Bazin and Kabrit² at the International Women’s Day Congress sponsored by SC in Maissade on March 8, 1997.³

Where we’ve come from: We the women of [Anwò], we were in a difficult situation, we did not know our rights in society, our children were dying easily, we were not organized, we did not know when they did violence against us, we did not know how to do [primary health care] prevention for our children, ...

Where we are today, thanks to SC: Now, we have already left the level of *groupman* or club, we have arrived at the level of an association, a part of us has already benefited from literacy, we have become more-or-less solid as a result of the presence of the *animatrisés* who have [trained, supervised]⁴ our clubs, we have become able to claim our rights in society, we have come to know where the idea that women are inferior to men came from, we have come to

² ‘Bazin’ and ‘Kabrit’ are two neighbouring women’s associations of the Timonn association, all of them located within the Anwò *seksyon rural* [township]. The eight women’s associations had met in three regional workshops (organized according to the three *seksyon rural* [townships] which comprise the *komin* of Maissade). These workshops had been facilitated by the SC *animatrisés*.

³ These resolutions were read publicly from a stage set up at the town soccer field during the course of the Women’s Day Congress program, which also included songs, speeches and a march by the women through town. The complete text of the Timonn-Bazin-Kabrit *seksyon* resolution can be found in Appendix C.

⁴ The *kreyòl/french* term is *encadrer*, which can be translated as ‘to train students, to supervise employees’. As I heard it used frequently in the SC program in reference to the work of the *animatrisés* and *animatè*, it had a stronger meaning than simply to train, but not quite the sense of supervision. The term reflected the powerful yet somewhat ambiguous task of the *animatrisés* and *animatè* in ‘framing’ the work of the community associations. More discussion of the roles of the SC animation field staff is provided below.

know how to take care of our children better so they don't get sick, we participate in making decisions within our houses, ...

Where we want to arrive: We need to have the associations to fly with their own wings, we need to have legal recognition (so that the state recognizes us), we need a revolving loan fund within the associations, we need all women who are in the associations to receive credit, we need all women who are in the associations to have a meeting hall, we need a lot of training, we need to visit other women's associations which exist in the country, we need to receive aid for us to set up community stores, ...

The tone of this statement undoubtedly was shaped by the enthusiasm generated by the nature of the Women's Day celebrations, yet its rhetorical quality highlights how the women have both symbolically embraced and positively evaluated the development they have achieved in the SC program. Their women's associations are clearly a key component of this progress. As the women state, before they 'were not organized', but now they have already 'left the level of club and arrived at the level of the association'. The associations are clearly identified with progress and advance. Now they want to obtain 'state recognition' for their associations in order to gain further access to development resources and services for new community initiatives. The associations are clearly embraced as representing a key stepping stone on the path to achieving 'development'.

Two other statements also demonstrate the combined symbolic and material importance of the associations for community members. During one interview, in response to the interview question 'Why is the association important?', one of the Savann women's association leaders responded:

There is more development when one has an association... It's what brings development, what opens our knowledge, opens our understanding.... It has brought a lot of development... [Before,] We did not have adult schools [literacy classes], vaccinations for children, understanding on how to care for children. The project gives us advice.

During another group interview with members of a *groupman* which belonged to the Bòdlo farmers' association, a member stated: "That is what we most like with the *groupman*, it's development it is." Another stated:

Now, here we are under a little *tonel* [referring to the small shelter, constructed from poles and covered with palm-tree bark, under which we were meeting], that's a first moment, but now, tomorrow, God-willing, suddenly this little shelter may become nicer yet, because it's to a *groupman* we belong. Now we see that it's a little palm-tree bark that's covering it, but maybe tomorrow, God-willing, we'll see that its not palm-tree bark anymore, and suddenly too, there may be some other even more nice things which will come in addition. What makes that happen - it's being in a *groupman*.

Taken together, these three sets of statements from association members clearly show the extent to which the promise of the dominant development discourse concerning the community associations has been embraced. The associations are important because they are bringing 'development', though what exactly this development consists of remains quite vague. Development, in and of itself, has become their goal. Paraphrasing Escobar (1995a, p. 212), "development has [become] the primary mechanism" through which rural Haitians have imagined themselves and their situation, "thus marginalizing and precluding other ways of seeing and doing." While there undoubtedly were some elements of a 'public transcript' (Scott, 1990) in these statements (see below), this fact only underlines the symbolic power that development discourse has achieved in the Haitian countryside.

Yet the statements also start to reveal that association members' understanding of development and the role of the associations is more ambiguous and multiple than the dominant interventionist discourses of empowerment, sustainability and participation which are utilized by SC. Following Foucault, these discourses of development are inevitably reinterpreted and reappropriated in multiple ways - as Foucault states, "... as

soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance” (1988, p. 123).

Women and men in Maissade clearly see the associations, in addition to being a means of engaging in communal self-help through such activities as literacy, health training, income generation and solidarity, as channels for bringing increased development resources into their community and symbolically participating in ‘development’.

Belonging to a community group is seen as a way to make claims for more material resources, and as the means to make development ‘come’ to their community. As has already been introduced in the previous chapter, and as I will describe more explicitly in the following sections, rural people have learned this additional ‘meaning’ of the associations by observing the history of development programs in their communities. They have developed their own local ‘development knowledge’ concerning how development programs work, incorporating this into their existing knowledge concerning the importance of social relations for access to resources. People’s participation in the associations, therefore, reflects a combination of both the symbolic influence of the meanings of development established by the dominant development discourse in rural Haiti, and the pragmatic realities concerning resource flows through rural development practice.

Recent History of the Farmers’ and Women’s Associations in Bòdlo/Savann

Despite the expressed positive understandings held by both SC and community members of the role of the farmers’ and women’s associations (though, as I have noted, the community members also valued them for more pragmatic reasons), an examination of the history of the farmers’ and women’s associations in Bòdlo/Savann shows only a

mixed record of success. The activities of the associations have been marked by mixed degrees of enthusiasm and apathy, cooperation and struggle, long-term vision and short-term pragmatism. In this section of the chapter, I will present an overview of the history of the two associations up until the period of the fieldwork, collected from interviews with association members and SC field staff, and review of SC program documents. This history will introduce the characteristic practices and activities adopted by the associations as a result of the support of SC. I will argue that the key role played by SC support to the associations (in the form of training and material resources) has reinforced local development knowledges concerning the symbolic and practical value of the associations. This historical description will also serve to set the context for the analysis in the final section of the chapter of the 'encounter' events observed in 1997.

The Bòdlo Farmers' Association

SC work in the Bòdlo/Savann area dates from the very beginning of its program in Maissade in 1986, when SC animators began promoting the formation of farmers' *groupman* by providing training and animation for soil conservation, agroforestry and income generation activities. In 1991, SC encouraged the formation of regional associations of farmers' *groupman*, as scaled-up local organizations that could undertake larger and more permanent community development activities. Twelve (12) local *groupman* (out of 20 area *groupman* - eventually a total of 19 *groupman* joined) initially formed the Bòdlo association, each contributing a G125 (approx. \$US 8) 'membership share' from their group fund, to form the association's capital fund. An executive committee, consisting of a president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary and two at-large

members, was elected. Soon afterward, the association constructed a small, palm-board-sided and tin-roofed meeting hall.

Initially, the association's activities centered around grain storage. In 1991, through the intermediation of SC, the Bòdlo association (and several other farmers' associations in the SC program) obtained credit from a HAVA⁵ community-credit program, and, again through SC mediation, purchased an imported galvanized-steel grain silo from another North American NGO. This silo was erected next to the association's meeting hall. Two storage cycles were usually conducted each year, in an attempt to benefit from the seasonal price cycles for both corn and sorghum. After the corn harvest in September, and again after the sorghum harvest in January, the association would forward funds to the leaders of member *groupman*, and these funds would be used to purchase grain, either from members or in the local weekly market, at the current market price. The *groupman* would then transport the grain to the association silo, delivering an amount of grain equal to the advanced funds, based on a price slightly above the current market price (in order to compensate members for their work in collecting and transporting the grain.) The stored corn would be sold in January just before the sorghum harvest, and the sorghum in May or June when its price peaked. Again, the incentive of a slightly preferential (in this case, slightly lower) price compared to the current market price was used to encourage members to purchase at the silo. (However, the grain was

⁵ HAVA is the acronym for the Haitian Association of Voluntary Agencies, the NGO umbrella agency in Haiti. The HAVA credit program, funded in part by U.S.AID and the Inter-American Foundation, provided credit for income-generation projects of the community-based groups that had been formed or supported by HAVA-member NGO's community development programs. (It is also noteworthy that HAVA was known by its English acronym, reflecting the dominance of North American development assistance, either directly through North American NGOs or through funding to national NGOs.)

not given on credit at the time of sale.) Three-quarters of the profit realized by the association (after paying insecticide costs and a small salary for the silo manager) was distributed as a dividend to each member *groupman*, increasing their share value in the association (it was not delivered in cash). The association executive committee, in return for their time, effort and responsibility in managing the project, shared the remaining 25 percent of the profits. Thus, the benefits of the project were shared in three ways: ordinary members (particularly female members and male members' wives) benefitted individually and directly, from the preferential prices they received when either delivering or purchasing grain at the silo; members benefitted collectively through the retained profits that increased their *groupman*'s share value in the association; and the association leaders benefitted through the remuneration they received for their management responsibilities. The association stored between 5,000 and 8,000 kg of grain each storage cycle, though some seasons when poor rains caused high harvest prices, they would skip a cycle when they judged the risk too great.⁹

In 1992, the Bòdlo association received the first of several infusions of outside 'capital', in the form of a donation of French government food aid. Due to the hardships and disruptions caused by the international economic embargo following the September 1991 coup, numerous international agencies distributed 'humanitarian' food aid in an attempt to ameliorate the embargo's effects. SC facilitated the distribution of 75,000 kg of 'yellow' corn, obtained from the *Coopération Française*, to the six Maissade farmers' associations. The Bòdlo association received 206 50kg bags (10,300 kg), which it sold to

⁹ This information concerning the grain storage project of the association was collected during the course of the fieldwork period, through interviews and informal conversations with association members and SC field staff, as well as from project documents.

members at a reduced price. This monetized corn yielded G8,200 (approximately \$US 500) for the association, which it then began to use for an internal revolving 'credit union' loan fund. The 1993 fourth quarter SC Agriculture sector report indicated that in Bòdlo, 39 association members (30 men and 9 women) had received average loans of G220 (\$US 14) for a three month term at 5 percent interest.

In 1994, the Bòdlo association became the recipient of another SC-facilitated intervention from beyond the community, when they were selected as an *Inite Pwodiksyon Semans Atizana* (IPSA)(Indigenous Seed Production Unit) by a U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) project. This project was intended to support and encourage local farmers' organizations to multiply locally adapted corn seed, in order to provide the FAO with national sources of indigenous varieties for their seed distribution programs. The Bòdlo association received 24 bags of seed corn, which were distributed to members for reproduction, with the requirement that 1.5 *mamit*⁷ would be 'repaid' for each *mamit* received. Another important aspect of this FAO project was the granting of funds to the Bòdlo association for the construction of a large (approximately 6m x 12m), cement-block storage depot, which was built next to the association meeting hall. The first production year was not very successful, as heavy early rains and then drought caused a poor corn harvest in 1994, and only approximately half the amount of 'loaned' corn was repaid. I was not able to determine the exact details of project events during the following two years, but it appears that followup by FAO field staff was poor (see below), and they did not demand full payment of the reproduced seed, but allowed the

⁷ A *mamit* is the common unit used to measure grain in markets in rural Haiti. It is a volume measure, measured using the standard shortening can in which local bakeries purchase shortening. Its size varies slightly in different regions of the country, and in Maissade represents about 3.0 kg of grain.

corn to be sold by the association in Bòdlo. By 1997, the IPSA project had effectively become a second credit fund instead of a seed production project, with the funds generated by the original donation (approximately G13,000 or \$US 800) being used as a crop production loan fund for members.

In 1994, elections were held for the positions on the executive committee, and all the members of the old committee were re-elected to their positions. The SC quarterly report for that period suggested that this reflected the 'conservative spirit' of rural people. More likely it reflected the relative ability of the committee and their success in managing the association's activities, as well as members' acknowledgement that these men were the recognized leaders in the community.⁸ Also in 1994, the Bòdlo association, with the active support and facilitation of SC, joined with the other farmers' associations to form a commune-wide peasants' federation, called *Asosyasyon Groupman Peyizan Mayisad* (AGPM) which then started a small agricultural supply store in town to serve members. SC promoted the formation of AGPM in the hopes that it would increasingly become a local 'partner' for its programs, slowly taking over management of commune-wide development initiatives.

⁸ The president was the lay-pastor of an area Protestant congregation, affiliated with one of the Baptist congregations in the town of Maissade. The treasurer was a former rural police militia and member of the *Volontaires de la Securite Nationale (VSN)* (the official name of Duvalier's *Tonton Macoutes*.) Yet as both he and others affirmed, he had served relatively fairly in his position as a rural 'policeman', and so had not been forced to flee revenge attacks at the time of Duvalier's departure in 1986, as other *VSN* members had. The vice-president was an older man, who had been active in local development groups, such as the Duvalier era *Conseils Communautaires* during the 1960s and '70s. He also was a lay leader in another local Baptist church, which was supported by his brother, who pastored a Haitian immigrant congregation in New York. The secretary was a younger man, who had completed elementary school, whose family was prominent in the community. All were relatively successful men, having larger-than-average agricultural land holdings in the area. All of them also owned or rented a house in town, where their children lived while attending secondary school, and the secretary and vice-president made their primary residence there, in order that their children could attend the better elementary schools in town.

The Bòdlo association received a second, larger distribution of French food aid in early 1995. With the removal of the post-coup de facto military government and the return of President Aristide in October 1994, foreign donors were eager to kickstart the Haitian economy in order to support this 'return of democracy'. Overall, SC facilitated the entry of 180,000 kg of corn into the Maissade region, which was partitioned among the associations. AGPM, and SC itself (for the funding of literacy activities.) The corn was again sold on the local market, and the Bòdlo association realized G33,400 (\$US 2,200) for its revolving loan fund. By the beginning of 1997, this loan fund totalled G59,000 (\$US 3,600), which had been loaned to 15 member *groupmans*. The association called this their *kes popilè* ('credit union'), since the loans were made on a matching basis, each *groupman* being required to make a 'collateral' deposit of one quarter of the amount loaned before receiving a loan.

This short review of the major events in the Bòdlo association's history suggests that it has been quite successful. Indeed, the Bòdlo association was considered by SC management staff as one of the most successful farmers' associations in the SC program, and my fieldwork in other communities confirmed this comparative assessment. It had built up a significant amount of capital, with a total of over G90,000 (\$US 6,000) in working assets (the revolving 'credit union' loan fund, stored grain, IPSA production credit fund), plus significant fixed assets (the IPSA storage depot and the grain silo.) It had grown to a total of 19 member *groupman*, with approximately 200 members (approximately 25-30 percent of these members were female, though almost all the association executive committee members were male.) The original 12 founding *groupman* had seen their share value in the association grow from their original entry

contribution of G125 to G1,400, due to distributed profit dividends and the infusions of outside capital. (Other *groupman* which had joined later had accumulated lesser amounts.) Two of the association leaders also had important leadership roles in AGPM, the commune-wide peasants' federation that both SC and the federation itself hoped would develop increasing responsibility and capacity for cultivating relations with development agencies beyond Maissade.

The Savann Women's Association

As described in Chapter Five, the antecedents of SC's work with women's associations goes back to the community health programs that were initiated in 1987. By 1990, several 'mother's clubs' had been formed in the Bòdlo/Savann area, in order to facilitate the delivery of health messages and encourage women's solidarity. During 1990, the SC program began to increase its emphasis on women's empowerment - the 'mothers' clubs' (*klib mè*) were renamed 'women's clubs' (*klib fanm*), and the first commune-wide "Women's Congress" was held on International Women's Day (March 8). By 1993, over 16 women's clubs had been formed in the area.⁹ For the next 2 years, SC *animatris* worked directly with the women's clubs, meeting with them individually (or in groups of 2 or 3) in the yard of a member, in a vacant church, or in a school after classes had been recessed for the day. During these meetings, the *animatris* delivered

⁹ Many of these women's husbands were already members of a farmers' *groupman* and the Bòdlo farmers' association, and some women themselves were also already members of the farmers' *groupmans*. Though no exact determination of the extent of this 'overlap' was made, I would estimate (based on my interviews with women) that 20 percent of women's club members also 'officially' belonged to a *groupman*, and that an additional 30-40 percent of women's club members' husbands belonged to a *groupman*.

'animation' lessons on women's 'empowerment', health lessons, and literacy training, and helped the clubs organize and manage their group savings activity and the small local income-generation projects (such as grain storage) in which these funds were invested. Many of the women's clubs also participated in a women's credit program offered by SC, in which increasing amounts of credit were given to club members.¹⁰

The *Asosyasyon Klib Fanm Savann* [Savann Women's Club Association] was formed in late 1995, during the same period as the women's clubs throughout the SC program were encouraged by SC to join together into community associations. Under the guidance of 'Eranna', the SC *animatrix* for the area, nine women's clubs in the Savann area initially joined to form the association, each contributing a G600 'membership share' to form the initial capital fund of the new association. During the spring and summer of 1996, seven additional women's clubs from the Bòdlo area also contributed their membership share and joined the association.¹¹ Since the formation of the

¹⁰ The initial loans were for G600 per participant, for six months, but were 'guaranteed' by the entire women's club. If the loan was successfully repaid, successive loans were increased, reaching G1700 (\$US110) per participant after 18 months. Recipients also had to make savings deposits in addition to their monthly loan repayments, which by the end of the fourth loan cycle almost equalled the final loan amount. These savings were then distributed to the women and allowed them to continue their productive investments. However, fewer than a quarter of the women's clubs reached the final cycles of the loan program, due to difficulties in making repayments (a few clubs defaulted on their loans, while many decided not to continue beyond the first or second cycle). This program had been put on hold by SC by the beginning of 1997.

¹¹ Initially, the women's clubs in the Bòdlo area had wanted their own association. (Bòdlo is where the local farmers' association has its building and grain silo.) Eranna, the SC *animatrix*, refused to help organize two separate women's associations. She argued that she did not have time to work with an additional association, and that since the farmers' *groupmans* in the Savann area did not have any difficulty being members of the farmers' association centered in Bòdlo, the women's clubs in Bòdlo should not have any difficulty being part of the women's association centered in Savann. (The location of the two association buildings is about a 30 minutes walking time apart, though the dispersed nature of settlement means that neither 'community' has a distinct populated 'center'.) Some tension remained concerning this issue, and participation of women from the Bòdlo women's clubs in the association's activities (i.e. attendance at the monthly meetings, helping with the mango-drying) was less than from clubs located closer to Savann.

associations, the *animatrises* had started to hold monthly *Asamble Jeneral* ['General Assembly'] meetings in which all the members from all the clubs of the association were invited (and expected to attend). With the end of the WCI funding, the number of *animatrises* had been reduced from 10 to 5, and so the remaining *animatrises* did not have sufficient time to attend local club meetings, and began focussing almost exclusively on meeting with (and providing training) at the level of the association *Asamble Jeneral* and Director's Committee meetings.¹²

In 1996, the Savann association members, under the training and supervision of Eranna, the SC *animatris*, had dried mangos for the first time. (SC had been promoting mango-drying with several other women's groups in the Maissade for several years already, and now was attempting to extend this activity as an income-generation project to other women's groups.) This was done at the home of one of the association members. They had produced quite a large amount of dried mangos, though in the end only 26 one-pound bags were sold, via SC, to UNICEF.¹³ At least three or four times as many bags had spoiled due to an interrelated problem with the slow drying times in the (somewhat inefficient) locally-made solar dryers and flies laying their eggs on the mangos and

¹² In addition, the *animatrises* had the responsibility for delivering much of the health training that was programmed as part of the WAND project. They thus had to spend between a third to a half of their time on this responsibility, first attending training-of-trainer seminars for 2-3 days to receive the particular health messages (related to malaria prevention, respiratory infection, breast-feeding, etc) from the community health doctor and nurse who headed the SC health program, then spending 5-8 days in pairs conducting training seminars with each association for two delegates from each member club. (These two delegates were then expected to replicate the training for the women (mothers) in their home clubs.) Thus, lack of sufficient time impacted the quality of training and facilitation that the women's associations received.

¹³ UNICEF is the United Nations Children's Fund. In Haiti, they were active in many children-oriented activities, including the distribution of Vitamin A capsules through community health programs in order to prevent childhood blindness. They were attempting to utilize dried mangos (which are rich in Vitamin A) in these programs, as a nationally-produced alternative to imported Vitamin A capsules.

worms subsequently emerging once the mangos were bagged. This problem was experienced by all of the women's groups which dried mangos with the SC project. Though the association had realized over G500 (\$US 35) profit from the mango-drying, this profit had not been distributed among the members who had worked on the project, and so the core leaders of the association, who had contributed most of the labour and effort, were not very satisfied with the project and the return on their hard work.¹⁴

Later in 1996, Savann and four other women's associations received a grant from UNICEF (via SC) to each build a 'workshop' to house their mango-drying projects. Since the building lot was considered to be part of the 'local participation' by UNICEF, the association used funding from the association's capital fund to purchase a small plot of land for G1,000 (\$US65). Using the UNICEF grant (approximately G80,000 or \$US 5,300), Eranna and association executive committee then contracted a local builder to construct a cement-block and tin-roof, two-room building approximately 8m by 5m in size. The building was completed in September 1996, though the women did not really consider it 'completed', since the floor in the second storage room was not yet cemented, the wooden window were still nailed shut since the iron latch-hooks had not yet been installed, and, most importantly, the block walls had not been plastered. (The association already had to contribute some of its own funds (approximately G3,900 or \$US190) in order to complete the basic construction, and the building was considered usable without these final touches being completed.) This building quickly became the 'center' for the

¹⁴ The performance standard for the mango drying project was a women's group in town in Maissade, which had produced over a hundred pounds of dried mangos the previous year, and made over G1500 in profits. This was the original group with which SC had originally launched the pilot mango-drying project in the early 1990s. This women's group in town was often held up by Eranna as to the potential of the mango drying activity.

association, serving as their meeting hall during the 10 months of the year when there were no mango-drying activities.

The Savann women's association had also engaged in grain storage during its first year. However, since the association did not have its own grain storage facility, and also lacked capital, only relatively small amounts of grain were purchased (less than 300 *mamits*), and the grain was stored in several member's *kolombye*.¹⁵

Compared to the Bòdlo farmers' association, the Savann women's association was still very young, with only a year and a half of experience when I started my fieldwork. It was still largely dependent on Eranna, the SC *animatrix*, for the functioning of its meetings and activities (this will be described and discussed in greater detail in the last section of this chapter.) It had not yet accumulated a significant amount of capital, nor had it had much success or profit in managing the activities it had undertaken with its limited resources. Since the association had not received any outside injections of capital, it only had approximately G4000 (\$US 260) in liquid assets, in addition to the fixed assets of its mango-drying workshop building and land. Total membership in the association was claimed by Eranna to be over 300 women (in 16 women's clubs), though my attempts to obtain membership lists from the individual women's clubs suggested that the actual membership was more realistically about 240 members.¹⁶

¹⁵ A *kolombye* is a storage depot, constructed of planks and palm-boards, roofed with galvanized metal sheets or palm-bark, built five to six feet above ground-level on top of four or six thick posts. The posts have sheet-metal inverted cones around them, and so the *kolombye* is an effective way of protecting stored grain from rats and mice.

¹⁶ The issue of the number of association members will be discussed more fully in the final section of this chapter, as part of the discussion of the meaning of participation in the association meetings.

Analysis - The Implementation of Empowerment

Both the Bòdlo farmers' association and the Savann women's association were relatively successful in providing development activities for their members, given the period of time each had been in existence. Yet the above histories show the key role played by the SC program in establishing and facilitating these activities. While both types of association were intended to empower local people, allow them to participate in local development efforts, and create the organizational framework for sustainable change, it is clear that outside initiative and support were foundational in the successes the associations had achieved in these areas. The histories of the two associations reveal the two key elements of this support - access to significant outside resources, and the facilitation and training provided by the SC animation staff.

The staff of the SC program were quite aware of the key role they had played in the formation and support of the associations. They were also quite aware of the necessity and importance of reducing the associations' 'dependence' on the SC program if the associations were to become the sustainable and mature community organizations that SC intended them to become. SC understood that true 'empowerment' required the reduction or 'phase-over' of their own role and support to the community associations. In fact, during 1997, a major thrust of the SC programming became 'partnership/institutional development', which was intended to promote the capacity and independence of their community 'partners.' The final section of this chapter will analyze specific 'encounters' in the associations where aspects of organizational independence and capacity were negotiated and contested.

The above short histories also make clear that a large part of the two associations' success (particularly that of the Bòdlo farmers' association) had been in carefully managing the significant amount of outside resources that had been channelled to them by the SC program. These histories would seem to support the local 'development knowledges' voiced by local community members, as introduced in the first section of the chapter, which focuses on the pragmatic usefulness of the community associations in attracting development resources to their community. Empowerment and participation take on different meanings in this local understanding. In much community development literature, these terms refer to 'internal' and 'autonomous' local community action, with previously marginal groups validating their abilities and resources, 'asserting' power and the ability to participate in local decision-making and economic activity (Pieterse, 1992). In contrast, local people hold an understanding of empowerment and participation which focuses on their relations to actors external to their community. In their understanding, empowerment becomes the ability of the community to organize itself and make claims in order to access external development resources, and in a similar manner, participation becomes the ability of the community, through its association, to establish external relations that allow it to participate in the development programs that are operating in the region. The associations are a means of 'upward mobility' through adaptation and conformation to the established practices of external development interventions (Pieterse, 1992, p. 11). In an African context, Sikana describes a similar pragmatic response of local farmers to well-intentioned efforts to establish participatory 'Village Research Groups' as part of a Farming System Research planning process. As Sikana describes,

... the primary concern of the local people is *how to access resources* from the development project rather than *how to be involved* in program execution. Participation is a 'development technology' which is being pushed by the development agency (to satisfy a range of economic, intellectual and political objectives) rather than being demanded by local people (Sikana, 1995, p. 3, emphasis in original).

The women's organizations in particular were a new type of community organization in rural Haiti, unlike the more generic 'farmers' or 'community' organizations (such as the Bòdlo farmers' association) which have existed since the beginning of community development efforts in the 1950s and 1960s. While women had frequently been members of these earlier organizations, they were almost always dominated by male leadership, reflecting the dominant patterns of gender relations in rural Haitian society. The formation of specific, women-only community development organizations had caused quite a stir in Maissade, as described in Chapter Five. However, the short history of the Savann Women's Association demonstrates how its formation was dependent upon the interventions of the SC program, particularly the training and supervision (*encadrement* - see footnote 4 above) of the SC *animatris*. The discussion in the next section of the events observed in the association during the fieldwork will further highlight the 'newness', and subsequent negotiation and contestation involved in this form of 'women's organizing.'

Yet the above analysis does not mean that the Bòdlo and Savann associations' success had been simply due to its relationship to SC. In order to maintain this relationship, both associations needed to show that they were 'good' managers of SC's investments of staff, training and material resources in them, in order to ensure their continued flow to their community. In the following last section of the chapter, I will

turn my attention to some of these more complex, real-life local social processes, in order to reveal the contested and negotiated nature of 'development' at the local level.

Encounters of Knowledge and Power: Events and Practices in 1997

During the fieldwork in 1997, I attended a total of 16 meetings associated with the Bòdlo association: 7 association *Asamble Jeneral* meetings, 3 *Komite Direkte* meetings, and 6 individual *groupman* meetings. In addition, numerous semi-structured interviews and informal discussions were held with various association leaders at various times, including the association president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, several *groupman* leaders, and several agriculture monitors. I attended a total of 31 meetings related to the Savann women's association: 7 *Asamble Jeneral*, 8 joint meetings of 3-4 area clubs, 7 individual club meetings or club literacy classes, 4 *Komite Santral* meetings, 3 *Komite Direkte* meetings and 3 health training seminars. I also conducted semi-structured and informal interviews with numerous association leaders, some at their homes before or after meetings, others informally while walking with them to or from town.

It is impossible to describe and analyze all the relations of power and knowledge which I observed in Bòdlo and Savann during these many visits and interviews. Nor would it be easy to follow these power/knowledge 'encounters' as they surfaced, ebbed and flowed in various discontinuous patterns through a simple chronological description of the associations' activities during the course of the study period. Instead, I will treat these encounters on a topical basis, in order to provide a clearer analysis of the dynamics of each case. I have selected four major recurring encounters, which occurred in both

associations, for analysis: grain storage activities, local *groupman* or club inactivity, association meeting attendance, and the role of the SC *animatè* or *animatris*. For each encounter, I will analyze the practices and strategies of the different actors involved, in order to reveal the discontinuous development 'knowledges' and 'identities' of local people and SC staff. 'Making visible' these contests of meaning and values in turn demonstrates how specific power/knowledge relations (related to access to material benefits, status and leadership) are established and contested.

Grain storage. Peasant-controlled grain storage projects were a common activity for community-based groups in rural Haiti (see, for example, Maguire, 1984.) Traditionally, store owners in towns and urban-rural traders (called *Madam Saras*) took advantage of farmers' post-harvest need for cash and the resulting post-harvest price decline to make significant profits reselling grain during the spring and summer months. For many community development programs, this practice represented a classic case of exploitation of the weak economic position of rural producers, and an opportunity to 'empower' rural producers and increase their incomes through cooperative action. This too was SC's intent in promoting and supporting the farmers' and women's associations engagement in grain storage projects (as was outlined in section two above.)

Yet despite the apparent advantages of community grain-storage activities for association members, both the Bòdlo and Savann associations faced numerous challenges in successfully managing their grain storage activities. Among the most difficult was getting members who had either been advanced association funds to purchase grain to deliver the grain promptly, or who had been advanced grain on credit to repay that credit once they had marketed the grain.

In Bòdlo, because each member *groupman* had considerable assets (in the form of its share of the association's capital) invested in the association, the association executive committee had considerable leverage to ensure members did deliver the grain which they had purchased with advanced association funds. Any outstanding funds could simply be deducted from a member *groupman*'s capital. However, some members appeared to be attempting to increase the 'bonus' price differential the association paid to members for delivered grain, by delaying delivery of purchased grain to the association silo. Since the market price would often rise as the harvest season progressed, some members would delay delivery, so that they could deliver a smaller quantity of grain (since the amount to be delivered for an advanced sum was based on the current market price at the time of delivery, plus a 'bonus' price differential of G0.50 per *mamit*.)¹⁷ This issue was one of the topics of discussion at the first Bòdlo association meeting I attended in March, when several groups had not yet delivered the sorghum for which they had been advanced funds, and again at several fall General Assembly meetings, when the conditions for the purchase of newly-harvested corn for the silo were debated. Members who engaged in such actions were clearly hurting the profitability of their association's enterprise. As the

¹⁷ For example, if a *groupman* leader had been advanced G500, and then purchased 100 *mamits* at G5.00, they would be required to deliver 91 *mamits* ($91 \times G5.50 = G500.00$). Members were given a 'bonus' price differential of G0.50 as remuneration for their effort in purchasing the grain. However, if the market price would increase to G5.50 during the time they delayed delivery, they would then only have to deliver 83 *mamits* ($83 \times G6.00 = G500.00$). Since association leaders would have difficulty knowing when a member actually had bought the grain (whether in the market or from their own production), there was little risk of detection - if the price by chance went *down*, they could claim they had already bought the grain before the price went down, and just had not had a chance to deliver it. If the price went up, as hoped, they could claim they had only just bought the grain since the price had increased, and benefit from an increased 'bonus'.

SC *animatè* stated, “You’re biting the hand that is feeding you.” Yet these members clearly chose their personal benefit over the communal goals of the association.

Members also negotiated with the Bòdlo association executive on several other conditions of the grain storage activity. At the March meeting, a group of members attempted to convince the executive committee to increase the ‘bonus’ paid on delivered grain from G0.50 per *mamit* to G1.00. This suggestion was resisted by the committee, since this would leave little profit for the association, considering that the margin between the purchase and selling price was usually only between G2.00 to G4.00. Some members then attempted to convince the committee to sell from the silo on credit, arguing that the lack of credit prevented the poorer members from participating and benefiting from this activity. This suggestion was also rejected, based on both local experience and the experience of other associations with selling grain on credit. Indeed, my visits to other associations and groups suggested that problems related to purchasing or selling on credit was the most common downfall of group storage schemes.

The experience of the Savann women’s association clearly illustrates the danger of selling grain to members on credit. As described in section two above, the Savann association’s experience with grain storage, though on a much smaller scale, was much less successful and more conflictual. Several of its member clubs still owed money to the association for grain they had received on credit in 1996. When the profit of the sorghum stored from January to June 1997 was calculated at the September association meeting, it was apparent that some groups again had failed to deliver the proceeds for the association grain they had sold. In total, over G2,200 in association funds were outstanding. There was also considerable suspicion and criticism from some association members concerning

the management of the grain storage project by the association leaders. Though I did not hear this criticism directly, it was evident from the defensive statements and reports given by the two association leaders who had managed the grain-storage (the association treasurer and an at-large executive committee member) that some association members suspected them of personally benefiting from their responsibilities for buying, selling and storing the grain.¹⁸

Thus, despite the 'empowerment' objectives of the grain-storage activities, some members seemed to be guided by very short-term, pragmatic and individualistic motivations in their dealings with their association. Some members were also suspicious that association leaders were also motivated by pragmatic, individual material gain. Any expectation by SC that the associations, because of their common collective goals, would function harmoniously and cooperatively, are clearly naive and simplistic. The 'mutual benefit' community development discourse repeated by the *animatès* and *animatrisés* had difficulty overcoming the simple material forces of personal benefit. The community grain storage projects was reinterpreted by local people in terms of their accumulated knowledges of how to 'get along', and became another 'resource' in their pragmatic

¹⁸ No direct evidence was provided that this was the case, and during my numerous contacts with these two leaders, they seemed to me to be quite dedicated and honest. In fact, they complained rather strongly about how most of the work involved in the grain-storage activity had been left to them (i.e. measuring the grain, selling it in the market), and they would have welcomed more involvement from other association members. It appeared to me that part of the suspicion stemmed from the poor literacy and numeracy skills of these two leaders (as well as Eranna, the SC *animatris*, whose own limited skills made it difficult for her to provide training and advice in this area.) The result was that the association leadership had difficulty keeping good written records and provide written reports of the transactions involved in the grain-storage activity. At the September Savann association meeting, the treasurer and Eranna provided, with great effort, a detailed financial accounting showing the expenses, income and profits (loss) from the mango drying and grain storage activities. One local club leader strongly questioned the treasurer during her presentation, concerning the amount of grain purchased and sold. I talked to the association treasurer after this meeting, and she expressed great relief in having been able to provide this financial accounting and respond to members' suspicions concerning the association's finances.

strategies for survival. Indeed, since it is questionable to what extent many members viewed the association as 'their' association, it was doubly easy to 'exploit' this 'outside' resource. As additional encounters described in the following sections show, members' pragmatic manoeuvres to obtaining immediate, personal benefit from association activities was a constant struggle in association activities.

Local *groupman* inactivity. The organizational foundation for each farmers' or women's association was considered by SC to be its member *groupmans* or women's clubs. In the case of the farmers' associations, SC documents stated that member *groupman* had been formed at the beginning of the SC program in Maissade, "based on traditional social linkages"¹⁹ (White and Quinn, 1992, p. 23), in order to engage in various soil conservation and income-generation projects. Though SC had ceased most of its programming in the area of agriculture and natural resource management, it expected that the *groupman* would continue their local cooperative efforts in improving both individual and collective livelihoods. In the case of the women's associations, the women's clubs were much newer organizational structures, not based on any pre-existing models in local social structure, but formed directly as a result of SC program initiatives. Yet these clubs, as well as the *groupmans*, were expected to form the base of a strong local community development organizations. They were intended to function as a solid 'first-line' in an ascending structure of collective action by local women and men, ensuring personal contact, communication and accountability among local members, their leaders, and the associations. Yet my research indicated that local-level *groupman* and

¹⁹ Based on my experience in Haiti, these 'traditional social linkages' would include pre-existing kin-based relations ('extended' family relations), exchange relations (people who had established exchange relations involving land and labour), and neighbourhood social relations.

women's club activity was quite low. Both women's clubs and *groupman* were 'maintained' by their leaders and members in quite a pragmatic and personalistic manner, with their activities and relationships in these groups centered primarily on continuing their access to the development resources that were offered by the associations and the SC program.

During the course of the fieldwork in Bòdlo, I attended six individual member *groupman* meetings. These visits resulted from requests I had made at association meetings, in which I had expressed interest in visiting such local *groupman* meetings. I had hoped and expected to receive more invitations as a result of my announcements. The paucity of invitations, combined with my informal observations during my frequent walks through and visits in the community, already suggested to me that many *groupman* were not very active.

This preliminary observation was reinforced by the *groupman* meetings that I did attend. At three of the *groupman* I visited, the group leader freely admitted at the beginning of the meetings that "it had been some days since we've last met." From the reports that were given during meetings, it was also evident that several of the groups had few active projects. This was particularly true for two *groupman* that had joined the Bòdlo association only recently. In one of these *groupman* (which had joined the Bòdlo association in 1995), members had contributed monthly dues until they had massed sufficient funds to join the association, but had then ceased collecting dues. Thus they were able to participate in the IPSA credit activity (they had received a loan of G1000, which they reported was divided among the 19 group members), but had not yet gathered additional funds in order to contribute the 25 percent match for a *kès popilè* loan. They

did not appear to have any other local activity, such as a grain storage activity, a group garden, or labour exchange arrangements.

The second *groupman* had initially not been a member of the Bòdlo association, but had used their group savings from monthly dues for a local grain-storage project. They told me that they had lost some of this capital when a robber had broke into their depot in 1993, but six months later they had resumed their monthly contributions and massed the G680 they needed to join the association in 1994. Currently, they said they still had a very small grain storage activity with the remaining G400 in their *groupman* fund, though they had also ceased their monthly contributions. The group's other activity was participation in the association *kès popilè* activity, though not all members were 'able' to participate. As the group leader stated, "we don't encourage everyone to take the credit, [because] some don't have the means to repay." Individual members who could raise a G50 'share' pooled their funds and then each received a G200 loan, which their leader stated was used for "buying and reselling animals, planting gardens, and doing marketing." In this situation, clearly the *groupman* was simply a channel for individual members to gain and maintain access to association resources.

A third *groupman* I visited was an original founding group of the association, and was lead by 'Fanius', the association treasurer. He was one of the richer people in the community²⁰, and had been active in various local development activities since the 1960s, including being part of the local *konsey kominote*, which "they had formed to do development, to make roads." Fanius stated that this group had formed in 1984, in order

²⁰ He owned a diesel-engine-powered sugar cane mill, which was installed in the middle of a cane field some distance from his house; his daughter worked as a government nurse-auxiliary in another town on the Central Plateau; and his brother was pastor of a Baptist Haitian-immigrant church in New York.

to participate in an FAO pig repopulation project.²¹ His group (its eight members included his wife and his son) had significantly more assets than the previous two groups I had visited, with G1400 invested in their own local grain storage activity, and the largest loan (G8000) of any of the member *groupman* from the Bòdlo association *kès popilè*. During the meeting I attended, the agenda consisted entirely of Fanius giving information to the five members present concerning the upcoming *kès popilè* repayments²², details concerning the association grain storage activities, and the activities of *AGPM* (*Asosyasyon Groupman Peyizan Mayisad*, the federation of farmers' associations). I also noted, when I asked Fanius if I could see the *groupman* notebook in order to check members' names, that (according to the notebook) this was the first group meeting since March. This notebook also contained a financial ledger for the group funds, which recorded numerous withdrawals and the balance declining to G400 as funds were used to purchase corn for their storage activity, then a single entry (without any description) which stated the fund balance was G1800. Thus it appeared that Fanius, as the leader of the *groupman*, exercised considerable unaccountable control over the

²¹ This pig repopulation project was part of a country-wide program to re-introduce pigs after African Swine Fever had infected the indigenous Haitian pigs (see Chapter Four). The U.S. government financed a program to eradicate all Haitian pigs, in order to eliminate the disease locally and prevent its spread to the mainland United States. The *groupman* leader stated that his group had received funds from the FAO to build several pig pens to hold breeding stock, though they had to buy the pigs themselves from another source. Concerning his earlier involvement in 'development', the *groupman* leader stated that in 1965, "we formed Community Council groups, to do development and to make roads." The Ministry of Agriculture had also given them supplies to make a coffee seedling nursery during that period.

²² Here, he made a comment that further suggested the pragmatic approach of members to association credit resources. He stated that he hoped the *kès popilè* loans would be reissued within a few weeks, "in time for the start of school." Here, he implicitly acknowledged that many people pragmatically used the loans for immediate 'consumption' needs (as opposed to the intended investments in productive assets), and would have to somehow plan some means to raise the required cash sum for the loan repayment at the time the credit came due (i.e. by selling some asset or planning some other productive activity to produce a liquid cash sum at the required time).

groupman's finances. Though these observations do not constitute conclusive proof, it seemed to me that this *groupman* was strongly controlled by its leader, and again functioned primarily as a means of access to SC program resources.

Another of the *groupman* I attempted to visit (also a 'founding' *groupman*, to which both the association vice-president and secretary belonged) had a first meeting date postponed, and then on a second date only a few members attended. According to the association vice-president (who appeared to be its leader,) this 11-member *groupman* also had significant financial resources, with G2200 in their *groupman* fund. They utilized this money to engage in grain storage, and also owned a plow (but no draught cows) which members could use. They had also previously participated in the *kès popilè* loans, but several members had not been able to repay at the end of the previous cycle, and so the leader had covered for them. But since they had not yet repaid him, he stated that he "had not let them enter the credit this time."

Several other incidents and comments at association meetings also suggested significant weaknesses in local *groupman*, related both to levels of activity and levels of transparency and democratic functioning. As will be discussed further below, attendance at the association *Asamble Jeneral* rarely attracted more than 30 or 40 members, out of a total membership of approximately 180 members. Usually only two or three representatives of a *groupman* would attend, and these would inevitably be the *groupman* leaders. At the distribution of the IPSA loans, it seemed that these *groupman* leaders played a strong role in determining which of their group members would be 'allowed' to obtain a loan. With the *kès popilè* loans, several people mentioned that they had heard that in one *groupman*, the leader had kept all the money for himself, and not distributed it

among all the *groupman* members. As seen in one of the *groupman* I visited, the loans were not divided equally, but were allocated directly to those members who made the 25 percent matching contribution. Another *groupman* leader, when he was making his group's loan repayment with several thick stacks of small bills, elicited this joking comment from another member of the association, "Well, it seems like you really do have a group after all!"

I also observed similar weaknesses in the functioning of the women's clubs. The women's clubs had received little attention from the SC *animatrices* since the summer of 1996, due to the combination of the reduction in the number of *animatrices* with the ending of the WCI project funding, and the need of the newly-formed women's associations for training and facilitation from the *animatrices*. By early 1997, SC staff were reporting increasingly poor attendance at association General Assembly meetings, as well as increasing inactivity in many local women's clubs. In response, during July of the research period, SC program managers instructed the *animatrices* to reduce the monthly General Assembly meetings of the associations to once every three months, and to start meeting with local clubs again. In the Savann association, since there were a total of 16 member clubs - too many to meet with individually - Eranna began to organize meetings with groups of three clubs that were clustered within a short distance.

I attended a total of eight of these meetings with local clubs, and my observations confirmed the earlier assessment of the low level of activity and cohesion in the women's clubs. Three of these meetings had to be postponed to a later date, as not enough people

came to merit holding the meeting.²³ Of the five meetings that were held, an average of eight members per club attended, which was less than half of the total membership of these clubs. At these meetings, most clubs reported some local club activity, usually grain storage using money from the club's saving fund which had been formed when the clubs were first organized. No clubs, however, reported that members were making continuing regular contributions to the club fund. Several clubs reported discouragement among their members, some complaining that members did not know how the club's funds were being invested and were not receiving any financial reports from the club leaders. Several clubs also reported problems with outstanding loans to club members, loans created either during the purchase or sale of grain, or during a family financial emergency such as illness. Eranna responded to this problem with the following comment: "Why are you in a club? So one can help another. But there are people who once they've received some money, they think its money from their club, they won't repay it. Loaning people money can wreck a club. It's something I'm afraid of."

At several of the meetings, Eranna attempted to use a combination of motivation and threat to get increased participation in the clubs. On the one hand, she told the women that "for the project [SC] to help you, you have to be active", clearly expressing the pragmatic, access-to-resources understanding that many people held concerning their membership in the clubs and associations. Conversely, on at least three occasions Eranna also employed the threat of exclusion from the clubs and association, telling people "I've

²³ This means that some people did show up for the meeting, but usually after waiting some time for additional people to arrive, Eranna (alone or in consultation with the group leaders) would decide that not enough people were present to merit holding the meeting.

come this month, if a member is absent three times, I'll remove them from the association, I'll put a line through their name in my notebook."²⁴

On five occasions I also visited individual clubs on my own, having fixed dates directly with club leaders, independently from Eranna. Two of these meetings did not succeed (the meeting had either been cancelled on short notice, or too few members showed up and the meeting was postponed), and an additional two meetings were primarily literacy classes, with a short club meeting appended after the literacy lesson was finished. Another club delegate, when I asked her if I could visit her club, admitted to me that her club mostly just met at the association *Asamblea Jeneral*, or when Eranna came for meetings with local clubs. At the single 'regular' club meeting I attended, the leader of the club (who was also the Savann women's association president) admitted that her club had not been meeting regularly. This made me wonder if she had organized the club meeting in response to my requests, made at the association meetings, to visits some local clubs.

My observations while attending women's club meetings both with and without Eranna also indicated that the club leaders (like the *groupman* leaders described above) had significant interest in maintaining a 'good' functioning club. Leaders of the clubs (called 'delegates') were supposed to transmit training received at SC health seminars to club members. The delegates also enrolled local underweight children in the SC 'nutrition demonstration foyers' (part of SC's WAND project), and assisted the SC field staff during the two weeks the foyers ran. They received a small stipend (approximately

²⁴This comment by Eranna also reveals much about the role the *animatrices* played in the associations. I will discuss this point in the next section.

G125 or US\$8) for this 'work'. Thus delegates received significant benefit from their positions, both materially in terms of the stipend they were paid, and in terms of community prestige as gate-keepers for the nutrition foyers. A number of club delegates were also hired by SC as literacy 'monitors' (teachers) for the literacy classes SC organized with the women's clubs as part of its WCI funding. Thus, when I asked the husband of one club delegate what 'advantage' (benefit) his wife received from the activities of her club, he replied, "She receives a salary from the club."

From these observations, it is clear that both *groupmans* and women's clubs hold very different meanings for local program participants, compared to SC program intentions and understandings. While SC understood them to be community structures for mutual self-help and 'empowerment', local people's understanding (knowledge) of them was much more pragmatic and utilitarian. Though the dominant development practice (discourse) enabled SC to promote and induce the formation and function of these community groups, it could not prevent local people from reinterpreting and effectively redefining their practical meaning. Though SC attempted to instill 'standard' or 'normal' *groupman* or club activities - such as attending monthly meetings, making regular financial contributions to the group treasury, engaging in a joint income-generating project or reciprocal labour sharing (in the case of the *groupman*) - these activities were only continued in a weak manner sufficient to maintain good standing in the SC program (i.e. the monthly group meetings and group income-generating projects), or not continued at all (i.e. the regular financial contributions). *Groupman* and women's clubs were largely reinterpreted in terms of dominant local knowledges concerning how to gain access to development project resources. Thus membership and local group

'activity' were maintained in an informal and 'loose' manner, in order to sustain ascending social relations to more 'powerful' social actors represented by the SC development program.

In theoretical terms, then, the discourse of community development, dominant throughout Haiti (and most of the rest of the 'developing' world) established relations of power which enabled SC to implement the 'normal' practices of community group formation and activity in Maissade. But these power relations, following Foucault and Long, are not fixed, but remain variable, multiple and contested. Local people, while remaining within these established power relations, are also able to subvert them according to their own 'subjugated' 'local' knowledges of how community development and traditional social relations work in rural Haiti. As described above, the activities of women and men *groupman* and women's club members deflect the intentions of the SC program to 'empower'. Yet, conversely, through these deflections and renegotiations, they are also able to utilize SC program interventions to their own perceived benefit, according to their own knowledges and identities within the dominant relations of power.

Association Meeting Attendance. The level of activity of local *groupmans* and women's clubs was not the only site where the discontinuous and contested nature of development knowledges and power relations was visible. Member participation in the community associations was another (related) site of negotiation and contestation, particularly the issue of attendance at the associations' regular *Asamble Jeneral* (AJ) meetings. The meetings were one of the most visible indicators of the successful functioning of the associations, with high attendance being the most important indicator of a successful meeting. Well-attended meetings became a symbol of - or came to

represent or mean - a successful community association. Thus the associations' meetings became a site where relations of power related to the SC development program were contested and made visible.

The issue of meeting attendance was most prominent in the Women's Association in Savann, as it was a younger, less-well-functioning association than the Bòdlo farmers' association. Furthermore, the association *Asanble Jeneral* was one of the few visible 'manifestations' of the Savann women's association, since all of its other activities only involved a few members and only occurred periodically (i.e. the three weeks of mango-drying only involved five to ten women, its training seminars on community health topics only involved club delegates, and its grain storage activities were largely performed by the two women responsible for this activity at their own home *kolombyes*.) Yet attendance at the *Asanble Jeneral* of the association was often poor, and became a issue of contention between SC staff and association members.

Out of the total of eight scheduled *Asanble Jeneral* that I attended in Savann, only three resulted in a 'successful' meeting in which the planned agenda was discussed. (Several other 'successful' AJ were held during this period, but I was not able to attend them.) The other five were all postponed or cancelled, for a number of reasons: people claimed the message that Eranna (the SC *animatrix* for Savann) had sent concerning a cancelled training seminar for club delegates had been misunderstood to mean the AJ was cancelled, once Eranna had not yet returned from a trip to Port-au-Prince (the truck she was travelling on back from Port-au-Prince had either broken down on the road or became stuck in the mud after a rain), another time Eranna was not able to attend because

her young son was sick and she needed to go to the medical clinic in town with him²⁵, another time members were attending a funeral for a local person, and once most of the association leaders were busy running the SC nutrition demonstration foyers that they had been chosen to do in their communities. At almost every meeting date, it often took at least an hour after the 'official-agreed-upon' starting time and/or Eranna's arrival before sufficient members would arrive for the meeting to begin, and at least the members who lived nearby seemed to have a system of calling to each other when they saw her pass on the path or arrive, to tell them whether to go to the association meeting. Poor attendance at the association *Asamble Jeneral* was another reason that SC field staff were directed to return to meeting with local women's clubs, in order to rebuild local members' motivation and interest. On one occasion, the treasurer of the association, who lived on the path leading to the association building, specifically complained that Eranna had not called to her as she had passed to tell her that the meeting was on. Of course, it was very difficult to judge the legitimacy of some of these offered reasons - some clearly were legitimate reasons for the meeting failure. Yet others seemed little more than 'polite faces' on what seemed to be expressions of resistance, stemming from dissatisfaction or discouragement with some aspect of the association, its leadership, or Eranna, their *animatrix*.

On several other occasions, the opposite appeared to be true, with attendance at *Asamble Jeneral* being very high. On these occasions, this high turnout of association

²⁵ The fact that the absence of the SC *animatrix* or *animatè* usually caused the cancellation of an association's meeting (or at least poorer attendance) indicates the important role she or he played in maintaining these structures. I will take up a discussion of the role of the SC animation field workers in the associations, in terms of competing local knowledges of development, further below in this chapter.

members appeared to be linked with advance knowledge that meeting agenda items were particularly important or valuable. For example, two weeks before the first AJ that I attended in Savann, over 200 people had attended a 'special' AJ meeting that had been called at SC's request, so that several officials from the SC headquarters office in Westport could 'meet' with a representative community association. It seemed that extra effort had clearly been made by SC project staff to communicate to association members that this was an important meeting, and to ensure that people turned out, so as not to embarrass or reflect negatively on the local SC program. After the regular AJ meeting two weeks later was postponed because of poor attendance, Eranna the *animatrix* suggested that the poor turn-out was related to 'meeting fatigue' after the good attendance at the extraordinary meeting only two weeks earlier, as well as 'agenda fatigue', since there was nothing specific on regular meeting agenda. The AJ that I attended that had the highest attendance also had a 'special' agenda item that had been communicated to the member clubs. In this case, it concerned the UCS initiative,²⁶ which was presented to the people in attendance as a 'new system' for organizing local services, which offered the possibility of increased services such as a new local clinic building, and association leaders seemed to want to ensure that sufficient interest and the community would be seen to 'merit' these new services and resources.

Similarly, attendance at the meetings of the Bòdlo farmers' association could be seen to be related to the perceived importance or interest in members in the anticipated

²⁶ The UCS (Fr. *Unite Coordination Sante*) was a government Ministry of Health initiative, funded by a World Bank loan, to improve the coordination and delivery of 'a minimum package of health services' in all areas of the country. SC was the Ministry's 'partner' in Maissade, effectively being delegated the responsibility for delivery health services in the commune.

agenda of the meetings. When a similar meeting was held in Bòdlo concerning the UCS initiative, a larger than average crowd attended the meeting, and attendance was again high when the meeting was scheduled to discuss the distribution of credit to member groups. Conversely, attendance was poor on a previous date when member *groupman* had to submit their loan repayments from the previous loan cycle.

SC field and management staff recognized the attendance problem of the association *Asamble Jeneral*. The SC 'institutional development coordinator', in a December 1997 report on the institutional capacity of the women's associations, wrote that attendance at association meetings was poor because members "are for the most part discouraged because they don't see anything concrete that they are individually benefiting [from the association]" (Jean-Francois, 1997, p. 11). For many members, meetings together did not seem to produce any concrete results, in comparison to specific group activities, such as storing grain, distributing loans, or engaging in mango drying. Conversely, SC management staff understood the 'processual' function of the meetings, within the discourse of community development knowledge, in terms of promoting and building association management skills. Since the associations were voluntary community organizations, they saw the meetings as important fora where information sharing, cooperative discussions and (usually) consensual decision making took place. These discussion and decision-making processes and skills were essential for realizing the 'concrete' material benefits of the group, and for achieving 'empowerment'.

While association members largely did not share this understanding of the association meetings, they did understand the importance of maintaining their status as 'good' well-functioning associations, and the role of 'successful' well-attended

association meetings in keeping this status in the eyes of the SC program. Thus the meetings took on a symbolic function, as indicators of successful 'development', and became the site where program participants contested power relations with SC. SC was able to induce minimum levels of participation at the association meetings, while community members used their participation to 'earn' access to development program resources. As Eranna, the SC *animatrix* stated at one meeting, "The more you are interested, the more they [SC] aim²⁷ to help you."

Yet the meetings also had a very real and tangible cost for each participant, in terms of the time they required, time that otherwise could potentially be used for other purposes. Thus the attendance of each member represented the outcome of a complex calculus of interest and understanding, in which a whole range of factors were included: the perceived potential for material benefit (of both attendance at this particular meeting and of the longer-term success of the association), the symbolic importance and meaning attached to participation in 'development', social obligations and ties to their club leader (who, due to the presence or absence of conflict with the association leadership, may or may not be encouraging club members to attend), social obligations and ties to the association leaders, competing demands on their time for 'domestic', 'marketing' and 'farm' tasks such as doing the wash, selling in a local market, field hoeing, cooking for a work group hired by themselves or their husband.

²⁷ The *kreyol* word Eranna used was *vize* (Fr. *viser*), meaning to aim at, to direct toward, to see, to be concerned with.

The role of the SC animator. While the analysis of the preceding three domains of association activity reveals the strong pragmatic and material orientation of development participation for many association members, examination of the role of the SC *animatè* and *animatris* in the Bòdlo and Savann associations introduces how social relations are also important aspects of how development is negotiated at the community level. Here, local understandings concerning the unequal but reciprocal social relations between ‘common’ people and ‘powerful’ leaders and officials encounters NGO notions of staff ‘professionalism’ within the discourse of community development, empowerment, and local organizational capacity development.

As has been described in Chapter Five, the building of local organizational capacity, in the form of the farmers’ and women’s associations, is a key strategy for achieving SC’s program goals of community empowerment and sustainable development. However, this building of organizational capacity is not easily achieved, and a key input into this process is the ‘animation’ provided to the associations by the SC field staff of *animatè* and *animatris*. The concept of animation, originally from the French variant of community development called *animation rural*, is a somewhat vague and broad concept, encompassing notions of facilitation, coaching, training, and supervision.²⁸ Since the associations were officially ‘partners’ with SC, who in the somewhat near future were expected to become ‘independent’ of the support of the SC program, the animation team was not supposed to exercise direct authority in the associations. Rather, through training, advice, coaching and encouragement, they were supposed to build local

²⁸ As discussed in footnote 4 in this chapter, the *kreyol*/French term *ankadre/encadrer*, with its connotations of supervision and training, was also frequently used by local people in Maissade to describe the work of the *animatè* and *animatris*.

association leaders' abilities to manage and lead their own affairs, and gradually reduce their own interventions. They were expected to provide sufficient support in order to ensure the associations were successful in their endeavours, but not too much so that dependence was created or maintained.

In practice, providing this balance of 'enough, but not too much' support was a difficult task for the *animatè* and *animatrisès*. In Bòdlo, I observed that 'Jean', the SC *animatè*, continued to play a key role in the functioning of the association, despite the fact that the association was considered to be one of the most competent of the farmers' associations in the SC program. Before most *Asanble Jeneral* and *Komitè Direktè* meetings, while members were still arriving, Jean would usually sit down off to the side with members of the executive committee to determine the meeting agenda. Though the association president would open the meeting, and usually introduce the discussion on new agenda items, Jean would often end up moderating the meeting when discussions became heated or difficult. Or, while members engaged in loud debate, he would have a little 'huddle' with the key executive committee members, and then one of them would announce a proposed resolution to the item under debate, which almost invariably would be accepted by the members.

I observed this occurring numerous times. During the discussion concerning IPSA loans (see above), it was Jean who proposed how the association should deal with those who had not yet repaid the previous year's loans, and he ended the protestations from members concerning the interest rate to be charged with a speech that reminded members of the fairness of the association credit rates compared to 'market' rates available from money-lenders. During the debates concerning the conditions for buying

corn for the association silo, it was Jean who ended the debate by announcing that the committee has decided that the price 'bonus' would remain at G0.50 per *mamit*, and gave a speech encouraging members "not to bite the hand that is feeding you", and be conscientious in their dealing with the association. In the drawn out manoeuvres between the association executive and members during successive meetings concerning the repayment of the *kès popilè* loans, Jean again played a key role, making numerous interventions to encourage the members to respect the conditions of the credit program. Before several of these meetings, he pulled aside the leaders of individual *groupman* to encourage (or pressure) them to repay their loans, or to give them advice on how to get delinquent members to repay their share of the *groupman* loan.

Yet despite Jean's readiness to continue to take a leading role in the affairs of the Bòdlo association, he also repeatedly warned the members that "one day you won't see me anymore"- one day they would no longer have a SC *animatè* to work with them. He was quite conscious of the fact that he was expected by SC's community development discourse to work with the Bòdlo association in such a manner that they would eventually become 'independent' and not require outside SC support. In fact, Jean seemed to use this language as a prod (or threat?) whenever the association members were faced with a difficult problem or decision, in an attempt to get them to resolve the issue themselves. Yet, as the incidents described above demonstrate, he had difficulty actually stepping back and allowing this to happen. Before another meeting, when I asked Jean what the agenda for the meetings was going to be, he said that there was not much of importance scheduled and so he intended to remain a spectator. Yet once the meeting began, he did in fact direct the agenda of the meeting.

The personalized nature of relations between the association and its *animatè* was also illustrated during the meeting in October, when 'Jacques', who had been the SC *animatè* for the Bòdlo association from 1989 to 1994, attended the meeting. He was received particularly warmly, and despite the fact that he no longer had any direct responsibility for the SC program in Bòdlo, he made several key interventions in the meeting. Near the end of the meeting, which turned out to be somewhat disorganized in the manner the agenda was discussed, Jacques gave a speech to the association members which seemed to reinforce the patron-like relationship between himself and the association. In his speech, he first scolded the members for the manner in which the meeting was run, saying "he felt deceived", in that despite the training he had given them they still did "could not even run a meeting." Then he went on to encourage the association members, telling them that the former director of the SC Maissade project, who now worked for a World Bank project, sent them his greeting and the 'informal' news that the irrigation project for the Bòdlo area will soon get new financing, and so members should be vigilant against land speculators offering to buy their land. These messages seemed to me to reinforce Jacques' social standing in the eyes of the association members, and local understandings of the importance of social ties to more 'powerful' and connected people as keys to getting ahead and accessing 'development'.

Very similar encounters between pragmatic local understandings and SC program expectations occurred in the Savann women's association. As mentioned above, the Savann association was considerably less experienced than the Bòdlo farmers' association, and therefore even more dependent on Eranna, its SC *animatris*. As described above, on two occasions a meeting of the association *Asanble Jeneral* was

postponed when it became apparent that Eranna would not be able to attend. On another occasion, when Eranna already knew that she would not be able to attend a previously scheduled AJ, several members of the executive committee told her, “don’t tell anyone you’re not coming to the AJ, or no one will attend.” When she in fact did not attend the AJ (which was attended by only approximately 35 members), many of those who did attend were angry that Eranna was absent. Several other meeting of the association *komite egzekitif* and club delegates also had very poor attendance when it was expected that Eranna would not be attending.

During both *Asanble Jeneral* and *komite egzekitif* meetings, Eranna controlled the meetings, determining the agenda and moderating the discussion, and often suggesting what decision should be made. Rarely did the association president or other members of the association executive committee moderate any part of a meeting. In fact, on several occasions, when I asked the association president what the agenda for the upcoming meeting was, she replied that she did not know, but that Eranna ‘had’ the agenda.

The dominating and patron-like role of the SC *animatrix* was also evident during the discussions concerning attendance at association meeting. As was noted above, Eranna displayed a very commanding and directing role in these discussions, announcing at several meetings that if members missed three consecutive meetings, she herself would remove people from the association member list (see above). Clearly she considered herself to have *de facto* charge of the association, and no association member challenged her appropriation of this authority.

Several other incidents, though seemly rather trivial when taken individually, taken together further reinforce the dominant role of the SC *animatrix* in the Savann

association. During the opening prayer of one *Asanble Jeneral*, a member prayed “Bless the *animatris* who brings to us, bless us who listen [to what she says].” At a meeting of a local women’s club, after the club delegate had delivered a health lesson concerning respiratory infections (a lesson she had previously received at a seminar,) encouraged members thus: “Don’t forget this lesson, because Eranna might ask you questions about it.” This was a rather overt admission that remembering the health lesson was not primarily important for its value in improving their children’s health, but for how it would help them maintain their reputation with Eranna (and the SC program in general) as a ‘good’ club.

The role played by the SC *animatè* and *animatris* in the Bòdlo and Savann associations clearly represents a case of the encounter of the dominant, established local patterns of social relations in rural Haiti with the development discourse ideals of empowerment, *animation*, and egalitarian relations. Local people considered the SC *animatè* and *animatris* to be powerful and important people in Bòdlo/Savann. Even aside from their role as *animatè* and *animatris*, their salaried jobs and exposure to training with SC meant they were richer and better-connected than almost everyone else living in Bòdlo/Savann. In their positions as SC *animatè* and *animatris*, they were additionally understood by local people to be key gatekeepers to the valuable resources of the SC program.²⁹ These local understandings of the operation of social relations with

²⁹ This was in fact true, particularly in the recruitment of women’s club delegates for several types of stipend-paid positions in the SC literacy and community health programs. The *animatris* were regularly consulted by SC management staff to provide the names of appropriate people who could fill these short-term positions as literacy class teachers and nutrition foyer assistants. This was an important reason most club delegates wanted to maintain their club’s (and hence their own) reputation as ‘good’ program participants.

'powerful' people were largely incongruous with SC's models of animation and empowerment. Within the SC empowerment discourse, the SC *animatè* and *animatris* were expected to 'facilitate' local capacity, 'transfer' power to local people, and therefore reduce their own power and influence in the associations. They were supposed to 'work themselves out of a job.' Contrary to established logic, local people were expected to utilize the important social relation they had with the *animatè* and *animatris* less and less. They were expected to become 'independent', able to function without an *animatè* or *animatris*, and the SC program itself eventually.

From the descriptions provided above, it is clear that this was not happening, and that the established patterns of using social relations predominated in its encounter with the newer empowerment discourse of the SC development program. Both the SC animators and local people seemed 'caught' in the dominant, expected patterns of social relations between 'more powerful' and 'less powerful' people, and therefore, the role of *animatè* and *animatris* tended to be exercised and understood in terms of these dominant social relations of patronage and gatekeeping, and rural inferiority and dependency. Again, local understandings concerning the meaning and identity of an 'animator' are able to subvert those constructed through SC's community development discourse. These local knowledges deflect the intentions of the SC program, and produce new and variable relations of power between the SC animation team and local community organizations and their leaders.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the practices and strategies of SC and local community actors at the site of the community associations, in order to make visible the contests of meanings and values that cumulatively shape power/knowledge relations between Save the Children and local people. I have demonstrated how the community development associations were key sites where dominant discourses of development established and reinforced meanings, identities and knowledges concerning development. For SC, the community associations are a key strategic element of its program interventions aimed at empowerment and sustainability, while local people in general were enthusiastic in embracing the associations, and saw them as important symbolic representations of, and material avenues towards, 'development'. In this sense, the various practices associated with the associations demonstrate the powerful effect of the dominant 'managerialist' and 'modernist' discourses of development. Yet my analysis has also demonstrated and emphasized how these relations are not fixed, or stable, but rather are variable and multiple. Thus, the associations were also the sites where local actors contested, negotiated and reinterpreted the meanings, identities, and knowledges associated with dominant development discourses in various ways. Careful attention to actual practices related to the associations - pragmatic manoeuvres to gain maximum individual advance from group grain storage activities, the symbolic maintenance of increasingly inactive local *groupman* and women's clubs, the management of attendance levels at association meetings, and the inability of SC animators to function in a genuinely empowering manner - reveal the resistances, renegotiations and reinterpretations that occur in the encounter of NGO and local development discourses.

Chapter Seven

SITES OF ENCOUNTER: KITCHEN GARDENS, WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER ROLES IN DEVELOPMENT

Fenced kitchen gardens were one of the innovations promoted by the SC program as part of their attempts to empower rural women. SC's focus on women's production in these home-yard gardens was intended to support both women's increasingly important role in agriculture, particularly subsistence food production (White, 1993), and women's key role in child nutrition, particularly the increased provision of vitamin-rich foods.

This chapter will examine a range of contested understandings of gender relations and 'women's development' that are revealed at the site of these gardens, and more broadly, SC's program interventions promoting these gardens, and gendered rural development programs in general. First it critically examines 'official' SC program discourse - how it constructs women's role in rural society in general and in agriculture in particular, and the importance and role of kitchen gardens. This SC 'knowledge' is then contrasted with the understandings of women and men who both did and did not adopt kitchen gardens, as well as direct observed evidence of the manner in which the kitchen gardens were adopted and managed. The second part of the chapter then utilizes the 'window' provided by the promotion of the kitchen gardens to examine gender contestation and negotiation around the gardens and over the larger concept of 'development'. Rural women's adoption of kitchen gardens, as well as their participation in the women's club associations, are ways in which they (and often their husbands) see themselves as becoming 'developed'. Yet these new roles also produce resistance,

contradiction and negotiation in the household and the community. The various discourses and strategies employed by women and men are examined to illustrate the complex and contradictory nature of the 'empowerment' that women are experiencing as a result of the SC program.

The SC Discourse Concerning Women's Empowerment, Agriculture and Gardens

The ability of an international NGO such as Save the Children to legitimate its program interventions depends on establishing the 'truth' of its claims concerning the needs of rural Haitians. Its ability to deploy material program resources depends on the establishment of relations of power through particular discourses related to women's empowerment, their role in Haitian agriculture, and the value of kitchen gardens in promoting development. In this first section of the chapter, I examine and critique these discourses, and detail how they are contested by local discourses and practices.

1. Women's Empowerment

As has been discussed in the previous chapters, a major component of SC's programming in Maissade since 1992 has been the implementation of the concept of 'women's empowerment', within an overall framework of community development. This focus on women's empowerment came from both the observed dynamism of numerous 'mother's clubs' active in the community health/child survival component of SC's program in the late 1980s (Tamari, 1992), and the emphasis in development practice on women's key role in development (WID and GAD theory and practice, i.e. Moser, 1993). The goal of this program was "to contribute to human development and the

empowerment of resource-poor women and children as critical participants and beneficiaries of their community's social and economic development" (SC, 1992, p. 2).¹

This women's empowerment strategy was implemented, starting in 1992, through SC's Woman and Child Impact (WCI) program, funded by U.S.AID (see Chapter Five.) In the WCI "Detailed Implementation Plan" document (SC, 1992, p. 7), in a section entitled "Problem analysis/justification of activities", the status of women in rural Haiti is described as follows:

Women are perceived as objects, are subject to violence by their husbands and do not take decisions within the family, despite their important economic, agricultural and household management roles. The cultural assignment of inferior social status to women and their traditional acceptance of this contributes to the physical and economic hardships they suffer. The 1985 qualitative study of a Maissade community by Chavannes noted that undervaluing of women was illustrated by the proverb 'women are tree leaves' - they fall and are stepped on.

While there is no contesting the overall inferior status of women in rural Haitian society, the SC description of women as powerless, 'not taking decisions' within the family 'despite their important economic, agricultural and household management roles', is contradictory and striking. If women have important economic, agricultural and household management roles, how can they not be actively involved in decision-making? It seems that SC planners considered that the implementation of 'empowerment' required justification through an initial construction of rural Haitian women as powerless, passive agents. The simplistic and paradoxical nature of this characterization is revealed within

¹ Schroeder, citing the work of Whitehead (1981) and Schoonmaker-Freudenberger (1991), notes that such WID projects are characterized by a strong underlying conviction that women are motivated in their economic activities in ways that differ fundamentally from those of men. Put simply, women are considered to be more attuned to 'bread and butter' issues of food and family welfare than are men: they are considered to be better parents because they are seen to be more responsible providers. Funding of women's projects was thus a logical, direct, and cost-effective means of making investments 'pay off' in terms of family well-being (Schroeder, 1996, p. 71).

the same document. Several pages earlier in an introductory background section, the document states “While women’s major responsibility for family economic survival and household management is recognized (women are called pillars *poto mitan* of the family), a peasant woman is not considered the equal of her husband” (SC, 1992, p. 4). This quote more realistically describes the active yet unequal role women play in Haitian households and communities.

Taken together, these ambiguous portrayals of rural Haitian women as both ‘pillars’ and ‘leaves’ begins to reveal the complex and contested nature of gender roles in the rural Haitian household. This view is supported in the anthropological and other literature on the Haitian household:

Anthropologists and sociologists generally admit that Haitian society is patriarchal and matrifocal. These two fundamental traits equally characterize Haitian families: men/fathers represent the force of authority, but women/mothers nonetheless retain the concrete daily management [of the household], and family life is organized around them (Tardif/CIFD, 1992, p. 55).

Lowenthal, writing of the ‘conjugal contract’² that defines gender relations in the Haitian household, states that “a woman in union is not seen, by herself or others, as a man’s

² The term ‘conjugal contract’ was coined by Whitehead (1981, p. 88) to describe the terms upon which the various responsibilities of supporting and sustaining the household are divided. As Huntington notes,

although this division of responsibilities is broadly based on culturally accepted gender roles and ideologies, the details of the conjugal contract are neither fixed nor constant: they must be expected to vary from one couple to another and to be subject to change over time. Indeed, as Jane Guyer (1988, p. 172) notes: ‘the specialization [of gender roles and responsibilities] is never complete; it oscillates according to each sex’s ability to cope with its own sphere, and its ability either to tap into the other or to shift the responsibility’. Within this reality, women may actively engage in manipulation and negotiation of their conjugal contract so as to create more favourable terms of exchange, thus granting them access to new levels of decision making power and control over household resources (Huntington, 1998, p. 240).

'dependent' but as his partner. Yet she is still expected to 'follow his orders', or else she will be accused of pushing him away or into external affairs" (Lowenthal, 1984, p. 25).

Thus, any simplistic notion of 'powerless' Haitian women is clearly inaccurate, and a program of 'women's empowerment' must take into account the current complex and contested nature of gender relations in rural Haiti. Yet the WCI planning document only superficially acknowledges the integral nature of gender roles - that is, the interrelated and interdependent nature of women's *and* men's roles. The document notes in several places that male 'hostility' may be a possible 'constraint' to the empowerment interventions, but rather naively proposes that "[m]ale SC project staff will work to sensitize men to the importance of women's empowerment" (SC, 1992, p. 2), and "[m]en's attitudes and behaviour will be positively affected through ultimate benefits brought by women to the household" (p. 8). Beyond this, however, the contested nature of gender relations is not specifically addressed.

Overall, SC intervention discourse constructs contradictory images of powerless and burdened Haitian women, and the seemingly a-political, uncontested and positive-sum nature of its women's empowerment interventions. Clearly both cannot hold. What is consistent is that this 'needs' discourse mediates a certain type of relationship between poor women and development programs, positioning women as clients in relation to the interventions of SC (Escobar, 1995a, p. 224; Fraser, 1989, p. 11). Power relations are established which legitimate outside intervention. Yet a brief look at the literature on Haitian gender relations already suggests more complex, subtle and variable combinations of partnership, subjection and contestation. Following Foucault, relations of power are better conceived as multiple, changing, and producing their own resistance.

The analysis of women's and men's contestation of women's participation in development presented below will illustrate how dominant gendered and intervention power relations are indeed more complex, variable and contested.

2. Women's Role in Agriculture

A second area of SC program discourse that can be analyzed concerns women's role in agriculture. A important rationale for the inclusion of agricultural interventions aimed at women (including, but not limited to, the promotion of kitchen gardens³) in SC's women's empowerment strategy is the understanding of women's key role in agriculture. The WCI document admits that previous SC program interventions, promoting natural resources management, were targeted mostly toward men, because of "commonly held stereo-types" which held that men controlled the agricultural domain, and that "women were only interested in petty commerce", which "precluded time and energy to devote themselves to careful application of methods to improve crop production" (SC, 1992, p. 9). The WCI planning document, in contrast, emphasizes the important role of women in agriculture, repeating in several places the (unreferenced) statistic that "68 percent of Haitian women are involved in agriculture" (SC, 1992, p. 3, p.

³ It should be noted that the promotion of fenced kitchen gardens was only a relatively small part of the interventions aimed at women's empowerment. As described in Chapter Five, the WCI funding grant had three components (education, economic development, and natural resource management), and the resource management component itself consisted of six sub-sectors (agroforestry, produce storage, soil conservation, horticulture, water resource management and animal husbandry). Only the 'horticulture' sub-sector interventions (the fenced kitchen-gardens) were targeted solely at women - the others were aimed at the farmer's' *groupmans* in general (whose membership was only approximately 30 percent female). The promotion of kitchen gardens was also part of the subsequent WAND funding grant (see below), but here also it was only a relatively minor component, supporting the major program activities focussed on nutrition promotion through the 'nutrition demonstration centers'.

9), and that “control of certain crop produce (whether produced by men or women) [is] the domain of the wife...” (p. 9). The introduction of this document (p. 3) also cites national statistics describing the high percentage of women-headed households in Haiti, stating that only 42 percent of women are in formal or common-law marriages, 15 percent are in unstable unions, and 47 percent are either single, separated, divorced or widowed.⁴ Again, no source is cited for these statistics. Oddly, however, the rest of the document makes almost no mention of program interventions that will be specifically targeted to this large proportion of female-headed households, and the assumption seems to be made that either most women do have a male partner, or the particular needs of female-headed households will be adequately met by the same interventions that are targeted to women who have spouses.

One of the main activities of the WCI funding in the agricultural sector was a baseline survey to collect quantitative and qualitative data on women’s role in agriculture, in order “to develop better program design benefiting women” (SC, 1992, p. 9). This study was completed by White in 1993, and served to reinforce the SC understanding of the importance of women’s role in agriculture. White found that “women are important

⁴ Broadly, the various types of sexual unions in Haiti can be classified by declining degrees of security, sexual exclusiveness, cohabitation and male economic support (Lowenthal, 1984; Maynard-Tucker, 1996). Legal marriage (*marve*) is the most secure and coveted, while common-law marriage (*plasaj*) is most common among poorer rural households - both these arrangements involve cohabitation. Less stable relationships (variously called *vivavek*, *renmen*, or *menaj*) involve visiting relationships (without co-habitation), sometimes as a prelude to a more formal relationship or as a ‘second’ relationship with/by a male already in a union (Maynard-Tucker, 1996, p. 1380). As Maynard-Tucker notes, “in general these unions do not follow a definite pattern, .. and are mostly affected by economic means, migration and the personal involvement of the partners” (1996, p. 1380-81). The strength and nature of a conjugal relationship is further complicated by the presence or absence of children. As one local person stated, “children are more important than a [wedding] ring”, since having children together with a man helped ensure a women’s access (through the children) to a man’s assets. Lowenthal (1987) reports a similar finding in his research, as indicated by the title of his dissertation: “Marriage is 20, Children are 21.”

agricultural actors and are the primary decision makers in domains that assure economic security and basic nutrition” (White, 1993, p. 5). His survey of women participants in the *groupmans* and all women’s club members found that women directly managed an average of one *carreaux* [1.29 hectares] of agricultural land, and 2 head of small livestock, and in addition were the primary decision makers in the management of small livestock (mainly chickens and goats), the home garden, fruit trees, family commercial activities and family food consumption (White, 1993, p. 5). These figures were cited frequently in subsequent program and evaluation reports (i.e. Boyle, 1995; Narcisse, 1996). Interviews with women and men also found that both “males and females ... overwhelmingly stated that the home garden was more important to family security than the large agricultural fields...” (White, 1993, p. 5).

This SC understanding of women’s role in agriculture, and the related issue of female-headed households, is problematic at two levels. First is the empirical evidence from both other available sources and my re-survey of White’s survey participants concerning the amount of agricultural land controlled by women, and the proportion of female-headed households in the Maissade area. White’s finding that women ‘directly managed’ an average of 1.3 hectares of land contrasts with other results (of separate research on soil conservation technique adoption) published by White (1992) that the **total** average land-holding of entire households in the Maissade area was 2.5 hectares.⁵ White’s 1993 survey results therefore suggest that women manage approximately **half** of all household land, a figure which seems very high given the acknowledged dominant

⁵ This 1992 figure is corroborated by that of Clerisme (1989), whose study of the Maissade region found average household land-holdings to consist of 3 land parcels averaging 0.7 hectares each.

role of men in managing most large agricultural parcels. (White's survey in 1993 did not question survey participants on the total land-holding managed by their household.) Nor can this result be attributed to either a high rate of female-headed households (only 10 percent of women in the survey were separated, divorced or widowed), or significant amounts of rented land (White's 1992 results also showed that only 10 percent of land was rented.) In addition, my re-survey of 72 of 112 of the women surveyed in 1993 found that these women reported managing only an average of 0.5 hectare, while the reported average for these same 72 women in 1993 (i.e. in White survey) was 1.0 hectare. It seems unlikely that the amount of land the average women managed could have decreased by 50 percent in only 4 years.

A more likely explanation became apparent when the original survey instrument was reviewed, which showed that the question in this survey was phrased in an ambiguous manner. The question asked "How much land do you work?" [*"kombyen tè nou travay?"*]' using the second person plural pronoun. Furthermore, it was asked immediately after the question "Is there a male [partner] in the household?" [*"eske gen mesye nan kay?"*] - with the effect that if a person responded that she was living with a man (either married or 'common law'), the following question clearly seems to refer to the land jointly farmed by them both. It is therefore very likely that the phrasing of this question skewed the responses given. Overall, the data from my re-survey⁶ suggests that

⁶ In my re-survey, I asked the specific question "How much land do you work, you by yourself?". using the second person singular form of the pronoun 'you'. I did not ask the total area of land managed in the household, since this was information that people were often reluctant to provide, and I did not want to raise interviewee's discomfort level. I therefore could not determine directly the percentage of land managed by women.

a more reasonable estimate is that women manage approximately 20 to 25 percent of agricultural land in the Maissade region.

SC's assertion on the high prevalence of female-headed households is the second problematic aspect of its construction of women's roles in Maissade. This assertion is refuted by numerous other sources. The first source is White's 1993 survey itself, which found that 80 percent of surveyed women had male partners, 14 percent were young single women who had not yet obtained a permanent male partner and established a household, only 4 percent were separated or divorced, and 3 percent were widowed (see column 1 in Table 7.1). My re-survey of 72 of these women in the fall of 1997 found only a slight change, explainable largely by the progression of some young single women into the establishment of a household with a male partner, and some women becoming widows (see columns 2 and 4 in Table 7.1). These percentages are also confirmed by Narcisse's separate survey of an unrelated sample in 1996, which found 78 percent of women living with male partners, 12 percent separated or divorced, 5 percent young and single, and 4 percent widowed (see column 3 in Table 7.1). Two other surveys of women's health and fertility on the Central Plateau, which utilized larger and more rigorous cluster sampling techniques, confirm the above estimates. A 1994 survey, also conducted by Narcisse (1994)⁷ found 70 percent of women aged 15 to 49 years were currently in a conjugal union, 22 percent were not in a union, 7 percent were divorced or separated, and 1 percent were widowed. A 1990-91 survey reported by Maynard-Tucker

⁷ This was a survey of attitudes, beliefs and conduct related to sexually transmitted diseases among sexually active women on the Central Plateau. Because of its larger sample size (n=479), and more rigorous design, it would appear to be more reliable. However, it surveyed only women aged 15 to 49 years, and data given show that the sample was weighed toward the younger age cohorts, with only 26 percent of surveyed women being over 35 years.

Table 7.1 Summary of Women and Agriculture Surveys conducted in Maissade.

	White 1993 ⁽¹⁾	White 1993 ⁽²⁾	Narcisse 1996 ⁽³⁾	Vander Zaag 1997 ⁽⁴⁾
	full sample	sub-sample re-surveyed 1997		
Number of women surveyed	112	72	148	72
Age				
average age	n/a	36	37	40
median age	n/a	33	35	37
Marital status: % women who were:				
living with a male partner (married or single ('miss'))	80%	76%	78%	75%
widow	14%	14%	5%	8%
separated/divorced	3%	4%	4%	8%
separated/divorced	4%	6%	12%	8%
Average Age according to Martial Status				
women living with a male partner	n/a		37 (n=114)	41 (n=53)
single women ('miss')	n/a		23 (n=8)	19 (n=6)
widowed women	n/a		52 (n=5)	57 (n=6)
separated or divorced women	n/a		42 (n=17)	34 (n=6)
Land Resources				
managed by all households (ha)	1.1 (n=104)	1.0 (n=67)	1.4 (n=141)	n/a
managed in coupled households (ha)	1.2 (n=86)	1.2 (n=54)	1.6 (n=113)	n/a
managed in female-headed hshlds (ha)	0.9 (n=6)	0.9 (n=6)	0.7 (n=22)	1.0 (n=11)
managed by women in all hshlds (ha)	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.5 (n=66)
managed by women - coupled hshlds (ha)	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.4 (n=53)
managed by female - coupled hshlds in which female has separate land (ha)	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.1 (n=21)
% all hshlds in which woman managed own land		n/a	n/a	45%
% coupled hshlds - woman managed own land		n/a	n/a	33%
% ♀-headed hshlds - woman mgd own land	83% (n=6)	83% (n=6)	100% (n=22)	100% (n=11)
Labour Resources: % Women who sold their labour (daily farm labour)				
All women	17% (n=106)	22% (n=68)	12% (n=133)	3% (n=59)
Women with partners	16% (n=87)	22% (n=54)	10% (n=107)	4% (n=46)
Women in female-headed households	33% (n=6)	33% (n=6)	19% (n=26)	0% (n=9)
Separated/divorced women	50% (n=4)	50% (n=4)	20% (n=15)	0% (n=6)

	White 1993 ⁽¹⁾	White 1993 ⁽²⁾	Narcisse 1996 ⁽³⁾	Vander Zaag 1997 ⁽⁴⁾
	full sample	sub-sample re-surveyed 1997		
Labour Resources: % women who personally bought daily farm				
All women	78% (n=108)	80% (n=69)	85% (n=138)	67% (n=64)
Women with partners	82% (n=89)	85% (n=55)	88% (n=111)	69% (n=49)
Women in female-headed households	67% (n=6)	67% (n=6)	73% (n=26)	64% (n=11)
Separated/divorced women	50% (n=4)	50% (n=4)	60% (n=15)	50% (n=6)
Marketing Activities				
% of women who engaged in marketing	n/a	n/a	91% (n=141)	87% (n=67)
Ave. # of days spent marketing by:				
Women without male partners	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.2 (n=18)
Women with male partner	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.0 (n=54)
Livestock: Ave. # of large animals owned by women				
Women without male partners	1.5 (n=21)	1.5 (n=16)	1.7 (n=28)	2.4 (n=18)
Women with partners	2.2 (n=86)	2.2 (n=55)	3.1 (n=110)	3.1 (n=54)
Home garden				
% women with vegetables in their <i>jaden lakou</i>	n/a	n/a	n/a	43% (n=68)
% women whose vegetable garden was fenced	n/a	n/a	n/a	32% (n=68)
Ave. # of plantain plants in home garden				
Women in female-headed households	0 (n=4)	0 (n=4)	4.9 (n=21)	1.7 (n=12)
Women with partners	0.9 (n=62)	0.9 (n=41)	8.1 (n=91)	3.4 (n=54)
Literacy: % women who reported participating in a literacy class				
All women	25% (n=108)	23% (n=70)	63% (n=147)	82% (n=65)
Membership in other groups: % women reporting membership in another grp.				
All women	16% (n=109)	18% (n=71)	22% (n=148)	27% (n=51)

(1) Information in this column is from the full sample of 112 respondents in White's 1993 survey on Women's Role in Agriculture (White, 1993).

(2) This column contains the information (means or percentages) from the 1993 survey, but only for the 72 women who were located and resurveyed in 1997.

(3) This column contains information from Narcisse's 1996 survey of 148 randomly selected women, conducted as part of the final evaluation of the WCI project (Narcisse, 1996).

(4) This column contains the information collected in 1997 from the 72 women from White's survey who were located and resurveyed.

(1996)⁸ reported that 81 percent of women aged 15-49 years had stable male partners, 12 percent were without male partners, and 7 percent were in 'unstable' relationships (*vivavek, remen* or *menaj*) that may or may not have involved co-habitation.⁹ Taken together then, it would seem that a reasonable estimate of the prevalence of female-headed households in the Maissade region would be in the range of 8 to 12 percent.¹⁰ While this proportion of female-headed households is not insignificant, it is clear that the large majority of rural women in Maissade live with a male partner.¹¹ As the data and discussion in the following paragraphs show, there are clear economic and social reasons

⁸ These are the results for 814 women aged 15 to 49 years surveyed in a rural town 15 kilometers north of Maissade. This was one of 3 mini-surveys comparing fertility and contraceptive use by women in the capital city, a medium-sized provincial city, and a small rural town.

⁹ The inclusion of this 'intermediate' category of unstable union, between the categories of 'married' (legal or common law) and 'not-married' introduces the complexities of the conjugal strategies and negotiations that are part of gender relations in Haiti. While this topic is largely beyond the scope of the present study, I will discuss this issue briefly further below in my discussion of the gender negotiations of participation in development.

¹⁰ This figure is partially explainable by data on the gender-ratio (the ratio of masculinity) for the adult population in the Maissade area. Data I gathered from SC's population database indicated that the male population in the 20 to 44 age cohort was only 85 percent of the female population. A 1988 OAS socio-economic survey in two rural sub-regions of Maissade also reported a 'ratio of masculinity' of 88 percent in the 20 to 44 year-old age cohort (OAS/CDRH, 1988). Part of these data may be explained by census and survey methodologies which might favour finding females at home during data collection. However, national data also show similar data: the 1994 national health survey reported a 92 percent ratio of masculinity for the rural 20 to 44 year-old age cohort, and an even larger ratio of 83 percent in urban areas (EMMUS-II, 1994, Table 2.1, p. 10). Local people confirmed to me that disproportionate levels of male outmigration (particularly internationally - to the Dominican Republic or North America) is a well-acknowledged and long-established feature of local livelihood strategies. The absence of a considerable proportion of males also adds further complexity in the conduct of both women's and men's 'conjugal careers' (Lowenthal, 1984).

¹¹ I could not find national data on marital states which dis-aggregated urban and rural figures. However, the national health survey did state that 33 percent of rural households in its survey reported being headed by a female (EMMUS-II, 1995, Table 2.3, page 11). This is considerably higher than the figures I have just suggested for the Maissade area.

that conjugal relationships are important and valued aspects of women's and men's livelihood strategies.

From my re-survey in 1997 and Narcisse's 1996 survey, a number of additional features of women's role in agriculture in the Maissade region can be described.¹² The 1997 re-survey found that only 33 percent of women in coupled households reported¹³ managing her own garden plot, while all women who headed their own household reported managing garden plots. These female heads-of-household reported that they managed an average of 0.9 hectares of land, compared to the average of 0.4 hectares managed by women for all coupled households. However, when a woman with a male partner did individually manage a separate plot of land, the average size of her gardens was 1.0 hectares, slightly larger than the average holding for a women without a male partner. A number of other data confirm that female-headed households on average were significantly poorer than the average coupled household: they reported hiring less day-labour, they spent fewer days in marketing activities, they owned fewer large animals (cows, donkeys, horses, pigs), and they had fewer plantains planted in their home garden (see columns 3 and 4 in Table 7.1). I will return and elaborate on the impact and importance of gender relations and the complementary nature of male-female relations in

¹² These conclusions should be interpreted while keeping in mind the limited sample size for some of the categories. For example, my 1997 re-survey only included a total of 12 women in female-headed households.

¹³ It should be noted that both White's survey in 1993 and my re-survey relied on verbal self-reports on the amount of land cultivated or managed. Such figures are often unreliable and underreport actual landholdings, as many rural people are reluctant to disclose the amount of total landholding to relative outsiders or in the presence of neighbours.

the household further below in this chapter in my discussion of the contestation of gender roles in the rural household.

In addition to empirical critique of the SC understanding of women's role in agriculture, I would also suggest a conceptual critique. This relates to the SC's apparent conceptualization of agriculture as a distinct or separate domain of activity in the rural Haitian household and its livelihood strategies, which women have now 'entered'. As has already been mentioned, the most common characterization of gender labour relations in rural Haiti is that men are primarily involved in agriculture, while women are almost exclusively charged with marketing and the domestic sphere. However, as Lowenthal (1984, p. 18) writes, such a broad generalization risks oversimplifying a complex situation, in which the productive agricultural domain is fundamentally interrelated with the household reproductive domains (provision marketing, child-raising and household management.)

In the Haitian household, women have traditionally always been in charge of the home-yard garden, which is seen as an important 'standing garden' which provides for piecemeal domestic consumption as the 'men's' gardens mature. Given that land inheritance is bi-partible and equal, many women (eventually) receive inherited land, even if many of these inherited parcels remain 'undivided' among siblings. Whether or not a woman retains control and management of this land, it is almost invariably a male (the woman's male partner, if she is in stable conjugal relationships) who provides the heavy physical hoe-labour for clearing and cultivating.¹⁴ Yet though men are expected to

¹⁴ In my survey, of the 18 women in coupled households who reported individually managing their own garden, 16 reported using their partner's labour, in combination with their own and/or hired labour, to work that garden. Another older respondent reported using her own and her son's labour. Only

do the heavy field labour, “a woman who *knows how* [and is willing] to handle a hoe, but need not actually do so, is complimented by both men and women: she is a potential asset to her household when male labour is temporarily unavailable and potentially self-sufficient when necessary or desired” (Lowenthal, 1984, p. 31). Further, “when a woman must ‘handle a hoe’ (*manyen wou*), this is remarked upon as an unfortunate circumstance, precipitated by a combination of poverty (the inability to hire wage labour or to compensate exchange labour) and solitude (the lack of a capable man, in any appropriate circumstance, to do the job) (Lowenthal, 1984, p. 31).

Men’s own gardens also receive important contributions of female and children’s labour at sowing and harvesting. Perhaps more importantly, even men’s labour in the fields or at the sugar-cane mill often depends on a woman’s provision of the substantial mid-day meal to the male labourers (whether hired day-labourers or reciprocal labour-exchange arrangements), which is an important component of the remuneration these workers are paid. Furthermore, though ‘men make gardens’ (*gason fê jaden*), “men make gardens for someone and that someone is invariably a woman” (Lowenthal, 1984, p. 18). As the men’s gardens mature and are harvested, the control of the produce generally falls to the woman, as it represents the man’s obligation to provide for his spouse.¹⁵

one respondent reported only using her own labour. Of the 11 female-headed households to responded in this part of the survey, only 4 reported using solely their own labour, while 3 hired labour, 2 used their own labour plus hired labour, 3 used their own and sons’ labour, and one even reported using both her own and her (former?) husband’s labour.

¹⁵ The extent of the ‘jointness’ of even ‘men’s’ gardens is suggested in my survey in the responses of women who did not manage a garden themselves to one of the questions. When these women were asked the question “do you make a garden, on your own?”, they did not reply to this question by simply saying ‘no’, but many instead replied that they ‘made a garden together with their husband’. This suggests the extent to which women feel that they share in their male partner’s labour. It would be interesting, of course, to determine if men would also respond in a reciprocal manner.

(Occasionally, a particular field may be 'worked' for another women with whom he has children.) Particularly if a man is 'living well' (*viv byen*) with his female partner, once a field is harvested he will generally leave the day-to-day details of the use and/or marketing of the harvest for the household economy to the women (Lowenthal, 1984, p. 19).

Lowenthal elaborates that the nature of rural Haitian gender labour relations (as well as sexual relations) are a fundamental aspect of the Haitian 'conjugal contract' (Lowenthal, 1984, p. 23). "Conjuality is both contractual and an exchange". for to be in a union is to *fè afê* or to *fè kondisyon*, which literally means 'to make an arrangement, to set the terms' (Lowenthal, 1984, p. 23). These arrangements or terms are defined through an explicit discussion between a man and a woman, and economic exchange involving a complementary gender division of labour is a fundamental element of this negotiation.

The man will provide generalized economic support to the best of his ability, and the woman will provide to the man her domestic and marketing labour - especially, cooking his food and washing his clothes, selling produce, and buying the necessities to keep the household functioning. In the majority, popular culture, the defining features of a *plasaj* union are that a man provides a house for his new spouse; he lives in it with his spouse as much as his circumstances permit; he makes a garden, the produce of which he will turn over to her to use for their joint benefit; and she cooks, keeps house and markets the produce from her spouse's land, and honours him with strict sexual fidelity (de Zalduondo *et al.* 1993, p. 10, citing Lowenthal, 1987).

Yet a woman is also often expected to contribute to the household economy, and "women who have no earning power [are] seen as receiving little respect and having little influence on household decisions and sexual negotiation" (Ulin *et al.*, 1993, p. 1).¹⁶

¹⁶ I was told an anecdotal example of this during one discussion while waiting for a focus-group session to begin. A young recently-married woman had suffered waist-down paralysis as a result of complications during childbirth. When it became apparent after almost a year that she was not going to recover from this paralysis, her parents came and 'retook' her from her husband's house to their home. My

Indeed, almost all women are potentially economically independent, through their skills as market women, when circumstances require or opportunity allows (even if many do not actually do so). As was mentioned above, women are also able, if required, to engage directly in agricultural production. Lowenthal therefore argues that, somewhat ironically, a woman has greater “manoeuvrability in the conduct of her conjugal career” (Lowenthal, 1984, p. 19) than a man. Men, in contrast, are dependent on women’s domestic labour, since “there are a whole range of tasks that adult men simply should not perform, but upon whose performance the successful maintenance of any household - and the satisfaction of any individual’s personal needs - depends” (Lowenthal, 1984, p. 19).

In general, then, this discussion of conjugality and the gendered division of labour in the rural Haitian household has demonstrated the complementarity inherent in these relations. It also reveals the fallacy of suggesting that ‘agriculture’ is a separate domain which women have now ‘entered’ in an important way. Such a construction reveals the program planners’ utilization of external analytical categories, and ignores the complex local realities concerning the organization of the rural Haitian household. Again, SC’s intervention discourses can be seen as strategies of power that legitimate external interventions.

3. Women’s Houseyard Gardens

The WCI project attempted to modify SC previous agriculture/natural resources interventions toward its goal of ‘empowering women’ by “increas[ing] benefits [of

discussants speculated that this set the stage for her husband to eventually take another wife, since, as my informant stated, “a handicapped wife is not useful for anything, she can’t wash...”

improving agricultural production] to women both directly and indirectly” (SC, 1992, p. 2). Within the agriculture sector, one of six sub-sector goals¹⁷ was “improv[ing] and giv[ing] value to traditional women’s gardens (*jaden lakou*)” (p. 10), with the objective of “50 percent of women increas[ing] food availability from traditional gardens” by 1996 (p. 10). Houseyard gardens were also part of the WAND project that began in 1994 (see Chapter Five for a summary description of this program). The nutrition component¹⁸ of this program included as one of its objectives “50 percent of women’s club members will increase the production of vitamin A rich food in their traditional household gardens” (Delisle, 1997, DIP Table B, n.p.) Chief among the interventions of both the WCI and WAND projects was a) the fencing of a *jaden lakou*. b) the introduction of new varieties of Vitamin A-rich leafy vegetables; c) the ‘revalorization’ of traditional local Vitamin A-rich vegetables; and d) the training of women in the cultivation and management of these gardens (SC, 1992, p. 10; Delisle, 1997, DIP Table B, n.p.).

The history of SC’s promotion of vegetable gardens actually begins before this period. In the late 1980s, SC agriculture promoters encouraged *groupman*-member farmers to produce non-traditional vegetables such as carrots, eggplant, tomatoes, and cabbage for market. Beginning in 1989, SC attempted to extend these vegetable gardening activities to the newly forming mothers’ (women’s) clubs, both for the economic benefits of market sale and the potential nutritional benefits of home

¹⁷ The other five sub-sector activities involved agroforestry, produce (grain) storage, soil conservation, water supply and animal husbandry (see footnote 3). As noted there but bears emphasizing, the kitchen garden initiative was targeted specifically towards women.

¹⁸ The other components of this project were child spacing/women’s health, dietary management of diarrhoeal diseases, and control/management of malaria and pneumonia.

consumption. Overall, both men and women only had limited success growing these vegetables, as they required considerable inputs of non-local expertise and purchased insecticides, and a reliable and nearby source of water for hand irrigation during the dry winter season (SC, 1993a). By 1992, SC had started to emphasize the production of 'indigenous' leafy vegetables for their nutrition benefits, and this led to the inclusion of the '*jaden lakou*' strategy within the WCI and WAND funding proposals. This strategy was subsequently refined to include the promotion of live fencing as a key component of the *jaden lakou* strategy, as a result of White's 1993 'women in agriculture' survey, which found that women's gardens were particularly susceptible to destruction by free-ranging livestock (particularly in the dry winter season, when other gardens were harvested and livestock more readily were allowed to graze freely).

With the start of the WCI grant in 1993, SC began promoting fenced kitchen gardens. SC's sixty agricultural 'monitors' (local 'progressive' farmers SC had trained in the promotion of agroforestry and soil conservation techniques, and hired on a contract basis for 6 to 8 months each growing season) began visiting women's clubs to promote the idea of a fenced kitchen garden. The agriculture monitors also visited the farmers' *groupmans*, in order to explain the idea to the men (husbands) and women members. According to the 'official' training they had received from SC, the monitors told members that a fenced *jaden lakou* should be 10 meters by 10 meters, and that SC had agreed to pay for the poles of *glirisidya* (*Gliricidia sepium* - a variety of sprouting hedge that SC was already promoting for soil conservation contour plantings) that were required to make the garden fence. The monitors then organized visits to members' homes to choose a location for the fenced garden (SC recommended that it be located next to the

'kitchen' - which was usually a small, free-standing structure some meters away from the house - so that it could receive waste-water from dish-washing), 'measure out' the dimensions of the garden and organize the delivery of the required poles (from fortunate members who already had *glirisidya* plantings, who were paid G5 per dozen poles). The agriculture monitors also distributed seeds of several varieties of leafy vegetables, including spinach ('*epina*'), another leafy vegetable called '*lalo*' which resembles amaranth, a longer-producing variety of okra ('*gombo*'), and a drought-resistant local vine-like species called '*lyann panyè*'.¹⁹

In 1994, SC reported that "611 household gardens were established with 23,428 linear meters of fencing" (SC, 1994, p. 9), and an additional 426 gardens were reported installed in 1995 (SC, 1995, p. 17). The 'final' WCI evaluation (Boyle, 1995, p. 39) reported that "the WCI grant fund[ed] the creation of household gardens for women, of which over 1,500 have been developed to date".²⁰ The promotion of the fence gardens thus seemed quite successful. In 1996, SC discontinued its policy of paying for the fencing poles for new gardens. As a result, fewer new fenced gardens were installed, and the agriculture monitors focused on "consolidating old *jaden lakou*" - repairing fences and distributing seeds, cuttings and advice (SC, 1996, n.p.). The final WAND evaluation in 1997, while not providing separate totals for each NGO partner in the project, reported

¹⁹ I was not able to obtain the common English names nor the scientific names for all of these plants.

²⁰ It is worth noting the irony of how the language of this report 'disempowers' women, assigning the WCI grant the agency in creating the gardens, and making the women into passive recipients. Yet surely it was local women (and men) who did the majority of the work for achieving these gardens. This is a clear example of the NGO planning discourse constructing itself as the active agent in Maissade, and local women 'beneficiaries' as the passive recipients of its interventions.

that the overall cumulative goal of 2553 fenced gardens for the three NGO partners in WAND was exceeded by 100 percent (Delisle, 1997, p. 30). Narcisse's study of the WCI project also gave a favourable evaluation of the impact of the fenced gardens, reporting women as saying that "home gardens are for them a very important activity because it provides them with vegetables that are nutritive for kids" (Narcisse, 1996, n.p.).

SC field staff and members of women's clubs and farmers' *groupmans* invariably also provided positive expressions of the value and importance of the *jaden lakou*. White's 1993 survey already found that, in focus group sessions, 56 percent of groups responded that the *jaden lakou* "was the most important for the life of the family", only 12 percent stated the 'large gardens' were the most important, while 33 percent stated both were important (White, 1993, p. 17 - see question 3 in Table 7.2). This result was corroborated in the focus groups I held in 1997, in which the majority of participants (though a greater proportion of men than women²¹) responded that the *jaden lakou* was 'more important' than the large gardens (see question 1 in Table 7.2).

When asked why the *jaden lakou* was more important than the large gardens (since, as question 2 in Table 7.2 indicates, the majority stated that the large gardens produced more food), a number of responses predominated. Many repeated an analogy that was the title of one of the literacy lessons - "the *jaden lakou* is the 'pantry' for the house". They elaborated on this statement by explaining that it was the *jaden lakou* that

²¹ I did not probe why a greater proportion of men than women felt the *jaden lakou* was more important, since this difference did not become apparent to me until after the fieldwork when I tabulated the responses. I can only speculate that men were perhaps emphasizing women's responsibility to providing subsistence food from 'her' garden, while women, conversely, were attempting to emphasize claims on 'men's' large gardens (which otherwise were seen more as a cash crop) for household food requirements.

'saves' them first - it is the first garden that has produce that is ready to harvest.

Furthermore, a number of people stated that its location next to the house meant "you always can easily find something in the *jaden lakou*, when you don't have time to go to the other garden", and "it's there you go most easily, in order to give the cooking pot some encouragement." The second common reason given for the importance of the *jaden lakou* was related to members' understanding of the nutritional importance of green leaves in their diet. One male participant stated "if you're making food, if it doesn't have a few green leaves in it, it's not important [significant], but if it has the leaves, it's important, it's fortifying". Another said "The big gardens fill people's stomachs, but it is the *jaden lakou* that provides the vitamins." Several men also stated that the *jaden lakou* was important "because of the children... They [SC] told them how to care for the children, to give them green leaves to protect their bodies....", implying it helped women be 'better' mothers. A woman echoed this view: "... all mothers of children now know how to use leaves, how they should take plantain, *tayo* or yam and make a little stew to give to the children before they go to school."

Yet despite this seemingly overwhelming positive evidence of the success and importance of the fenced kitchen gardens, the focus group sessions, field interviews, the survey results and field observations all provided contrary evidence that highlights the ambiguity, complexity and multiplicity of understandings and meanings attached to the *jaden lakou*. The first complexity involves the term *jaden lakou* itself, which can have several overlapping but slightly differing meanings. Literally, the term *jaden lakou* means 'yard garden', and the term is commonly used in a general sense for the land immediately around the house. This garden can vary considerably in size, from a small

Table 7.2. Comparative Importance of *Jaden Lakou* and Large Gardens.

1997 Focus Group Participants					
		Women		Men	
		adopters	non-adopters	adopters	non-adopters
1. Which garden is more important?	Large garden	0% (n=5)	25% (n=8)	0% (n=10)	0% (n=6)
	<i>Jaden lakou</i>	80% (n=5)	50% (n=8)	100% (n=10)	100% (n=6)
	Both important	20% (n=5)	25% (n=8)	0% (n=10)	0% (n=6)
2. Which garden gives more food?	Large garden	89% (n=9)	100% (n=7)	58% (n=12)	100% (n=6)
	<i>Jaden lakou</i>	11% (n=9)	0% (n=7)	17% (n=12)	0% (n=6)
	Both important	0% (n=9)	0% (n=7)	25% (n=12)	0% (n=6)
1993 'Women in Agriculture' Survey (White, 1993)					
3. Which garden is most important for the life of the family?	Large garden	56% (n=160)			
	<i>Jaden lakou</i>	12% (n=160)			
	Both	33% (n=160)			

ranplasman (a 'building lot', detached from other land holdings, purchased specifically for the establishment of a residence) to a larger garden plot as large as and/or contiguous with other 'large gardens'. Whatever its size, the home garden is usually fenced, planted with numerous trees for shade and fruit along its borders, as well as plantain plants, corn and sorghum, and other crops. In the SC program, however, the term *jaden lakou* came to be applied in a second, more specific sense, referring to the 10 meter by 10 meter fenced garden devoted to leafy vegetables that was promoted by SC's agriculture promoters. Thus, during the focus group sessions I conducted with 'non-adopters' of fenced kitchen gardens, people still readily responded to the various questions concerning their *jaden lakou*, including the questions concerning the gendered division of labour in

this garden, and the questions concerning the relative importance of the *jaden lakou* and the large gardens (see Table 7.2).²²

This ambiguity in the meaning of the term *jaden lakou* helps explain the importance the majority of respondents gave to the *jaden lakou*. Understood as the larger ‘garden around the house’, this garden often did provide substantial produce, particularly of higher value crops such as plantains, fruit trees and vegetables, which benefited most from the increased surveillance and security of the fenced *lakou*. Conversely, the SC-promoted fenced kitchen garden, with a surface area of only .01 hectares (only approximately 0.4 percent of the area of the average landholding of 2.5 hectares), could only make a significant contribution to household nutrition through its provision of vitamin-rich specialty foods like vegetables. This was born out by the focus-group participants, the large majority of whom indicated that their large garden produced more food than their *jaden lakou* (despite their ranking of the *jaden lakou* as ‘more important’ (see question 2 in Table 7.2).

The second importance piece of evidence which questions the declared importance of the fenced kitchen garden comes from both survey data and field observation. The survey of 72 woman SC program participants indicated that only 43 percent had a ‘*jaden lakou* where they planted vegetables or leafy vegetables’. Only 76

²² When possible during interviews and focus groups sessions, I attempted to deal with this ambiguity of terminology by referring to the fenced kitchen garden as the *jaden klotire* (fenced garden) and the more general garden around the house as the *jaden devan pòt* (‘garden in front of the door’ - houseyard garden). However, even this did not remove the ambiguity completely, as some people’s entire home-yard was fenced, and this was cited by one focus group participant as the reason he had not installed a SC program *jaden lakou*. In the remaining discussion in this chapter, I will use the term ‘fenced kitchen garden’ when referring to the SC-promoted 10x10m vegetable garden, the term ‘houseyard garden’ when referring to the general garden around the house, and the term *jaden lakou* only when citing (directly or indirectly) usage by a research participant.

percent of these gardens were fenced. Thus only 32 percent of the respondents had actually installed a fenced kitchen garden, as promoted by SC. In Narcisse's 1996 final evaluation survey of the WCI project, 66 percent of women responded yes to the question "do you have a *jaden lakou*", but due to the ambiguity of the meaning of the term *jaden lakou*, this does not necessarily mean that these were 'new' fenced kitchen gardens installed as a result of SC's interventions. Thus it is not certain whether the project objectives of increasing 50 percent of women participants' production from their kitchen gardens was achieved. Likewise, the level of production of vitamin-A rich foods was not assessed in final surveys for the WAND project,²³ and as Delisle comments in her evaluation of this project, "no particular effort was devoted to following up on how these plant foods were used by women and young children" (1997, p. 30, p. 21). Field observations I made during my numerous visits and walks in the communities also suggested a relatively low rate of adoption. Furthermore, many of the fenced kitchen gardens I did see appeared to suffer from significant neglect, with few of the promoted vegetable species planted or growing well. Some fenced gardens were cultivated as the rest of the houseyard garden was, with corn and sorghum dominating the garden canopy, or were planted with plantains or sugar cane (particular a variety that was good for chewing raw), rather than vegetables.

²³ Determining levels of production of small-holder crops is notoriously difficult (due to inter year fluctuations, progressive harvesting, farmer reluctance to disclose harvest size, intercropping and other factors), so this failure is quite understandable. The original objective (of 50 percent of women increasing production of leafy vegetables - Delisle, 1997, n.p.) was likely only meant to indicate that 50 percent of women participants would install a fenced vegetable garden, with the assumption that installation of the garden would inevitably increase vegetable production (the amount of the increase was not specified.)

This decline in interest was also substantiated by comments made by several focus group participants. Several of the agriculture monitors remarked that fewer people were interested in installing fenced gardens once SC had discontinued its practice of paying for the fencing poles. One remarked to me that “when they [SC] didn’t take [buy] them again, well, there were a number of clubs who didn’t make a *jaden lakou*, because they saw, they didn’t earn money from the posts, and they were discouraged”. Another remarked that one of the reasons SC has discontinued paying for fencing poles because some people were letting the *glerisidya* take over the whole garden, since they were more interested in producing poles to sell to SC than in producing vegetables. A women adopter at one of the focus group sessions also remarked about this, stating that during the past two years she had re-planted the pruned branches from her garden fence in another location in hopes of selling them to the project, but that so far she had not had her chance to “make a few dollars on the wood”. Delisle, in her evaluation report of the WAND project, also noted a decline in interest in the vegetable gardens, remarking that “this component seems somewhat neglected” (1997, p. 60).

These comments begin to suggest the multiplicity of participants’ objectives and understandings in installing the fenced kitchen gardens. The comments above indicate that some adopters also had a pragmatic material motive when they installed the fenced garden. Other comments by women and men also indicate that the promotion of fenced kitchen gardens may not represent as significant a change as suggested by some women and men adopters. From my discussions with both adopters and non-adopters, it was clear that women (in particular) had grown leafy vegetables for a long time already, and therefore any implication that non-adopters of the fenced *jaden lakou* do not use or know

leafy vegetables is false. In the focus group sessions with non-adopters of the fenced kitchen gardens, 86 percent of these non-adopters reported growing some type of green vegetable (often okra, papaya or squash) in their homeyard garden (see Table 7.3 below). During my community visits, I also observed many 'unimproved' houseyard gardens which contained small plantings of leafy vegetables, particularly okra, either intercropped or grown separately. In addition, many adopters of fenced kitchen gardens also continued to grow vegetables outside this garden in other parts of their homeyard garden - 65 percent of the adopters in the focus groups reported this (see Table 7.3). As mentioned above, the houseyard garden has always been managed in a particularly intensive and unique way, and contained a high concentration of high-value crops and trees, due to its proximity to the house and its greater likelihood of being well fenced (and thus protected from at-loose animals). Other participants also stated that they had grown vegetable crops like okra, *lalo*, squash and *liane panye* intercropped in their large gardens for many years. The seasonal production calendars that focus group participants produced for me also belied statements some people made that the fenced garden helped assure year-round production of leafy vegetables (as they said, it 'never dried up'). These calendars indicated that production from the fenced gardens did slowly end by the middle of the dry winter season.

The ambiguous and contradictory evidence on the importance and role of the fenced kitchen gardens suggests that these gardens held differing meanings for SC program officials and community program participants. Analysis of SC program participants' statements and actions indicates that the fenced gardens have taken on a certain symbolic importance within the development discourse of SC field staff and

Table 7.3. Other Crops Reported in Home-Yard (proportion of households).

	Adopters		Non-adopters		Women		Men	
		%		%		%		%
Corn/sorghum	31/31	100%	18/21	86%	20/22	91%	29/30	97%
Plantain	24/31	77%	19/21	90%	18/22	82%	21/30	70%
Leafy Vegetable (okra, papaye, squash, 'lalo', 'lyann panye', eggplant)	20/31	65%	18/21	86%	16/22	73%	26/30	87%

community group members. For many people, the fenced gardens seem to have become a symbol of 'development', of being progressive and 'modern' woman or man (or household), or at least a 'good' participant in SC's development program.

During my fieldwork, I kept attempting to probe what seemed to me to be the contradictory evidence between the professed value of the fenced gardens among SC program participants, and the apparent small impact of the gardens (both in terms of rates of adoption and in terms of increased production of vegetables.) When I questioned SC program participants, after they had told me about the significant benefits of the fenced gardens, why then other community members had not also installed them²⁴, the reason given was often that "it's because if a person is not in a club, if you're not in 'Save the Children', that's what makes a person not have a fenced kitchen garden, because they should know what importance the kitchen garden has." Another person (a man) stated "it's people who aren't in a *groupman* who don't have a garden." When I pursued this

²⁴ Since I assumed that if the benefits of a fenced kitchen garden were as large and significant as claimed, other non-members would spontaneously also adopt them.

rationale and asked why group members were more likely to install a fenced kitchen garden, people responded “the person in a *groupman*, he’s more likely to be conscientious than someone who is not”, and “people who are not in a club, mostly it’s people ‘who are in the dark’ they are, too.” While these responses remain rather vague, clearly club or *groupman* membership was associated with progressiveness. As the discussion in the previous chapter concerning membership and attendance in the farmers’ or women’s associations demonstrated, being associated with ‘development’ itself was understood to be a positive and ‘modern’ value.

In a similar manner, both women and men also made numerous statements that indicated that adoption of the fenced gardens was understood as part of being a ‘good’ or ‘proper’ program participant and group member. A women’s club member, in describing how they came to have a garden, said “Well, it was when the promoter came, and he had given the training, and then he said ‘if you are a woman who is in a club, you have to have a fenced garden’, and then he came to make the garden with us, he marked it out square for us.” The husband of a women adopter, describing how they had come to have a fenced garden, stated that “it was our wives who were in the club, who went to their meetings, while they were at the meeting, they [the promoters] came and they said they had to have a *jaden lakou...*” One of the agriculture promoters, remarking on the difficulty of getting some people to install a fenced garden, stated that “when we give our order, well, we’re not almighty, so when we pass the order, and then, when we go, the person does what they want.” In a discussion with several female focus-group participants, they emphasized how they had made their fenced garden in the ‘proper’ dimensions of 10 meters by 10 meters:

Respondent 1: He [the SC agriculture promoter] marks the size you should make [the garden], if you yourself had thought you would make the garden bigger, he tells you 'no, it's this size they said to make it, it's this size, with their feet they mark [the garden boundaries] for you, when he finished marking it, he gives it to you, he says 'now you can fence it'.

Respondent 2: 'The *juden lakou* is done with more principle.

Question: But, with more principle, but its more work too.

R2: But it works better.

Q: How does it work better?

R2: Before we used to work [the land] in front of the door, but now they've come to tell us to make a *juden lakou*.

Another female participant told about how she had tried to get the agriculture monitor to 'put her name on the list' - the monthly report the promoters had to submit to their SC supervisors - despite the fact she had gone ahead and installed her fenced garden in a location the promoter later deemed to be too shaded. Some of the above language can undoubtedly be understood in terms of hierarchical patron-client relationships between the SC agriculture promoters and community group members. Yet it also remains apparent that the fenced gardens were perceived as being part of the formal 'development' that the SC program was delivering, and that community members perceived SC project messages and interventions as orders that they, as 'good' participants, should adopt.

The symbolic attachment of fenced kitchen gardens to 'development' and things 'modern' was also revealed by the research process itself. While I will discuss this matter in greater detail in Chapter Nine, the focus group session concerning the kitchen gardens themselves seemed to elevate people's interest in them. At one of the focus-group sessions with women non-adopters, one of the participants complained that her husband had not helped her install the fencing required so she could have a vegetable garden. 'Marie', my research assistant, commented to me on this women's remarks after the

session: “The women said, maybe he will do it now [help with the fence for the garden], that is to say, this here [the focus-group session] is a spring [source] for her, when she gets home, she will talk with him, she will say to him. ‘You see, the *jaden lakou*, you see, it is important after all’.” In a similar manner, Delisle’s 1997 evaluation report of the WAND funding noted that SC had reduced its emphasis on promoting the fenced gardens during the past year, and reported a remark from an interviewed women who stated that “before, when the *blan* showed interest, we gave more importance to vegetable gardens. Now we tend to let go” (1997, p. 74). These two statements again reveal the combined and intertwined symbolic and material meaning attached to the fenced kitchen gardens.

Particularly for women, having a fenced kitchen garden which produced leafy vegetables also seemed part of her self-image of a competent mother. When women explained the fenced garden’s importance for allowing them to prepare a nutritious meal easily for their children before sending them off to school (implying this was not something they used to do), the presence of a fenced kitchen garden in her yard seemed to symbolize her competence, especially her knowledge related to caring for her children.

The declared importance of kitchen gardens for SC program participants discussed in this section reveals how relations of power established by the dominant discourse of development associated with (and promoted by) outside NGO programs had penetrated into the countryside around Maissade. Despite evidence that adoption rates and nutritional benefits were quite limited, both women and men were eager to elevate their status by associating with what they understood to be an important symbol of ‘development’. Even people who did not adopt gardens spoke of them as important and valuable. Yet power relations associated with the discourse of the gardens was not

monolithic. Some people appeared to adopt the gardens for simple pragmatic, material benefits related to hopes for the sale of fencing poles rather than vegetables. People who did install fenced gardens undoubtedly also did receive some of the intended benefits of improved nutrition from vegetables they did produce in the gardens. Yet the evidence that adoption rates and increased production were quite limited indicates that these developmental ‘meanings’ of the fenced gardens were often not strong enough to overcome established local understandings and practices concerning vegetable production, nutrition, and the management of the houseyard garden area.

Gender Negotiations and Women’s Participation in Development

In the first part of this chapter, I have demonstrated the encounter of differing discourses and understandings concerning the *jaden lakou*. While I have discussed some of the gendered aspects of these ‘gardens’, and illustrated the understandings of both women and men concerning gardens, I have not focused on the gender differences and contestation in these understandings. In this second part of the chapter, I specifically analyze this issue, since during the fieldwork it was clear that struggle and encounter between women and men was being produced at the site of the fenced kitchen gardens, and SC’s interventions in support of ‘women’s empowerment’ in general.²⁵

In general, SC’s promotion of fenced kitchen gardens was **not** a significant source of new negotiations and encounters between rural women and men. There are two

²⁵ Methods used to investigate this included separate focus-group session with women and men from adopting and non-adopting households of the fenced kitchen garden (see Appendix 3 for the focus-group protocol), questions related to gender roles in the re-survey of women participants in the SC program (see Appendix 4 for the questionnaire), and participant observation during community visits.

reasons for this, both of which I have already introduced in the first section of this chapter. First, since the introduction of the fenced kitchen gardens did not seem to produce a major increase in vegetable production, they therefore also did not have a major impact on the relative productive abilities of women and men, and thus of their relative economic positions. Those participants who did report that they produced more vegetables indicated that they sold little of this produce, but used it primarily for home consumption.²⁶ Second, the kitchen gardens largely fit into the existing gendered division of labour in the household economy. The gardens around the house have traditionally always been the woman's domain, which she managed to provide subsistence food for the household. Yet men have also always been expected to provide assistance with the heavy labour required for planting plantains, fencing the yard, and primary field tillage. As one agriculture promoter explained, if a man did object to providing the extra help required to fence a kitchen garden, that was considered 'negligence' and 'laziness' on his part.

Yet this is not to imply that gender relations are harmonious and uncontested in rural Maissade. While the fenced kitchen garden did not seem to create any major changes for gender relations and the division of labour in the household, the focus group sessions revealed that SC's promotion, and women's adoption, of the kitchen gardens and the ideals of women's empowerment did become another site in the on-going struggles and negotiations that are a regular part of gendered domestic relations in rural Haiti. The 'development attention' that SC paid to the gardens and women's empowerment, and the subsequent symbolic importance that both women and men attached to it, allowed gender

²⁶ However, as I discuss below, the improved contribution of women to household reproduction did elevate their status as a competent mother and wife.

divisions and negotiations over the larger concept of 'development' to become visible. As discussed above, rural women's adoption of kitchen gardens, as well as their participation in the women's club associations, were ways in which they (and often their husbands) saw themselves as becoming 'developed'. Yet these new roles also produced resistance, contradiction and negotiation in the household and the community.

In this second section of the chapter, I will examine the various discourses and strategies employed by women and men in this encounter, in order to illustrate the complex and contradictory nature of the 'empowerment' that women are experiencing as a result of the SC program. A series of dimensions will be analyzed in these gendered discourses: the discourse of gender equality and mutuality; underlying male discourses and strategies of resistance to women's newly 'empowered' status; and the discourse of the competent and 'developing' female.

1. The Discourse of Gender Equality and Mutuality

Gender relations within rural Haitian household (both its productive and reproductive spheres) involve a high degree of complementarity and interrelatedness, as I have detailed in the first section of this chapter. This complementarity works itself out in a complex range of conjugal and domestic relationships, depending on the legal nature of the conjugal bond, the number of children produced in the relationship, the accumulation of land and wealth, migration and other factors (Lowenthal, 1984; Maynard-Tucker, 1996; Tardif and CIFD, 1992). While women may have different degrees of ability to negotiate and manoeuvre within these different types of relationships, both statistical and

ethnographical data make clear the general subordinate position that woman hold in Haitian society.²⁷

Despite the subordinate position of women, the ideal of equality and mutuality for women and men's relationships and decision-making within the household is commonly held up by both women and men in public discourse. Questions concerning gendered decision-making responsibilities were asked in all three of the Maissade surveys already introduced above (White, 1993, Narcisse 1996 and my re-survey in 1997). In both Narcisse's 1996 survey and my 1997 re-survey of individual women, the majority declared that management responsibility was joint (decisions were made 'together') in a range of household domains - household food, large gardens²⁸, large animals, children's education, and managing household money (see Table 7.4). White's survey, in which the questions were asked in group sessions, showed a stronger tendency to distinct gendered division of responsibilities - men were clearly responsible for large gardens, large livestock, planting trees and religion²⁹, women were clearly responsible for household

²⁷ Statistical evidence can be found in the lower rates of schooling and literacy for women (UNDP, 1994; UNESCO, 1996), the low proportion of land holdings registered in women's names, and their lower participation in the paid labour force (Tardif and CIFD, 1992; ILO, 1999). Ethnographic evidence is provided by examples such as the proverb 'women are leaves' quoted in the first part of the chapter, and in the declarations made by the women's club associations during International Women's Day, quoted in Chapter Six.

²⁸ In my re-survey, I also asked my respondents (all women) "Who is responsible for managing [particular food crop name] while they were growing?" Here again, a majority of women reported that men and women "'together'" managed: the main corn/bean/sorghum intercrop, plantains, sugarcane, fruit trees, and cassava. Only for trees for charcoal did a majority of women report male responsibility for management.

²⁹ The exact meaning of 'religion' is not specified - the question simply asked "Who is responsible for taking decision concerning 'religion'?" In White's 1993 report, this is translated as "family religion choice". I assume this question to refer to decisions concerning church affiliation or participation in particular religious ceremonies. I did not repeat this question in my re-survey, since my experience suggests that many women and men make such decisions individually and independently - i.e. a woman or

food, the small houseyard garden, small animals, and marketing activities, and only for children's education did a majority of the groups report that decision making was 'together'. It is difficult to speculate how many of the differences in these survey results might be due to the impact of the 'women's empowerment' messages of the SC program since White's survey in 1993, and how much is due to the different survey settings. It would also be interesting to have asked the same questions to a sample of males in 1996 or 1997.

This ideal of equality and mutuality between man and woman in the household was also upheld in numerous public discussions. In one discussion with men concerning household disputes, they insisted that such disputes should be resolved by dialogue and consensus. One man, speaking of a husband and wife in dispute, stated: "They come to agreement, in any case, they reflect and then they come to agreement, they have to come to agreement. ... you yourself, the man, you calculate yourself, you see how she says to do it really is the best, then you 'enter' into your conscience, one can 'enter' into the conscience of the other." Another woman described how, when school fees came due for their children, she and her husband together decided to roll a *chòf*³⁰ of sugar cane in order to raise the money required. I pressed her on this point, but she insisted that it was 'they', not 'he', who rolled the sugar cane (even though sugar cane is often considered a man's crop). Both men and women admitted that in many households such 'togetherness' did not actually hold, and I will present and discuss considerable evidence for this further

man may 'convert' and join a Protestant church even if the husband or wife does not.

³⁰ A *chòf* is a large iron vat used to boil down the sugar cane juice. Since one *chòf* is the minimum amount of cane juice that can efficiently be processed into locally-refined sugar, it represents a common unit for measuring the amount of sugar cane that is harvested.

Table 7.4 Household Decision Making Roles.

Who makes decisions in the household concerning:	WOMAN			MAN			TOGETHER		
	White 1993 (1)	Narcisse 1996 (2)	Vander Zaag 1997 (3)	White 1993 (1)	Narcisse 1996 (2)	Vander Zaag 1997 (3)	White 1993 (1)	Narcisse 1996 (2)	Vander Zaag 1997 (3)
Household food consumption	96%	48%	45%	2%	1%	0%	2%	51%	55%
Large gardens	0%	17%	6%	93%	17%	13%	7%	68%	81%
Kitchen ('small') gardens	75%	48%	38%	4%	4%	0%	21%	47%	62%
Children's education	13%	23%	6%	9%	4%	2%	78%	73%	92%
Small animals	83%	46%	63%	1%	1%	0%	16%	54%	38%
Large animals	1%	13%	8%	93%	37%	35%	6%	50%	57%
Marketing activities	84%	60%	68%	2%	7%	0%	14%	33%	32%
Planting trees	16%	21%	9%	65%	42%	50%	19%	37%	41%
Managing household money	n/a	n/a	35%	n/a	n/a	0%	n/a	n/a	65%
Religion	15%	27%	n/a	60%	6%	n/a	25%	67%	n/a
Participation of the woman in a group	n/a	32%	n/a	n/a	6%	n/a	n/a	63%	n/a
Participation of the man in a group	n/a	13%	n/a	n/a	38%	n/a	n/a	49%	n/a

n/a = This question was not asked in this survey.

1. White's 1993 survey questioned 67 women's clubs and 95 *groupman* in a focus-group setting, and the answer reflects the group consensus. The responses from the women's clubs and *groupmans* were aggregated since there was 'virtually no difference in response to the questions between the women's clubs and the *groupman*' (White, 1993, p. 16).

2. Narcisse's survey questioned 148 women members of women's clubs.

3. My re-survey was with 72 women participants in White's individual questionnaire survey.

below. Yet it is clear that mutuality and equality were considered the ideal for men's and women's relationships in the household. The fact that this discourse of equality and mutuality was in fact an ideal, a 'discourse' or strategy of power, was evident from the manner it was used by both women and men, each in support of their own strategic

interests. Men used it in reference to the current situation, to the dominant (unequal) pattern of gendered labour and power relations. They characterized the 'proper' norms currently held as being those of equality and mutuality. When confronted with situations in which a man did dominate or abuse his partner, this was labelled as inappropriate behaviour on his part. For example, I have already cited an informant's statement that a man who 'lived well' with his partner would turn over the produce from his fields to her for her management. Thus, men's use of the discourse of gender equality and household harmony can be seen as an attempt to diffuse the necessity of change and women's empowerment.

Women, on the other hand, used this discourse of equality and mutuality to legitimate the changes they were attempting to achieve. Women kept insisting that they were not trying 'to lift their heads above that of men' - they were not trying to claim superiority or independence from men. Rather, they insisted that it was the ideal of equality and mutuality that they too were striving to achieve, as they participated in the women's clubs, the literacy classes, and the associations. In fact, many claimed that they had made significant progress in this area of joint household decision making, that, as they put it, "things have changed". In my re-survey of women participants, almost half (49 percent) of women reported that household decisions were made "together" more often, or men and women "put their heads together" more, when asked the question "what changes have you seen in the relations between women and men in the last 10 years?" (see Table 7.5) The range of other responses given also confirms that many women considered (at least in public statements) that their status had improved.

Table 7.5 Women's Ranking of Changes in Gender Relations.

Frequency of responses to the question: "What changes have you seen in the relations between women and men in the last 10 years?"⁽¹⁾			
Rank	Response	# of responses⁽²⁾	% of respondents⁽³⁾
1	They make decisions together in the household, 'put their heads together'	35	49%
2	No response	9	13%
3	Women can make decisions for herself, can go out more easily	9	13%
4	Women have value, are respected by men	8	11%
5	'Yes there's change', or 'lots of change' (vague answer)	4	6%
6	Do not know	4	6%
7	Men do not mistreat women anymore, do not beat women	4	6%
8	Men watch the children while the women is out, take them to be vaccinated	3	4%
9	Things have changed for some, but are the same for others	3	4%
10	Women now receive credit, loans	2	3%
11	'My husband and I have always got along well'	1	1%
12	Woman can have children when she wants	1	1%
13	Women have the right to speak in public	1	1%
14	No change or little change	1	1%

(1) This question was asked as an open-ended question of the 72 women surveyed. The answers were grouped into the categories below.

(2) Multiple responses were possible. A total of 85 responses were recorded, an average of 1.2 per respondent.

(3) Percent of respondents who gave this response. Since multiple responses were allowed, the percentage totals more than 100 percent.

2. Male Discourses of Resistance to Women's Empowerment

While many men proclaimed the ideal of an equal and mutual relationship with their spouse in the household, they also made strong (though subtle) critiques of women's increasing status. These critiques belie the discourses of equality that some proclaimed, and reveal many men's underlying sentiments concerning 'proper' gender relations

within the household. As such, these critiques can be seen as discourses of resistance to the claims women were making to improve their status and influence within the household, and as attempts by men to retain their perceived status as ‘head’ of the household.

Men’s discourses of resistance were illustrated in a number of dialogues I had with men during the focus-group sessions. One of the agriculture promoters, in explaining to me why they also held training sessions with the (mostly male) farmers’ *groupmans* concerning the *jaden lakou*, stated that men “might not take it into consideration” if they only heard about the fenced gardens from their wives.

You know there are a lot of fellows who don’t ‘take the words’ [*ki pa pran pawòl*] of a woman, since the men often will take a posture of jealousy, when the woman goes out, the woman takes a posture that she is above the head of the man. Well after they come to see that, they come to say, no it’s not true, things are not like that, that is to say, for things to go well it has to be that the man has ‘togetherness’ [*tet ansanm*] with his wife. And we [the agriculture monitors], when we are making the gardens, we encourage the men.

First of all, what the women are saying [about the fenced gardens], it’s found they’ve found it, it’s been explained to them, it’s from the training that the *animatris* and *animatè* have done with them. When they have given the details, and when they find out it’s truly like that, and when we [the agriculture monitors] who are out with the men, when we encourage them, we say, “Well guys, what you see the other women say to you, it’s from the training they’ve received it. The same way that others have got information and explained it to us, in the same way we too, we take the information in order to encourage you men so that you can do it, can realize a *jaden lakou*.”

The agriculture promoter’s indication that men more readily accept the innovation of the fenced kitchen garden when they are told that this idea does not simply come from their wife, but from the training they have received from SC, demonstrates the competitive and threatening nature of women’s empowerment, and men’s insecurity in their expected dominant position in the household. It also again reveals how change (in this case, the

fenced garden) that is associated with 'development' gains legitimacy and overcomes resistance to this change.

On another occasion, I solicited men's reaction to SC's emphasis on women's empowerment in its interventions during the past few years of the program. The following extended exchange between myself and three men reveals a range of understandings and dynamics:

Question: In the project, they talk a lot about the rights of women, that women are the 'centre-post' of development,³¹ things like that. Has this helped change the position of women in the household, compared to how it was in the past?"

Respondent 1: Yes.

Q: How has it changed, what can women do now that they couldn't do in the past?

Respondent 2: Still in the same way, since they say that women are the 'centre-post', but really I see that its men who are the 'centre-post', but they give women this glory, since they say that we are obliged to accept it, that said I see that if women are the 'centre-post', men are the 'corner-post'.

R2: Yes, and its the 'corner-post' which holds [up] the house'

R1: They always say, better to put the big post in the corner, and the little, old post, you can put it in the center.

R3: When you have corn, you the man you work hard you grow it, you have plantains in the garden. Well, the wife sees there is nothing in the house, she 'threshes' two small *mamits* of corn and two small *mamits* of sorghum, she sells them at whatever price she can, she buys a little salt, a little soap, a little kerosene, a little of this and a little of that, you live together, well, in that way, the woman is the centre-post.

R2: The centre-post doesn't hold up the house.

R3: Because if a house doesn't have a woman in it, it dies, the house is damaged.

Q: And if a house doesn't have a man, it's not good too?

R3: It's not good, both have to be there, both are necessary.

R2: It's a team of cows together who can pull the cane-mill.

Q: That's why at the mill, they put a bull and a female cow?

R2: Yes.

³¹ The slogan 'Women are the Centre-post of Development' ('*Fanm se poto mitan devlopman*') was the theme for one of the first SC-sponsored International Women's Day celebrations in Maissade, in 1993. This theme derived from and extended women's well-acknowledged claim as 'centre-posts of the family' ('*fanm se poto mitan lafanmi*'). The term 'centre-post' commonly refers to the key central post at each end of a building. However, it also refers to the centre-post of the voodoo *peristil* or worship temple, which symbolically joins the three levels of the skies, the earth and the subterranean (Tardif and CIFD, 1992, p. 201). People reported that this theme provoked considerable debate in Maissade at the time.

Q: Which one leads?

R2: The male.

Q: The bull.

R2: Yes, its the bull who leads ahead.

Q: But, do the men, because before they said there were men who mistreated their women, but do you see that this starts to change, with the way that women have their groups, their association, they have literacy classes, do you see that is bringing change?

R³²: Yes, there is change.

Q: But, is it a change that is good, or has this caused women to lose their place, elevate 'their heads' too high?

R: No, no. They all [both] have something [good] they are working toward.

Q: That means, when ever a woman has more power, it's to the advantage of the whole house?

R: Yes, that's right.

Q: Even for the man?

R: Yes, yes, that's right.

Q: But there aren't places where, after the woman has joined a club, an association, the man becomes unhappy because he feels [she] is trying to put her head above his head?

R: He doesn't see it that way, because they are all involved in development.

Q: So there's never any conflict in homes because the woman goes to the literacy class, or the woman is going to the activities of the club?

R: No, that doesn't happen.

Q: It doesn't happen?

R: No.

Q: But I've heard other people say it happens.

R: Because they're both in development.

Q: So, it never happens that a man forbids his wife to go to the club or to a literacy class.

R: No, no they won't do that, because they themselves, they already understand too, they see that it can help the household too.

A number of understandings and 'claims to meaning' concerning gender relations and development are apparent in this exchange. First is the first two respondents' attempt to counter women's claimed position as the 'centre-post' of development by insisting that they as men retain the critical position of 'corner-post'. These men clearly are attempting to resist a perceived threat to their traditional position as authorities and leaders in the

³² At this point, my transcripts do not continue to indicate which respondent replied. The original interview tapes were not kept.

household and community. The third respondent seems more sympathetic to the position and importance of women, describing the key role of women in the management of the household, and insisting that 'without a woman, a house dies.' He clearly acknowledges the mutual interdependence of women and men for the successful pursuit of both their livelihood strategies, as described previously. But the first two respondents insist on retaining the man's position as 'leader' in the household - while two cows are required to power a cane mill, it is the bull that leads. Yet as the questions proceeded, somewhat paradoxically, the changes brought on by 'women's development' are viewed positively and accepted. The men see a 'development-oriented' woman as an asset to (their) household. The labelling of women's changing roles in the household and the community as part of 'development' legitimates these changes, and appears to encourage their acceptance by men (at least in public). Development clearly has a powerful cultural appeal that facilitates women's attempt to modify dominant gender roles, and allows women (and men) new opportunities that are perceived as progressive, positive and holding the possibility of a better future.

3. The Discourse of the Competent Development-oriented Woman

While the previous section has shown that some men continue to resist women's increasingly 'empowered' status as a 'developed' person, it has also shown that this resistance exists in tension with many people's (particularly women's, but also some men's) embrace of this new identity of women. Women's attempts to claim a more equal and influential position (discussed in section 1 above) and overcome men's resistance to this 'empowerment (discussed in section 2 above) depends on their being able to claim

the identity of being 'modern' and 'developed'. As was introduced above, a woman's competence and respect are important assets in the ongoing conjugal relationship, and her ability to negotiate that relationship. Her knowledge related to caring for children, her ability to earn income for the household, her ability to read and write, and her participation in a 'development' program all help her to receive respect and increase her influence on household decisions and conjugal relations (Ulin *et al*, 1993, p. 1).

During the focus group sessions, I heard numerous statements which illustrated how having a fenced kitchen garden had become a symbol (for both men and women) of the competent, development-oriented woman. The gardens allowed them to become better mothers and providers for their children. As was quoted earlier, now "... all mothers of children know how to manage with children and green leaves. ... Now we know how to get green leaves, how we should get some plantain or yam, mix it to make some stew to give to the children before they go to school. Before, you gave it when you felt like it, but now you can't not give it." Men who had helped their partners with fencing a kitchen garden also valued their partners' knowledge and ability to be better mothers: "Well, its because of the children, they said, they told them how to care for the children, to give them green leaves to protect their bodies..." Another man stated: "we saw that it was in our interest, it was good of us..."

As was seen in the long quote in the previous section, the fact that the women's club meetings and association meetings were considered part of 'development' legitimated women's participation in them in the understanding of men. As the one man stated, men would not forbid their wives attending these meetings 'because they are development'. On another occasion, a woman told me that at one time, a man might have

been opposed to his wife going to group meeting. “But now, they know what they are discussing, for example, the three food groups. ... The men see that it is important.”

Another woman made a similar comment about women’s attendance at literacy classes:

“Its also a glory for the husband if his wife can speak [well], and can read and write.”³³

During the re-survey that I conducted, many women reported new ‘competencies’ that they had gained as a result of their participation in the women’s clubs and associations (see Table 7.6 below). Some of these new abilities were related to practical women’s needs, such as their ability to provide care for their children, while others were related to more strategic needs, such as their ability to organize, sign their name, and know their rights.³⁴ Interestingly, some identified simply the act of ‘participating in a

³³ A similar finding was reported in a 1995 study of the impact of literacy training on women (Clérié and Douyon, 1995). They surveyed women participants and family members in UNICEF literacy programs in Port-au-Prince and Grand Goave, and the SC program in Maissade. Women who participated in literacy classes reported important improvements in self-perception: “we are people now... we are no longer in the darkness” (Clérié and Douyon, 1995, p. 12, 13). Numerous women reported that the literacy training had improved relations with husbands and children, helping them learn to interact in a more educated and refined manner with their husbands, children and neighbours: “My life with my husband has changed... When I learned to read I also knew how to live in the house with him... If he says something to me, I shouldn’t give him a ‘mouthy’ response” (p. 17). A child reported “she doesn’t yell at us anymore, she talks better to us” (p. 11). Many women reported increased new knowledge concerning child care, home management, family planning, the importance of schooling for their children, and other skills. Overall women reported an important change in social status: “we are not the same people anymore - now we are moving up in society” (p. 10). The uniformly positive and expansive claims made for the benefits of literacy by the interview women and family members seem to indicate that there was a significant element of ‘public transcript’ (Scott, 1990) involved in these interactions. Yet the very fact that increased personal and social competence is seen to be the ‘correct’ public discourse reinforces notions of the powerful nature of such a discourse of the competent ‘developed’ women, as I have been arguing here.

³⁴ The distinction between women’s ‘practical’ and ‘strategic’ interests was introduced into the gender and development literature by Molyneux (1985), and has since been incorporated in many gender planning approaches to development (ie. Moser, 1989; Wieringa, 1994). Much debate remains about the conceptual soundness and practical usefulness of such a separation. The poststructural approach of this thesis emphasizes the interrelationship of symbolic and material struggles, and how they are often mediated by discourse. As Molyneux states (and this thesis argues), “The formation of interests, whether strategic or practical, is to some degree reliant on discursive elements, and is always linked to identity formation” (1998, p. 233).

Table 7.6 Women's Ranking of New Competencies They Have Achieved.

Frequency of responses to the question "What can you do as a women that your mother or grandmother could not do?"⁽¹⁾			
Rank	Response	# of responses⁽²⁾	% of respondents⁽³⁾
1	Can take care of her children better	29	40%
2	Knows preventative health care	28	39%
3	Can read and write, can sign her name	25	35%
4	Can organize/lead group meetings, can speak/discuss in public	12	17%
5	Knows her rights/value as a woman, can stand up and claim them	12	17%
6	Can participate in a club or group, participate in group meetings	10	14%
7	Can 'participate in development'	7	10%
8	Can do marketing better, receive loans, do group savings	5	7%
9	No response	5	7%
10	Knows to send children to school, knows the value of schooling	5	7%
11	Knows how to dry mangos	5	7%
12	Can discuss things with her husband, make decisions together	4	6%
13	Knows to go to doctor when she is sick	2	3%
14	Can do her farming better	1	1%
15	No change	1	1%

(1) This question was asked as an open-ended question of the 72 women surveyed. The answers were grouped into the categories listed in the table.

(2) Multiple responses were possible. A total of 151 responses were recorded, an average of 2.1 per respondent.

(3) Percent of respondents who gave this response. Since multiple responses were allowed, the percentage total more than 100 percent.

club or club meetings', or even more generally, 'participating in development', as a positive change in their lives. Women's new abilities, whether practical or strategic, are clearly interrelated and associated with their participation and identification with

'development', and all allow women to improve their position in their conjugal relationship in the household.

Conversely, not being involved in 'development' and the groups associated with development was seen as a major cause for people not improving their situation. In the previous section, I already described how people ascribed the unwillingness of some people to install fence kitchen gardens to the fact that they 'were not in a group'. Similarly, women who were involved in the clubs stated that having a partner who was not involved in development was a big drawback. If a man was not willing to help them with a fenced garden, despite their efforts to "talk to them" and convince them of the value of a garden, this was because the man "was not in development." One woman described her frustration this way: "Once in a while you have a little talk with him so that he may have a little understanding, because if he doesn't have any understanding, that's what really kills you, you a grown up person, and he doesn't want to go to anything, he doesn't go to group meetings, he's not involved in anything."

Finally, on a number of occasions women insisted that the reason some women were not able to achieve more equal and mutual relationships in their households was due to the lack of 'competence' and knowledge of the woman. One woman insisted that some men are justified in not letting their wives manage the household money, and in only give them small amounts of spending money, because their wives had shown they were poor financial managers. "When they get to the planting season, there are no seeds left in the storage depot, because the woman has sold them all." Another woman (who was a widow) stated that even if a woman had a husband who would not agree to help her with her kitchen garden, that was not an excuse for a woman not to have one. She said: "You

can't just make the man the scapegoat", since there are other ways for a woman to get the labour she needs to have a garden. Thus, women themselves seemed to understand that some women's 'incompetence' was justification for not being treated equally and justly by their partners. The discourse of women's competence worked in both directions, also 'disqualifying' some women from establishing more just relations with their partners.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analyzed the encounter of numerous 'discourses of women's empowerment' at both the site of the *jaden lakou* in particular, and SC 'women's empowerment' interventions in general. I have analyzed these encounters as 'struggles over meaning', and demonstrated how different actors - specifically, Save the Children and women and men program participants - have used these discourses to establish, negotiate, and contest specific relations of power in Maissade. SC program documents construct simplistic and problematic images of 'powerless' women who none-the-less have important roles in the traditionally male domain of agriculture, in order to legitimate and enable its program interventions in these areas. Evidence from fieldwork surveys and interviews reveals instead a much more complex, variable picture of women's position in agriculture, which in turn is complexly interrelated with issues of conjugality and overall household livelihood struggles. Similarly, both SC and local women and men participants describe the success and importance of the SC-promoted fenced kitchen gardens, yet field observations indicated only limited increased vegetable production from these gardens. This suggests that the adoption of the gardens and representations of their importance are also 'strategies of power', supporting both

pragmatic and symbolic interests in maintaining women's and men's status as 'good participants' and association with 'development'.

In the second section of the chapter, I have specifically analyzed the encounter of women and men's gendered discourses concerning the *jaden lakou* and women's empowerment, and how these contest relations of power between women and men. Both women and men utilize the progressive discourse of women's equality and conjugal mutuality, in an apparent attempt to gain advantage in negotiating the current state of gender relations. In other situations, however, numerous men utilized subtle yet strong counter-discourses, and reveal men's resistance to women's increasingly 'empowered' status. Women's attempts to claim a more equal and influential position, and overcome men's resistance to this 'empowerment', are in part negotiated through the discourse of the competent, development-oriented women. Participation in SC-supported practices, such as fenced kitchen gardens and membership in women's clubs and associations, are used to claim an identity as 'modern' and 'developed', and contest women's gender roles with men.

As mentioned above, the SC interventions promoting kitchen gardens were a relatively minor component of its overall program in Maissade. Yet the ability to analyze how power relations (particularly gender power relations) are established and contested even through these very ordinary and relatively insignificant interventions reinforces the relevance and appropriateness of Foucault's notion of power, and reveals the diverse and multiple ways that discourses of development operate in rural Haiti. As Foucault states, power is "exercised from innumerable points" (Foucault, 1978, p. 94), and in order "to understand power in its materiality, its day to day operation, we must go to the level of

the micropractices” (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 185). This chapter has thus attempted what Foucault calls

an ascending analysis of power, starting, that is, from its infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then see how these mechanisms of power have been - and continue to be - invested, colonised, utilised, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended etc., by ever more general mechanisms (Foucault, 1980, p. 99).

As I have argued, the everyday (relatively insignificant) practices and discourses involving the kitchen gardens are part of the ‘ever more general mechanisms’ by which relations of power between outside NGOs and local people, and local women and men, are established and contested.

Chapter Eight

SITES OF ENCOUNTER: PEASANT MOVEMENTS AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT POLITICS

My analysis of sites of encounter of development discourses has, up to this point, focused almost entirely on the Save the Children (SC) program and its affiliated local development associations. I have argued that different discourses of development are represented in the practices and manoeuvres of different local people within the SC program interventions, and argued that these represent the encounter of discontinuous 'knowledges' and different 'identities' concerning development. Yet SC is not the only NGO that is actively implementing development programs in the Maissade region (see Chapter Five). Thus, the question can be raised as to what extent such encounters and discontinuities are unique to the SC program and its community groups, or are more widespread features of community development practice in rural Haiti.

The other main development program operating in Maissade since 1995 was MPP (*Mouvman Peyizan Papay*). I have described MPP's background and pre-1997 development activities in Maissade in Chapter Five. As a self-described regional peasants' movement, MPP promoted a much more politicized, grassroots vision of social and economic change, compared to the more technocratic, 'a-political' approach of SC as an international NGO. MPP was also actively involved in organizing what one writer (Arthur, 1997, p. 155) describes as the largest peasant organization in Haiti (MPNKP - *Mouvman Peyizan Nasyonal Kongre Papay* - see Chapter Five), and so was a key part of the movement of grassroots populist organizations that numerous writers have identified

in Haiti (Maguire, 1991; 1995; 1997; Nicholls, 1996; Smucker, 1996; Arthur, 1997). Compared to the SC-affiliated community groups, therefore, MPP and its associated community groups (and the entire country-wide grassroots peasants' movement they are part of) appear to correspond much more closely with what the post-developmental literature has called New Social Movements (NSMs) - the identity-based, local-knowledge-promoting, grassroots initiatives that are the focus of post-developmental approaches in development studies (i.e. Escobar, 1992; 1995; Peet and Watts, 1996)(see Chapter Two for an introduction to NSMs). As Escobar states, such networks of grassroots organizations "are proliferating and acquiring a force capable of far-reaching social and political transformations" (1992, p. 421), which he hopes leads to "the formation of nuclei around which new forms of power and knowledge can converge" (1992, p. 416). Given that this thesis also draws its theoretical framework from a post-developmental focus on the interrelation of power/knowledge, an additional question for investigation concerns the extent to which such 'new forms of power and knowledge' are present in the MPP movement in Maissade - whether alternate identities and knowledges (discourses) are being formed, compared to the technocratic NGO discourses of Save the Children and the pragmatic local development knowledges of its affiliated farmers' and women's associations (described in Chapter Six).

This chapter examines the encounter of development discourses at the site of MPP interventions in Maissade. The chapter begins with a short review of the literature describing the emerging grassroots peasants' movement in Haiti, in order to set the context for the MPP interventions and local responses in Maissade. The chapter's second section analyzes the 'development discourse' of MPP, as articulated in a publicity

pamphlet it published, and compares and contrasts this discourse with the post-development literature on New Social Movements. This analysis reveals the ambiguous and multiple nature of a peasant movement such as MPP, and supports a critique of some academic discourse concerning New Social Movements. The third section of the chapter examines the specific local practices of MPP and local community groups involved in its programs. This analysis again demonstrates discontinuities and multiplicities, this time between the development knowledges and identities of local actors and MPP leaders, and analyzes the effects of the encounter of these different discourses. I argue that any simplistic portrayal of 'authentic' and 'grassroots' alternatives to development is mistaken, that local identities are firmly embedded within the discourse of development, and that consequently much of the encounter between local groups and outside programs remains a struggle for access to development.

Grassroots Peasant Movements in Haiti

Much has been written about the important role of rural grassroots community groups in the struggle for democracy and economic justice in Haiti (Durning, 1989; Maguire, 1981; 1990; 1991; 1995; 1997; Charles, 1995; Smarth, 1996; Nicholls, 1996; Trouillot *et al.*, 1997; Arthur, 1997.) As Nicholls (1996, p. 722) states, since the 1970s, "[a]ll sorts of groups have sprung up, bringing together people in the rural areas." The result was, according to Nicholls, one of "the more profound changes taking place in Haiti ... [a] country wide peasant movement" (1996, p. 722).

This broad 'peasant movement' has its roots in the Freirian concept of conscientization, and is based on the "hypothesis that community-based agents of change,

or *animatè*, could catalyze local grassroots development groups as structures for community mobilization and action” (Maguire, 1997, p. 158). Initially, most groups focused on local-level projects, such as grain storage projects and literacy campaigns, aimed at improving members’ social and economic status. Community leaders, including the *animatè*, helped community groups “harness resources for local projects [by] serving as intermediaries between grassroots groups and city-based NGOs and international donors, presenting and negotiating proposals for project funding” (Maguire, 1997, p. 161). These leaders and their grassroots groups also gained increasing political importance, as demonstrated by the key roles they played in the overthrow of the Duvalier and military governments in the 1980s and the election of President Aristide in 1990 (Trouillot *et al.*, 1997, p. 76; Maguire 1997). As Maguire (1997, p. 158) states,

[b]y 1991 this hypothesis was clearly borne out when, as a result of these efforts, hundreds of *animatè* in Haiti had developed such a successful record of community mobilization that the country was cited as being one of only a handful of nations worldwide where ‘evidence of grassroots groups’ increasing political importance is available’ (Durning, 1989, p. 80). Also by 1991 an estimated 2 million Haitians out of a population of 7 million belonged to, or were affiliated with, these grassroots groups.¹

While many grassroots leaders were driven underground following the coup d’état of 1991, and the groups they led ceased meeting, both the leaders and their groups returned to action after the removal of the de facto military government in 1994. In the municipal and parliamentary elections of 1995, many grassroots leaders, without previous political experience, won office (Maguire, 1997, p. 154).² This pattern also held in

¹ The character and meaning of this widespread participation in these grassroots groups will be an important topic of discussion in this chapter.

² Maguire reports that candidates associated with President Aristide’s Lavalas political movement (OPL - *Oganizasyon Politik Lavalas*) won 66 of the 79 lower (Deputy) house seats, and 17 of the 18

Maissade, where candidates associated with President Aristide's populist *Lavalas* political movement won the deputy (lower house of Parliament), mayoral (municipal) and all three rural section races.³ As Maguire states, this represented "a fundamental change in nature of political participation in Haiti" (1997, p. 164), as many rural-based, grassroots leaders and community activists moved from being "outsiders", eschewing political participation, to "insiders", directly holding public office. In addition, "a considerable number of political appointments and posts [went] to individuals who [had] been affiliated with, or at least openly sympathetic toward, grassroots movements and as such, [were] willing to work closely with the newly elected national and municipal officials" (Maguire, 1997, p. 165). With these new politicians and public officials came promises of a newly responsive government that would listen to the needs of rural people, decentralize government services and invest in the countryside.

As indicated earlier, the rise of grassroots movements has been identified as an important feature of political and social change throughout Latin America and elsewhere in the world, particularly by post-Marxist and post-developmental analysts (Escobar and Alvarez, 1992; Escobar, 1992; 1995; Friedman, 1992; Routledge, 1996; Peet and Watts, 1996; Crush, 1995; Esteva and Prakash, 1998). Such 'new social movements' are seen as challenging dominant political and economic structures and development models (i.e. Escobar and Alvarez, 1992; Veltmeyer, 1997; Routledge, 1995). Instead of

contested upper (Senate) seats. As well, most of the 133 three-member mayoral councils and 564 three-member rural section councils (*KASEKs*) were won by partisans of Aristide's *Lavalas* political movement (Maguire, 1997, p. 154).

³ The winner of the mayoral race had been employed as a SC *animateur* before the 1995 election. Due to SC's 'a-political' policy, he had had to resign his position when he declared his candidacy. Most of the members of the winning *KASEK* (rural section council) cartels were also local *groupman* leaders.

traditional class-based social struggles, these new social movements are rooted in specific, local social experiences and identities (subjectivities) related to their social position as women, peasant farmers, indigenous people or other marginalized groups. These identities are seen as forming the basis for social action focused on local resistance, day-to-day survival, and the “demand for enough political space and participation in decisions that affected people’s everyday lives” (Veltmeyer, 1997, p. 148). These movements are about “community power and grassroots democracy, and the transformation of social life”, the title of a recent study of popular collective-action organizations in the Americas (Kaufman and Alfonso, 1996).

Some writers have suggested that the rise of grassroots organizations in Haiti (including women’s, urban workers’ and youth organizations, as well as rural peasants’ organizations) are part of this world-wide rise of new social movements (Charles, 1995, p. 136).⁴ MPP itself has been described by several writers as one of the leading grassroots peasant organizations in Haiti (Charles, 1995; Arthur, 1996). As mentioned in the introduction, MPP has also attempted to play a lead role in organizing a ‘national’ peasants’ movement, through an annual congress (named the ‘National Peasant Movement of the Papaye Congress’ - MPNKP) of community-based *animatè* (many of whom are graduates of the MPP animation training program.) MPNKP has been described by Arthur as “Haiti’s largest peasant organization”, with a membership of

⁴ It should be noted, however, that many writers on the Haitian grassroots (i.e. Maguire, 1991; 1997; Smarth, 1996; Smucker and Noriac, 1996) have not analyzed or interpreted its rise from a specifically NSM theoretical perspective. These writers have tended to employ unproblematized positivist notions of ‘participation’, ‘community power’, ‘empowerment’ and ‘grassroots democracy’. For example, in the introductory chapter to the volume containing Smarth, Kaufman describes the genesis of many grassroots groups as “a lack of power to identify problems and mobilize the society’s resources to solve them” (1997, p. 6). See my critique of such notions of power in Chapter Two.

100,000 in affiliated local groups (1997, p. 155), while MPP itself has reported its membership to be over 60,000 peasants⁵ (MPP, n.d., p. 6). MPP was certainly the largest and most politically active grassroots organization on the Central Plateau of Haiti.

MPP and the Discourse of the Grassroots

In this section, I analyze the grassroots ‘development discourse’ of MPP, comparing and contrasting it with the characteristics of New Social Movements described in the post-developmental literature. For my source of MPP’s grassroots development discourse, I utilize a publicity pamphlet produced by MPP, which I obtained from an MPP member in Maissade during my research. This document is a locally-produced 16-page mimeographed document, written in *kreyol*, which appears to have been intended to inform and encourage MPP members. I cite extensive passages from the pamphlet, and first demonstrate the similarities of MPP’s ‘development discourse’ to that of various NSM analysts. I then discuss a number of areas where MPP’s development discourse differs from the ‘anti-development’ discourse of some NSM analysts. This leads to a short critical discussion of the nature of grassroots social action, when analyzed from a post-structuralist theoretical perspective. My analysis reveals the ambiguous and multiple nature of a peasant movement such as MPP, and supports a critique of some academic discourse concerning New Social Movements.

MPP clearly viewed itself as a ‘grassroots movement’, a populist movement that was resisting the economic domination of small rural producers, and building an

⁵ These claims concerning MPP’s membership should be interpreted with caution, since ‘membership’ in MPP had a broad range of meanings for different people, as I will discuss in the third section of this chapter.

alternative social order. The pamphlet opens with a strong statement which clearly declares MPP's self-identity:

- we are an organization of poor peasants which is defending the interests of poor peasants, the interests of poor youth and poor women, the interests of all the Haitian People.
- we are an organization of women and men whose rights have been crushed by society, who are working to build a society where the rights of all people are respected, where all people are people (MPP, n.d., p. 2).

Such an "identity-centred" (Escobar, 1995, p. 221) or "identity-oriented" (Cohen, 1985, p. 663) foundation is one of the key characteristics identified in new social movements. Rather than the traditional class-based identities of past oppositional movements, NSMs are seen to emerge from "the constitution of new collective identities" (Canel, 1997, p. 189) - a diverse range of localized identities as indigenous people, ecological movements, rural peasants, urban youth, poor women, informal sector workers, and other alternate social groups struggling for survival. MPP also represents the constitution of rural Haitians' identity as 'poor peasants' who have been 'crushed by society', 'defending their interests' and 'working to build a new society' of equal rights and respect.

The pamphlet then lists "what we have already done", describing MPP's achievements in fighting for increased justice and socio-economic empowerment for peasants. Among the achievements listed are the following:

MPP has made brothers with brothers, sisters with sisters, cousins with cousins, neighbours and poor people living in the same neighbourhood reconcile. It has eliminated the divisions which used to make one person tear apart another.... MPP has made many peasants not be afraid of speaking in front of people, it has made them not be afraid of the authorities. ... MPP has made the local tax officers stop pulling the loads from women's heads, grabbing market animals' heads in order to collect market taxes. This money was going in their pockets. ... MPP has completely destroyed the system of rural section chiefs [the former rural police] which was breaking the bones of peasants, and sucking their blood. (MPP, n.d., p. 3-4).

A second key characteristic of NSMs is their focus on local practices and struggles. As Escobar (1992, p. 421) states, “They are essentially local movements, responses given by a group of people to particular problems or direct instances of power. In this sense, they concern the day-to-day existence of people.” MPP resistance to oppressive local forms of state power, clearly demonstrated in the citation above, reflect NSMs’ concern for the “creation of ‘decentred autonomous spaces’”, rather than state political power itself (Watts, 1995, p. 59).

Yet as Escobar points out, NSMs “are by no means a-political” (1992, p. 422).

The MPP pamphlet also contains numerous references to direct political activity of MPP:

MPP has participated in crushing the coup d'état, crushing the army, crushing FRAPH.⁶ ... MPP defended Aristide in the churches, it opened Aristide's campaign [on the Central Plateau in 1990] to show that he had a lot of support, today Aristide has betrayed MPP, he is trying to destroy it, he has released mad dogs after it. He can make us stumble, but we will never fall. As for him, history will judge him.⁷ ... We were the biggest ‘centre post’ [force] in the election of the *KASEK* [rural section (township) councils], the *majistra* [municipal mayors], the senators and the President in the 1995 elections. (MPP, n.d., p. 4-9)

As claimed in this citation, organizations such as MPP were very important in the rise of the broad, grassroots push for democratization in Haiti. MPP supported the formation of the new populist political coalition that elected Aristide in 1990, much to the surprise of both domestic and international observers. Thus MPP's involvement in politics shows

⁶ As noted in Chapter Five, FRAPH was the neo-Duvalierist para-military organization that sprang up to support the de facto military government after the 1991 coup d'état that ousted President Aristide.

⁷ MPP's leader, Chavannes Jean-Baptiste, was at one time one of President Aristide's main advisors on rural matters. MPP split with Aristide is part of a larger split within the *Lavalas* movement during 1995. This split was due to criticisms of Aristide's management of the presidency after his return in 1994 (including allegations of graft by his close associates), and differences over Aristide's acceptance of international conditionalities as part of his economic policies. I do not know of the particular actions to which the statements alleging Aristide's attempt to destroy MPP make reference.

aspects of what Escobar describes as “a whole new style of political activity” (1992, p. 422), outside the established parties of post-Duvalier Haiti, which had only weak links to most rural areas.

These broadly political struggles are intimately intertwined with livelihood struggles in NSMs. The MPP pamphlet gives a long list⁸ of development projects that MPP has achieved, both before the 1991 coup d'état, and since the return of President Aristide in 1994. Some examples:

It is MPP who made the 'kreyol' [indigenous, rustic] pig return. It is MPP who put the grain silos which have allowed the poor to not sell their corn and sorghum for the price of sweet potato skins [i.e. unjust low prices]. MPP has created SPC [a peasants savings and loan credit program] to combat loan-sharking, to help the poor save money.... [since 1994]. MPP has planted more than 15 million trees MPP has conserved more than 5,000 *carreau* of land that erosion can no longer wash into the ocean. ... We have tried to restructure the *groupmans* which were scattered, we have organized new groups of young people, women, men throughout the Central Plateau. But, the groups are not yet solid, they are not yet remobilized everywhere according to the principles of MPP. But, we have 4,750 *groupmans* which have more than 60,000 members. Its a question for them to become really active. We all need to work for them all to become solid. We have established Peasants' Voice Radio, a tool which has raised the voice of peasants and made education and entertainment programs... We have re-established the literacy program... . We have re-established the agriculture credit program, credit for women doing artisan and marketing. This program is going to become larger. But, the people who borrow have to respect the agreements they have taken. ... We have installed 2 corn mills and one sugar-cane mill. We're working to get numerous more. We have started 3 irrigation projects (Maissade, Cerca la Source, Saltadere). This will help increase national food production, which is one of the big priorities of MPP. ... We have trained 270 *animatris* and *animatè*. We call them popular education promoters, to help the People organize itself so we can continue to struggle to change the State. ... We are working to sensitize the groups which owe on their loans. We can receive more credit when the groups which have borrowed finish repaying (MPP, n.d., p. 4-9).

⁸ The list contains 42 specific projects or activities in total, ranging from distributing plows, agriculture supply stores, bee-keeping, soil conservation training, chicken distribution, to rebuilding MPP's ransacked training centre and offices, literacy training, spring capping and youth exchange visits.

The pamphlet then lists “other project ideas that MPP is working on or is planning to work on”: labour-intensive infrastructure projects, a tourist project “that will make many tourists come to the Central Plateau and give many people work”, rain-water catchment projects, irrigation, the re-introduction of indigenous cotton, and the training of more youth “both within the country and in other countries....” (MPP, n.d., p. 12).

Many of these local development projects correspond to the model of development alternatives that many NSMs support. Instead of the World Bank and U.S.AID development agenda of assembly industries and export crops, MPP is attempting to invest in small-holder agriculture through credit programs, irrigation, the promotion of the exterminated indigenous pig, agroforestry and soil conservation. As the pamphlet states, national food security (self-sufficiency) are important priorities for MPP. Elsewhere, Arthur (1997) reports the ‘anti-mainstream’ rural development vision of MPP and its founder and leader, Chavannes Jean-Baptiste. Jean-Baptiste

predicts the SAP [the IMF imposed Structural Adjustment Program] will open the Haitian market to cheap imports, especially U.S. food imports, thus destroying the livelihood of the small Haitian peasant. Many will be obliged to move to the cities to find work in the assembly industries, while others will have to work as agricultural labourers, producing specialty crops such as tropical fruit for export to the U.S. market. ‘We will have to eat the leftovers from their main course so we can produce their dessert’ (Arthur, 1997, p. 155, citing a 1995 interview with Chavannes Jean-Baptiste).

Local autonomy and control of livelihood decisions, disengagement from external dependency and “opposition to the bureaucratic organization of life achieved by Development institutions..., and to the steady expansion of commodification and capitalist rationality brought about by Development technologies” (Escobar, 1992, p. 431) are all part of the alternative social vision proposed by NSMs (Mohan, 1997; Pieterse, 1998).

Yet while all these aspects of MPP's development discourse correspond with characteristics of NSMs, other elements of MPP's program do not compare as well. Although MPP is clearly identity-based, its identity of 'oppressed peasants' is still largely that of an economic class defined by its economic relations with the dominant economic class in Haiti. In contrast, Escobar states that NSMs "do not conceive of their struggle in purely economic terms or only in terms of economic class. Local culture, artistic aspects and communal aspirations are often equally important concerns" (1992, p. 422). This emphasis on non-economic 'cultural' aspects represents both NSMs' rejection of what it perceives as the materialistic and economistic mainstream development paradigm, and an important means by which to contest access to material resources. Yet such 'cultural' non-economic concerns were not a large part of MPP's agenda, as indicated by their absence from the list of MPP-supported activities cited in the pamphlet. In a related manner, a large part of MPP's political activity did attempt to access state political power itself. While it did advocate political decentralization and more local autonomy, MPP (in particular, its leadership) actively aligned itself with the new national political parties. Chavannes Jean-Baptiste initially served as one of President Aristide's advisors on rural matters, and after the OPL faction split from Aristide's *Lavalas* party, served on the executive of OPL's governing body. The goal of much MPP political activity was to enable its leaders to move from being "outsiders to insiders" (Maguire, 1997, p. 154), to become actively involved in the Haitian political leadership, which represented a "fundamental change in the nature of political participation" from rural people's past exclusion from politics. Instead of the pluralistic, 'non-party' nature of NSM political involvement, "seldom aligned with one particular ideology or political party ... shar[ing]

a distrust of organized politics and conventional political organizations” (Escobar, 1992, p. 422), MPP was strongly identified and associated with organized politics at both the national and local level. One of the strongest and most consistent criticisms expressed by local people against MPP was its overt politicization of its development projects, seen as the continuation of past political practices.

This politicization is demonstrated in a final militant section of the MPP pamphlet, which criticizes MPP’s ‘enemies’, and encourages its members to action within MPP and vigilance in claiming access to state and development projects:

The enemies of MPP which have appeared, there is only one thing in which they are strong, that’s telling lies, making false promises, violating the rights of people, wrecking people’s houses, burning people’s goods, stealing people’s things. MPP’s enemies, it’s the election which has brought them out. After the election, they won’t set foot again. If they win, they will see how they can destroy MPP. You should watch them, block them.... We’ll continue to build MPP, we’ll continue to advance, without stopping, within MPP so that we make it better, stronger. We’ll work within MPP, which was, which is, which will always be until the end of the world. MPP OR DEATH. A solid organization or death (MPP, n.d., p. 13-15).

As this surprisingly strong rhetoric demonstrates, MPP retains much of the ‘bipolarity’ of traditional right-left contests, rather than the ‘polycentrism’ of NSMs (Watts, 1995, p. 59).

Another significant difference concerns variation between MPP’s development discourse and the strong ‘anti-development’ discourse of some NSM writers such as Escobar (1992; 1995a; 1995b) and Esteva and Prakesh (1997). These writers see NSMs as holding “alternate visions of democracy, economy and society” (Escobar, 1995a, p. 212), “mediated by anti-Development discourses” (Escobar, 1992, p. 431), based on ‘alternatives to Development’ which are ‘anti-imperialist’, ‘anti-capitalist’, and ‘even anti-productivist and anti-market’ (Escobar, 1992, p. 431). NSM writers such as

Latouche (1993) and Esteva (1985; 1993) see the less radical 'alternative development' approach as fundamentally flawed and compromised within the same basic premises as modernist mainstream development. As Latouche declares, alternative development approaches, with their "three principal planks of food self-sufficiency, basic needs, and appropriate technology [are] the most dangerous solicitations" (Latouche, 1993, p.161), "products of the same world view which has produced the mainstream concept of science, liberation and development" (Nandy, 1989, p. 161, cited in Pieterse, 1998, p. 364-65). As evident above, MPP's development projects include numerous interventions which fall into such an alternative development paradigm rather than an anti-development approach. MPP itself states that it wants to "work with the rural section councils, municipal mayors, deputies and senators on projects that can be done with the State to create ... a sustainable development" (MPP, n.d, p. 12). As Pieterse (1998), Fuentes and Frank (1989), Rangan (1996) and others have noted, "many popular organizations are concerned with *access* to development, with inclusion and participation, while others are concerned with *renegotiating development*" (Pieterse, 1998, p. 363) in terms of devolution and decentralization. MPP also is clearly concerned with access to and participation in development, rather than a wholesale rejection of mainstream development.

In a related manner, Escobar suggests that another "feature of NSMs" is "the existence of a domain of popular knowledge" (1995a, p. 223) - knowledge based on 'nomad' science, flexible and changing local cultural and social understandings. NSMs increasingly "rely on their own knowledge", and "do not accept at face value the knowledge of the 'expert' and of government agents" (Escobar, 1992, p. 422). Yet the

MPP discourse presented above does not rely on any particular local knowledges, nor does it base its analysis and action on “the inadequacy of conventional knowledge systems” (Escobar, 1992, p. 425). While MPP questions the existing economic order in Haiti, it retains the traditional emphasis on establishing more just economic structures and distribution of resources as the key to liberation for the Haitian peasant. MPP does not “invent new forms of discourse for interpreting needs” (Escobar, 1995a, p. 225), but retains the dominant problematic of ‘underdevelopment’.

Finally, there is the question of how much MPP really is a grassroots organization. In many respects, MPP has also functioned as a development NGO, planning development projects, establishing funding relationships with international donor NGOs, building a large training and administrative centre, and assembling a professional staff of trainers and administrators. A important element of MPP’s growth and success large has been the strong, dynamic leadership of its founder, Chavanne Jean-Baptiste, a university-trained agronomist, and its cadre of young professional staff, rather than its grassroots membership. MPP’s effective leadership has also allowed it to attract substantial amounts of international funding for its development projects, particularly from progressive European NGOs eager to support social democratic change in Haiti since the Duvalier era.

A second key element in attracting this support was MPP’s skilled use of ‘grassroots’ discourse, in order to establish itself as a ‘social movement’. As their publicity stated, they were an “organization of poor people defending the interests of poor people”, which were then declared to equal the interests of “all the Haitian People” (MPP, n.d., p. 3). Yet as the third section of this chapter describes in detail, I observed

considerable distance and manipulation between MPP grassroots members and its leadership. Trouillot *et al.* note that, while grassroots civil society organizations (such as MPP) were instrumental in causing the changes of the past ten years in Haiti, they face the danger of “becoming detached from their bases” (1996, p. 78) if they become intermediate political or development organizations prematurely.⁹ In MPP’s case, I suggest further below that this in fact is happening, or at least that the relationship between MPP and its ‘members’ is more complex and ‘multiple’ than simply solidarity and participation.

The difficulty of ‘fitting’ MPP neatly into any well-bounded conception of a NSM reveals a number of critical issues concerning grassroots movements and post-development theoretical approaches. First, as many writers on NSMs themselves insist, there is a “staggering heterogeneity in form and character” within NSMs, and it is therefore “difficult to generalize about these movements and what they represent” (Watts, 1995, p. 59). Escobar (1995b, p. 218) also sees the post-development era coming to Latin America as “characterized by complex processes of hybridization encompassing manifold and multiple modernities and traditions... “ in which “distinctions between modern and tradition, urban and peasant...lose much of their sharpness and relevance.” Processes of change in the South are “characterized by continuous attempts at renovation, by a multiplicity of groups taking charge of multitemporal heterogeneity peculiar to each sector and country” (Escobar, 1995b, p. 218). The above discussion of MPP development discourse clearly demonstrates both continuity and hybridity within MPP

⁹ The relationship between grassroots groups and supporting NGOs remains an issue of debate among analysts of Haitian politics and development (Trouillot et al, 1996; Smucker, 1996; Fauriol, 1995).

with regards to traditional peasant class struggles, and the resulting multiple nature of MPP. Thus it is perhaps not particularly important to determine whether it 'fits' the characteristics of a NSM.

Yet in other places, NSM analysts do make claims concerning the unique character of NSMs:

In spite of the wide array of theoretical propositions among them, NSM theorists converge in their emphasis on rupture and discontinuity when comparing the new movements with traditional struggles and collective actors. These new actors are said to be at the centre of contemporary conflict, to raise new issues, to be the carriers of new values, to operate in new terrains, to employ new modes of action and to have new organizational forms (Canel, 1997, p. 198).

Similarly, Escobar, one of the leading post-development writers, argues that one of the 'nodal' points of NSMs is their mediation by anti-development discourses, though he admits this "often takes place in an implicit manner" (1992, p. 431). Pieterse suggests in his critique of the post-development literature that with post-developmentalism "there is a desire for the grand oppositional coalition and the evocation of a 'we' that, in the desire for rupture, claims to capture all social movements in the 'Third World' under the heading of anti-Development" (1998, p. 363). Yet, as has been discussed, many of the social movements in the South, including that of MPP, are rooted more in reactive livelihood struggles which seek to gain access to development. It is ironic that within the post-developmental approach, with its Foucauldian emphasis on local resistance, local struggle and the disavowal of any universal agenda (Pieterse, 1998, p. 361), some analysts seems to fall into this very thing - overlooking difference and "aspiring toward the construction of [NSMs as] a grand coalition of opposition forces..." (Pieterse, 1998, p. 362). Thus, the NSM literature itself cannot be exempt from analysis as a 'discourse of (anti)-development' - a strategy of power and a contestation of meaning.

Such an analysis of the NSM literature as a discourse of power can also be applied to MPP's development discourse. The excerpts from the MPP 'discourse of development' in its publicity pamphlet also clearly indicate that it is in a contest to establish legitimacy, meaning - relations of power - in Maissade. In the final section of this chapter, I turn to this local contestation of power relations, through an examination of the encounter of interventions, practices and statements between MPP and local participants in Maissade.

MPP Encounters at the community level

The previous section has demonstrated the differences between MPP's development discourse and that of NSMs, and argued that the complexities and multiplicities of a given grassroots organization such as MPP cannot be 'captured' within any easy 'theory' of NSMs. In a parallel manner, in this section I demonstrate that large discontinuities exist between MPP's discourse and local practices, and the practices and understandings of local participants in its projects. I do this through the description of the actions and statements of local people in response to three selected MPP project interventions - a 'community' sugar cane mill in Bòdlo, MPP's area-wide savings and loan program, and the joint government/MPP literacy program - and the analysis of these actions and statements in terms of local 'knowledges' and 'meanings' connected to group membership, projects, and development and politics. These three 'sites of encounter' were selected for two reasons: they were three of the most important project interventions of the MPP program in the Maissade area, and they were relatively

'accessible' sites where I was able to observe the dynamics of the encounter of MPP and local discourses.

Before beginning, however, it is helpful to quickly review the context of the events I describe and analyze. As detailed in Chapter Five, MPP's activities in Maissade and in other parts of the Central Plateau had been surrounded in controversy and opposition. Before the election of President Aristide in 1990, MPP had strongly opposed Duvalier and his military successors using demonstrations and marches, public pronouncements and grassroots organizing, and in return had been labelled 'communist' and targeted with violent repression. During the de facto military rule after the 1991 coup, MPP was driven completely underground and its training and administrative centre ransacked. During President Aristide's brief rule in 1991 and again after his return in the fall of 1994, MPP was ascendant, with MPP-endorsed candidates winning elected office, other MPP-associated leaders being appointed to public offices, and many development projects being channelled through its organizational network of affiliated *groupmans*. By 1997, however, many people were disillusioned with the performance of these MPP-affiliated public officials, due to the partisan nature of those government services that were delivered, the non-fulfilment of many other election promises, and allegations of corruption and mis-management. In Maissade, controversy erupted over the overt politicization of two MPP development projects - the digging of the irrigation canal in Bòdlo in late 1996, and the payment of people to carry rocks for the Madame Jwa road reconstruction - in which the recruitment of labourers was interpreted by many as a direct attempt to 'buy' election support for MPP-affiliated candidates. Many people were also critical of the verdicts of the MPP-installed judge in several local court cases. These

tensions had come to a head in late January 1997 in the form of a violent clash between MPP supporters and townspeople in a dispute over the functioning of the local electoral office and the upcoming municipal elections. Thus, the MPP project interventions described and analyzed below took place in the context of considerable ongoing polarization, tension and conflict between MPP members and supporters, and other community members in Maissade.

MPP's Community Cane Mill. On my first visit to the community of Bòdlo in March 1997, just before I reached the Bòdlo farmers' association hall, I passed a large wooden crate, containing a piece of red-painted machinery, lying on the ground next to an open-sided, tin-roofed structure in a clearing beside the path. I asked the SC *animate* what this was, and he told me it was a MPP sugar-cane mill. Over the course of the following 2 months, the cane mill and its small diesel motor, along with 3 large iron evaporating vats were installed, and the cane mill began operating. By the time I made my last visit to Bòdlo 10 months later, high piles of crushed sugar-cane stalks, drying in the sun to be used to fuel the evaporating vats, the result of the constant operation of the mill by many local farmers, surrounded the mill on all sides.

As listed in the MPP pamphlet cited in section two above, community sugar-cane mills were one of the development projects MPP had implemented. These imported (Venezuelan), steel sugar-cane mills were powered by a small diesel motor, and were much more efficient in extracting sap from stalks than the widely used, hand-made mills constructed from wood and powered by oxen.¹⁰ As described in Chapter Five, sugar cane

¹⁰ Only one other such imported steel mill existed in this region of Maissade, and was owned by a richer farmer who had relatively large fields in sugar cane - enough to finance the imported mill.

is the most important cash crop in the Bòdlo area, but for many small-holder peasants, finding a cane-mill to rent was difficult and the cost involved absorbed a large part of the proceeds from the produced sugar. Thus a 'community-owned' mill could be expected to benefit local farmers by expanding production opportunities and increasing profits on existing production.

My investigation of this project, however, revealed significant differences and gaps between MPP's articulated discourse of a community, grassroots project, and local people's responses to and understandings of this project. Since it was located on the path to the Bòdlo farmers' association, I would frequently stop in at the mill on my way to an association meeting and ask the people present about the project. Many of the answers I received made me question the degree of community participation in, and ownership of, the project. There were five MPP *groupman* in Bòdlo¹¹, and these groups had apparently expressed the need and desire for a steel cane mill several years previously, which the MPP *animatè* Norbè had then taken to the MPP director in Papaye. Beyond this request, however, the local *groupman* appeared to have participated very little in achieving the project. MPP had purchased the mill, and transported it to Bòdlo. Norbè himself had located and signed the 5-year lease for the land on which the mill was installed. (This land was immediately across the path from the house of the local KASEK member, who had been elected as part of the MPP-supported 'ticket'.) MPP had also paid for the roofing-tin and other building materials to construct the large shelter under which the mill and evaporating vats were installed. MPP had even paid local people to transport the

¹¹ These groups appeared to have been functioning since 1995, when had each received G1500 (\$US 100) in credit from MPP in 1995. By mid-1997, these loans had mostly not been repaid, though they were now over six months overdue.

sand required for the cementing of the mill base, the installation of the vats, and the construction of a small, cement-walled storage depot. The only equity that local members had contributed was the transport of some rocks needed for the construction, and some of the poles for the mill shelter. Nor had repayment of their outstanding loans been required before the project was implemented.

When I asked local people concerning the financial terms and conditions under which MPP had provided the cane-mill, many people were not able to give any details, indicating again that there had been little community participation or consultation in this project. Local people regularly called it 'the MPP mill', and for many people this summarized their understanding of the arrangement with MPP - MPP had given it to the community. Norbè had told me that the total cost of the project was G300,000 (approximately \$US 18,000), which had all been provided as a loan 'to the community', and repaid in quarterly installments from the fees charged by the mill. Yet, when I then asked him how much this quarterly payment was, he was not able to tell me the amount. Few other people seemed to know about these financial arrangements. At one *groupman* meeting I attended, I asked about the price of the mill, and a member responded: "Us poor [peasants] would not have been able to make it come ... it's a project [MPP] which needs to pay for it." About six months after the mill had started functioning, I asked several men at the mill "if the mill was paying for itself [i.e. was the community able to make the required repayments]?" The men didn't seem to understand my question, or know about the amount of any required loan repayments. They said the mill was making lots of money, as many people were using it, and everyone had to pay 2 *rapadou* per *chof*

of cane syrup¹² that they milled. In fact, they said they felt this charge was high. I asked if the charge wasn't comparable to what the other steel mill in the area was charging, and they replied, "Yes it is, but this is an *oganis* [i.e. an organization, a NGO], the other is private." Later, the local manager responsible for the day-to-day operation of the mill confirmed to me that the local MPP groups had not made any down payment before the mill was installed. Other community members I questioned on other occasions also knew little about the organizational details of the project.

Many local people also considered this project to be politically motivated, designed in the short-term to promote the electoral chances of MPP-affiliated candidates in the April 1997 elections, and to maintain MPP membership support base and influence in the longer term. MPP itself was acutely aware of this critique. In July, soon after the mill had started operating, Norbè had held a meeting with MPP members in the Bòdlo area. At the meeting, he openly addressed this issue, denying that the project had been "parachuted" into the community. He then asked the question "Who has responsibility for the mill? Who does it belong to?", and then answered his own question: "it's a *community mill*". (However, as the previous paragraph described, few community people knew any details about the project, nor did I observe any concrete efforts to establish a local community committee to manage the cane-mill project.) He also acknowledged the

¹² A *rapadou* is the unit in which the final raw sugar is packaged, stored and sold. It is made by soaking palm bark and sewing it to form a tube about 15 cm in diameter and 70 cm long, into which the caramelizing sugar syrup is poured to crystallize. Each *chof* of pressed sap, once boiled down, yields between 12 to 15 *rapadou* of sugar. Thus the milling charge is approximately 15 percent of the harvest.

lack of local participation in the construction of the mill, though he justified it by saying “it was the fear the *makouts*¹³ created that made you not participate.”¹⁴

These events reveal a number of aspects of local people’s understanding of their relationship to MPP. First, they clearly considered MPP an external agent acting in their community, and not a community-based grassroots organization. They did not consider themselves ‘members’ of MPP, at least not of MPP conceived as a grassroots organization. This was evident in the statement of one member at the July meeting in Bòdlo: “All the time *they’re* taking money from us to make a group [i.e. as membership dues], but we don’t get anything [in return].” As this statement also indicates, people understood their relationship with MPP to be one of pragmatic exchange, not membership and mutual self-help. Their supposedly ‘grassroots’ community groups did not have sufficient cohesion and motivation to generate communal self-help resources for investment in community projects such as the mill. Despite Norbè’s claim, they saw the cane mill was something MPP had achieved, not the community. As one person stated, “*They’ve* done something for the community that really is good.” Second, they seemed to expect development agencies such as MPP to subsidize or even give resources to the community, without significant local participation. MPP itself implicitly recognized this

¹³ Literally, the paramilitary *tonton makouts* of the Duvalierist area. In this case, he is referring to the anti-democratic forces who intimidated people during the period of de-facto military rule after the 1991 coup.

¹⁴ Another issue that Norbè discussed at this meeting was the outstanding loans local groups had with MPP. He told them that a new credit program was going to be starting, but that they wouldn’t be able to participate as long as the old loans were outstanding. Apparently some of the groups had been forewarned about this, for several made their repayments at the end of the meeting. Norbè also told members that there was a good possibility that MPP would be installing a distillery in the area to utilize local cane syrup.

attitude, and the resulting unwillingness to mobilize local resources. Yet because of its 'need' to deliver 'development' projects to support its political objectives, MPP ended up reinforcing this understanding by the almost total lack of local participation and contribution it required before it supplied the cane mill. Third, local people widely understood, accepted and even expected the politicization of development-related interventions in their communities. In effect, this became a mutually symbiotic relationship, in which local people accepted and benefited the material resources from politically-motivated development interventions, and in return gave political support to those who had been able to deliver a project. Referring to the now-long-overdue loans local MPP groups had received, one group member put it this way: not only do MPP-affiliated politicians and leaders "fill their pockets on the backs of the peasants"¹⁵, but peasants "fill their pockets on the back of MPP."

These events also reveal the dynamic and multiple nature of power relations between MPP and the local community. Local community members who had decided to join a MPP-affiliated *groupman* manoeuvred within MPP's development discourse of the grassroots empowerment of poor peasants and political mobilization to ensure benefits for their community. Yet the ability of MPP to actually create such empowerment and mobilization remained very weak. MPP's intention of creating a grassroots social movement that would transform both Haitian politics and economics remained difficult to realize. In this context, power cannot be conceived of as a 'thing' that MPP or local

¹⁵ By saying this, he was referring to the common assumption that politicians and project staff skimmed public funds for their personal use, or at least did not provide value for the relatively generous salaries they received.

peasants had or do not have. Power was never fixed. Rather, relations of power were constantly being contested and negotiated, as MPP's *animatè* and local MPP *groupman* members utilized local discourses of development to make claims of meaning. The effects of the encounter of these discourses and associated practices was outside the intentions of any of the groups utilizing them. Neither 'side' was able to decisively 'win' - MPP was not able to achieve a genuine grassroots peasants' movement or gain firm political power, and local groups were able to extract only limited resources and benefits from its development projects. Rather, the outcome was the perpetuation of an ongoing symbiotic and dysfunctional struggles between outside intervenors and local groups, each utilizing the other for their own projects.

Manoeuvring to Save and Borrow. Another intervention where the intentions of MPP encountered peasant manoeuvres occurred with a savings and loan program promoted by MPP. One of the basic ways that MPP attempted to encourage grassroots self-help among local peasants was through the organization and promotion of a savings and loan cooperative. This program was called *Sere pou Chofè* (SPC), a local expression referring to the practice of "hiding away" a portion of a cooked meal in order to be able to "reheat" it later.¹⁶ By saving small amounts regularly in SPC, members would be able to build a common credit pool, from which they could then borrow to meet unexpected expenses. SPC was intended to stop peasants' exploitation by money-lenders and richer neighbours when they would otherwise have to liquidate accumulated assets (such as a cow, a standing harvest, or parcel of land) at fire-sale prices when faced with such

¹⁶ The literal French origins of this term are *serrer pour chauffer*.

unexpected cash requirements. SPC was thus a text-book example of a self-help community development project.

MPP had first began organizing SPC in Maissade in 1995, and by 1997 Norbè claimed that there were 2,000 members who had paid the G11 (\$US 0.70) required to join (this consisted of an initial, refundable G5 (\$US0.33) 'membership share', G5 for the membership 'passbook' in which shares, savings deposits, and loans were recorded, and G1 for a non-fundable entrance fee.) However, very few members were continuing to make regular deposits in their SPC accounts, as total member savings amounted to only G7,400 (\$US 500), or approximately G3.50 per member, by November 1997.

The poor performance of the SPC was the background for several meetings that I observed between Norbè, the MPP *animatè* for Maissade, and local MPP groups. The first meeting I observed was held near Savann, and had approximately 60 people attending at its peak (some of whom I recognized from meetings of the Bòdlo farmers' association.) Norbè began the meeting with a motivational talk, reminding people of the logic of SPC, saying how it would help them "avoid selling an animal when is it pregnant, avoid selling a field of beans while it is still flowering." He then encouraged them to be more faithful in depositing regular savings in their passbook, and linked their regular savings deposits to eligibility for credit from the SPC. He told them that MPP was getting additional credit funds for the SPC, but warned that members who "never sign their passbook" would not be eligible. "There are foreigners who are giving aid, if they see there is a serious [ie. well-run] project". He then also attempted to create motivation and solidarity among the SPC members by pointing to their common 'enemy', stating: "The sector that doesn't want to see change, the exploiting sector, they're

preventing us from organizing. We have to identify our real enemies and our real friends.”

Countering Norbè’s prompts, people at the meeting then questioned him about their MPNKP membership cards, for which they each had paid G5 the previous year. Norbè deflected their question, saying that delivery of the cards had been delayed because group names had been entered incorrectly while the cards were being prepared in Port-au-Prince. He promised that this year the cards would be prepared in each region to prevent this problem from happening again. He then promised: “This card will be very useful for you, I’ll tell you how another time.” One of the local community leaders attempted to pressure Norbè to be more specific about when people would be able to start receiving loans from the SPC, saying if the people are supposed to have solidarity with SPC, “SPC has to have solidarity with us too.” The meeting ended with the promise of more information at a Maissade-wide SPC ‘General Assembly’ meeting to held in August. Norbè promised that “many foreigners will be there, Papay is sending representatives, Port-au-Prince is sending representatives.” He then also told people that, in order for the Assembly “to be done properly”, there had to be food served, but that “an empty sack cannot stand.” Therefore each member who wanted to attend should contribute G2.50, and a list of participants and the collected money should be submitted by the beginning of August.

The SPC General Assembly did not happen in August (for reasons I was not able to determine), but was rescheduled for September. The meeting was held in the yard of

the national school¹⁷ in Maissade, with the school benches placed outside to provide seating. Though I overheard Norbè saying he expected about 300 people, the meeting started at 11:30 with about 70 people present. Norbè again began with a motivational review of the benefits and potential of the SPC, claiming that if all the 12,000 MPP *groupman* members joined SPC and contributed regularly, they could “do miracles” and “take the economic power in Maissade.” He demonstrated this ‘economic power’ by calculating how 12,000 members saving G10 per month for a year would yield a capital fund of G1,440,000, and how such a fund would allow peasants to by-pass the importers and middle-men who exploit them. Demonstrating the influences of MPP’s dependency and class-based analysis of underdevelopment, Norbè stated: “In Haiti, for every 100 people, there are 20 who live easily. But it is we the 80, we the peasants, it’s we who enrich these 20 people. It’s on our backs they make their riches, because we don’t mobilize our resources. ... You need to ‘take up’ your class consciousness!”

Norbè then addressed the problem of SPC members who were not saving regularly. He said that 360 SPC members who had never deposited anything in their account since they joined could come get their membership share, since they were not serious members. He stated that MPP had a large credit program that it was going to start, but that SPC members had to have G50 accumulated in their account to be eligible for a loan. As well, once members had G50 in their account, they would start to earn interest on their savings. Then Norbè gave a summary financial report for the SPC, listing the total of members’ membership shares and savings deposits, a list of members

¹⁷ In a bit of incidental irony, given MPP’s anti-World Bank stance, this school was popularly called the *Bank Mondyal*, the ‘World Bank school’, since it had been built as part of a department-wide World Bank-financed project to construct elementary schools in the 1980s.

who had already received loans, and the total amount loaned to these members. He then held up a plastic bag holding a significant amount of cashing, indicating this was the SPC balance.¹⁸ He then reiterated the conditions for members to be eligible for loans, saying “we’re looking for people who are serious, we’ll invite them to come borrow money.”

The meeting then took a bit of a detour, as Norbè started to describe MPP’s development accomplishments and plans. He cited the sugar cane mill project MPP had finished installing in Bòdlo, but said because only six MPP members from Bòdlo were present at the Assembly, they had lost their chance to get a corn mill project. Norbè then listed four other communities that would soon be receiving a cane mill, and said that three more mills were available, and had to be allocated yet. He said that Anwò would be receiving a cassava mill. He told of a grain storage silo that MPP was going to construct in Maissade, and also of a distillery. Upon hearing this, people present from other communities not yet promised a project began to take turns speaking up, asking what their community was going to receive, arguing the merits of a cane mill for their community. As the meeting was nearing its end, Norbè started to introduce the 15 members of the SPC executive committee, but could only identify 6 members in the crowd. He stated that the Assembly should renew one-third of the committee members at this meeting, but that they would not be able to do this because time was running late. The meeting ended with a crowd of people gathered around Norbè to ask him questions and press their case for some ‘development’ for their area.

¹⁸ The fact that he presented this money for all to see suggested to me that he felt he needed to counter members’ scepticism that the SPC money was being managed transparently. But I have no other concrete indication that this was the reason he presented the money.

These two meetings showed numerous examples of encounter, negotiation and manoeuvre. Norbè attempted to appeal to members' identity as exploited, poor 'peasants' to encourage them to more active participation in the SPC. He also appealed directly to aspects of members' 'local development knowledge' concerning how NGO programs operated: the association of 'foreigners' and 'outsiders' with abundant project resources; and the requirement of a certain level of local 'participation' (in the form of SPC membership, savings contributions, and fees for food served at meetings) in order to 'qualify' for such project resources. He also implicitly appealed to their understanding that their membership (and financial participation) in SPC (and their MPP *groupman*) was in fact largely a strategy or exchange, designed to enable access to outside development resources. By utilizing these local 'discourses of development' - by calling on these meanings of these development practices - he attempted to establish specific relations of power between MPP and its 'members' - MPP's claim to their continued participation in its programs, attendance at the General Assembly, and implicitly, support for MPP's political program.

Local people, in contrast, appeared to have only limited confidence in the benefits of the SPC, as evident in the low attendance at the General Assembly, the low levels of savings deposited in the program, and in Norbè's apparent felt need to demonstrate transparency in the management of the program. They understood that NGO-generated self-help projects often held only limited potential in delivering concrete benefits. Based on the meanings of these MPP's interventions, they were able to subvert and renegotiate MPP's claims to their participation, and to manipulate MPP's need to maintain strong local support for its 'grassroots' movement. This was evident in the fact that Norbè made

rather bald promises of cane mill projects and loans to the participating communities (and also his threatened withholding of 'Bòdlo's' corn mill). The people present at these two meetings continually attempted to manoeuvre to ensure that project resources, in the form of loans and specific projects such as sugar cane mills, did in fact flow to their groups in return for their contribution of their 'participation' and 'solidarity' with MPP.

Paying for Literacy. A third important intervention where MPP understandings and intentions encountered local pragmatic strategies was MPP's promotion of literacy training. In 1995, MPP had sponsored a limited number of literacy classes in the communities around Maissade. Twenty of these classes had had enough participants pass their first evaluation, and continue into a second 'cycle' of lessons in 1997. In early 1997, the government's Secretariat for Literacy launched another literacy program, and invited MPP, the Catholic church and SC to send potential literacy trainers to training sessions. MPP appeared to dominant the implementation of this program, and, as I will describe below, many people perceived it as "the MPP literacy program."

There was great interest in these literacy trainer positions, with over 450 people reportedly attending the trainers' evaluation seminars.¹⁹ There was also considerable political manoeuvring among candidates to get their names included on the list of accepted trainers after the evaluation at the end of the seminars - one person told me that, after the evaluation, MPP leaders had taken the list of accepted trainers, added names of

¹⁹ It was at the end of one of these training seminars that the MPP demonstration that led to the violent confrontation with opposing townspeople in front of the electoral office occurred on January 31. MPP leaders led the seminar participants to the town square for a public pronouncement, which then quickly turned into the confrontation. One attendee told me that most people at the seminar had no intention of taking part in such a demonstration, but that they felt they had been manipulated and tricked by MPP leaders into participating in the demonstration.

MPP supporters, and deleted other names. This competition for the trainer positions was induced by the promise of a stipend of G1,000 (\$US 65) for the 6 month class session,²⁰ though as controversy later demonstrated, it was never clear to most people whether this stipend was to be paid by MPP or by the Secretariat for Literacy. Classes began in March and April, and during the summer months. I encountered numerous SC association members, including the Bòdlo association president, another Bòdlo association member, an SC agriculture monitor from Anwò, and the daughter of an Anwò *groupman* leader, who all told me that they had received positions as literacy trainers in this program.²¹ However, as the summer progressed, I also heard increasing reports from these people and others of complaints that the trainers had not yet been paid the promised first installment after 3 months of classes. By September, most people, including several of the trainers themselves, acknowledged that few of the classes were meeting regularly, due to the discouragement of the trainers and little supervision of their work. During the fall, public criticism mounted, with people sending letters of protest that were read on regional radio, many blaming MPP and calling on MPP to live up to its promises.

Finally, toward the end of 1997, MPP supervisors conducted evaluations in most of the literacy classes. On the last day of 1997, Norbè held a large meeting in town “for all MPP literacy trainers” - implicitly acknowledging MPP’s co-option of the project as its own. A large crowd of over 150 people was at the meeting, and when I arrived near

²⁰ SC declined the invitation to send trainers, since it already had its own literacy program, with approximately 40 trainers and 5 regional supervisors. Its trainers were paid G200 per month by SC for conducting a hour-and-a-half class 4 times per week.

²¹ This is another example of the practices described in Chapter Seven - the strategic and pragmatic participation of local people in multiple development groups and programs.

noon, names were being called out and those called were going to the front of the meeting hall to receive their stipend. Earlier, I was told that Norbè had given a speech explaining that each trainer would be paid G550 at that time, with the rest to follow in January. Several people at the meeting complained to me concerning the partial payment, claiming it was “exploitation”, another saying that “the people in charge don’t know what hunger is.” But another person, referring to the announced start of a second cycle of classes in January, stated “The trainers will continue with their classes in January, they don’t have much choice”, acknowledging that for most trainers even the partial payment was sufficient incentive to continue with their class.

Two days after this meeting, I interviewed Norbè, who told me that 172 trainers had been paid. He justified the lower payment as being due to numerous factors: bank fees and other expenses incurred while transferring the money from the Secretariat for Literacy, additional names on the list which had not been included on the list submitted to the Secretariat, and the holding back of a reserve for future payments. He also noted that they had already discovered 10 people who had managed to receive payments even though they had not been trainers, and had already apprehended one of these people. Here again, the pragmatic and opportunistic motivations of some local people is evident.

These events again demonstrate the encounter and manoeuvring between MPP and local people based on differing yet ‘symbiotic’ meanings attached to development interventions. For both MPP and many local people, the real value or meaning of the literacy classes had little to do with the actual attainment of literacy skills by previously illiterate group members. The poor organization of the program, the lack of supervision of the trainers, the quick decline of trainers’ motivation when their stipend payments were

not forthcoming, and the almost complete absence of discussion of the actual participant success rates in the classes, reveal that the literacy program was again mostly a contest about access to resources and participation.²² MPP was primarily concerned about its ability to maintain its profile and following in the community through the channelling of resources to the selected trainers, and local people were willing to lend their 'participation' in return for access to these resources.²³

Conclusion

The three cases that I have described and analyzed in the third section of this chapter show strong similarities. The sugar cane mill in Bòdlo, the SPC program and the literacy classes all became sites where MPP and local participants manoeuvred to establish specific relations of power, based on their understandings of these development interventions. For MPP, its interventions were more than simply a means to empower or

²² One trainer described a previous literacy program to me as 'very successful', because it had paid its trainers regularly and well.

²³ It should be noted that I encountered a similar instance of strategic manipulation within the SC literacy program. The treasurer of the Savann women's association, Madame Moise, had previously graduated from a women's club literacy class, and had been hired as a trainer in the new 1997 cycle of literacy classes. She was still only marginally literate, but SC had wanted to be able to encourage and reward successful literacy participants. Madame Moise commented to me on several occasions on the difficulty of maintaining sufficient interest in her class, stating that frequently only 4 or 5 members would come to class. Maintaining attendance was important to her, since if the SC supervisor determined that it had fallen below a minimum level, the class would be cancelled and she would lose her monthly stipend of G200. Madame Moise's neighbour, Alira, was a member of her class. I interviewed her as part of the pre-test of the women's agriculture questionnaire, and conversation turned to the literacy class. I had noted earlier that Alira seemed to be quite literate, so I asked her why she attended the literacy class. She admitted rather frankly that she attended both to 'support' Madame Moise in maintaining sufficient participation in her class, and because she herself hoped that once she 'graduated' from the class that she might be selected for a 'job' to teach in a new cycle of classes SC might be organizing. On another occasion when I asked some women why they had joined a literacy class, one of the responses that was given expressed the same hope: "They may chose me to do another literacy class [*Yo ka pran mwèn pou fê yon lòt alfa*]."

'develop' local peasants, but just as importantly, a means to build and maintain support for its self-styled 'peasants' movement' and its political goals. For most local people, these projects represented valuable material resources for themselves and their community, which could be accessed through their 'participation' and membership in MPP's programs. All recognized and understood that 'development' was also inevitably 'political', that projects are exchanged for membership and participation. Relations of power were constantly negotiated and contested, as the 'powerful' outside development agency attempted to successfully assert its model of development, and local people found multiple ways to subvert and redefine the impacts of development interventions. The MPP interventions repeat patterns that have been ongoing in rural Haiti for decades - outsiders attempting to come in to achieve certain goals, and local people resisting, adapting, and manoeuvring as best they can.

This analysis further supports the conclusion of the second part of the chapter concerning the gaps between the NSM literature and the realities of grassroots development movements such as MPP. Rather than being an 'anti-development' movement, both MPP and local participants actively strive to either deliver or gain preferential access to development resources. Local people do not primarily resist more 'powerful' outside agencies and development models, but actively embrace the promises of development. Yet this does not mean that development's aims are easily realized. Local actors actively reinterpret the opportunities of development, utilizing various local strategies and available discourses of development to make claims for 'development' resources according to their particular needs and interpretations. Material and social

relations are negotiated through claims to meaning. These relations of power are not fixed, but are established, subverted, and reworked in a variety of ways.

In Maissade, the dominant NGO development discourses of 'empowerment', 'participation' and 'the grassroots', whether expressed by MPP's 'political' programs or Save the Children's 'a-political' programs, allow these 'powerful' outside actors to deploy a range of development interventions and community organizations in the Haitian countryside. Yet the active agency of local people in reinterpreting and renegotiating the meaning of these interventions means that the specific intentions of these powerful agents are rarely achieved. Following Ferguson (1990) and Foucault (1979, 1980), however, this outcome is predictable and intelligible. The result of the encounter of these discontinuous development discourses is ongoing yet dysfunctional development programs. The implementation of these programs produces a 'powerful' yet subjectless set of relations in rural Haiti, beyond the intentions of any single actor.

Chapter Nine

SITES OF ENCOUNTER: THE FIELD RESEARCH

The encounter of discontinuous and negotiated knowledges and identities was not only revealed in local development programs in Maissade, but also in encounters involving the research process itself. This chapter, therefore, is much more reflexive than previous chapters, as I explicitly engage in discussion and analysis of questions concerning my own identity and position in the research process, as understood by both myself and the people who were the 'objects' of my research in Maissade. I have included this chapter for two reasons: first, theoretical and methodological concern for issues of objectivity and accountability stemming from the post-developmental framework of this thesis; and second, practical difficulties and questions, related to issues of power, identity and participation, that I encountered during the course of the fieldwork.

The chapter begins with a discussion of theoretical and methodological issues concerning field research that have been raised in recent literature. I review how the post-structural and post-colonial approaches, discussed in Chapter Two, have led many field researchers to examine the nature of the 'knowledge' they produce, and raise questions of power, accountability, and representation. I then discuss the practical difficulties I encountered during the field research, comparing the participatory research procedures I had intended to implement with the actual conduct of the research. These theoretical and practical concerns both lead to the conclusion that the analytical framework of 'encounter' utilized in the rest of the thesis can also be applied to the research process. In

the third section of the paper. I present several incidents from the research period - encounters when I became strongly aware of unequal relations of power, differences in identity, and incongruous knowledges between myself and local people. I utilize these cases to analyze the nature of both local 'development' identities and knowledges. I argue that the field research encounter itself needs to be situated and understood in terms of the relations of power, knowledge and identity related to discourses of development. Such an approach both deepens the analysis of the operation of the discourse of development, and suggests more critical perspectives are needed on issues of participatory research, informed consent, and mutual learning.

Theoretical and Methodological Issues

Post-structuralist approaches, as discussed in Chapters One and Two, have challenged positivist views of 'true' knowledge, and individualistic, modernist views of 'unitary' subjectivity. Social scientists increasingly view knowledge as partial and situated, shaped by the specific circumstances in which it is produced. Human subjectivity is seen as variable and multiple, constructed and maintained through social relations, embedded in the structures and discourses of society. As a result, human investigation (research) cannot produce a single 'true' or 'objective' knowledge, nor can knowledge be viewed as "a tangible stock, body or store" (Scoones and Thompson, 1993, p. 12) that can easily be extracted, transferred or shared among people occupying different 'subject positions'. Foucault's concept on discourse has added concern for how relations of power are established (and also resisted) through the construction of knowledges and subjectivities.

These theoretical and conceptual issues have also raised a number of methodological issues concerning field research, issues that are important in the social sciences in general and in development studies in particular. The realization of the constructed, often ethnocentric, nature of knowledge has led to the widespread popularity of participatory research techniques, with the aim that so-called local or indigenous knowledges can be incorporated into development practice (ie. Chambers, 1993; Scoones and Thompson, 1993; Warren *et al.*, 1995). Feminist approaches, drawing from their basic belief that 'the personal is political', attempt to adopt methods which "centrally locate 'the subjective in the knowledge'" (Cotterill, 1992, p. 594, citing Currie and Kazi, 1987, p. 81), and thus emphasize "subjectivity as a route to theory" (Graham, 1984, p. 123). These approaches all attempt to produce "non-hierarchical, non-manipulative research relationships which have the potential to overcome the separation between the researcher and the researched" (Cotterill, 1992, p. 594).

As well, increasing numbers of field researchers, particularly working from a feminist and/or post-colonialist perspective, are acknowledging the position or identity of the researcher. They situate themselves within the context of the research, in an attempt to recognize the impossibility of objectivity or neutrality (ie. deVries, 1992; McDowell, 1992; Tedlock, 1991; Abu-Lughod, 1993). The post-structuralist critiques of the multiple and fragmentary nature of knowledge and identities, and their relation to power, have problematised any easy transfer or sharing of knowledge through participatory research, or the positioning of any fixed identities of either the researcher or those researched (ie. Rahnema, 1990; Harding, 1992; Scoones and Thompson, 1994; Rose, 1997).

Questions concerning the power relations between the researcher (who is often from or at least trained in the West) and those being researched, in the context of the increasing emphasis on the relations of power inherent in dominant (usually Western) systems of knowledge, also leads to questions concerning the power of the researcher to establish the very conceptual terms that will be used to 'construct' the reality of those researched. This concern is expressed in the following statement by Staeheli and Lawson, which, though written of feminist research, applies to cross-cultural research in general:

When Western feminists enter developing settings, they cannot escape the power relations that exist between those societies or between themselves as academics and their research subjects, even when they wish to do so. Western researchers are in a position of power by virtue of their ability to name the categories, control information about the research agenda, define interventions and come and go as research scientist (1995, p. 332).

Therefore, as Harding (1992, p. 178) argues, researchers must do more than simply have their research subjects "appear" in their research agenda, but must also challenge their research agenda and conceptual scheme with the research agendas that these groups themselves construct. As Nash points out, collaborative research means more than "incorporating the voices of the voiceless. ... We must constantly test our own interpretations against those of our informants in a dialogical approach. ... In this process, we may learn to embrace as complex a reality as the one people live with in their everyday lives" (Nash, 1992, p. 292, cited in Smith, 1997). Research must be informed by the meanings and perceptions of local actors.

A post-positivist methodological approach also recognizes that those subjected to research continue to retain the ability to act, contest, resist and divert. The traditional

concerns of ethnography regarding reactivity²⁴ are heightened, as it is now assumed that those being researched also manoeuvre and negotiate the research experience in terms of their own knowledges and interpretations. Cotterill, in an examination of interview research methods, argues that such research must be seen as “fluid encounters where [power] balances shift between and during different interview situations” (Cotterill, 1992, p. 604).

These interrelated issues all raise important concerns regarding how we learn about other people. They raise difficult questions concerning the influence and role of the researcher in the research encounter, and how we analyze difference. As McDowell states, “we must recognize and take account of our own position, as well as that of our research participants, and *write this into our research practice* (1992a, 409, cited in Rose, 1997, p. 305, italics in original). I now turn to ‘writing into my research’ descriptions and analysis of the encounters of identity and knowledge between myself as researcher and local people in Maissade.

²⁴ Creswell (1998, p. 76) defines reactivity as “the impact of the researcher on the research site and informants’ responses.” Most common among these impacts are ‘best face’ phenomenon (Cornwell, 1984) and the provision of ‘public transcripts’ (Scott, 1990), in which informants attempt to manage the unfamiliar research situation and ‘accommodate’ the researcher by giving the ‘right’ publicly-accepted responses. This concern also extends to survey research, and can produce rather severe distortions in the reliability of collected data. Chen and Murray (1976, p. 241) have noted this problem in Haiti, and devised the following descriptive definition of a survey following their experience:

a rural Third World survey is the careful collection, tabulation and analysis of wild guesses, half-truths, and outright lies meticulously recorded by gullible outsiders during interviews with suspicious, intimidated but outwardly compliant villagers. The definition is meant to be a caricature not of the villager, but of the researcher.

Practical Difficulties

In my research proposal, I attempted to incorporate these methodological concerns regarding power relations and the construction of knowledge by planning to incorporate some participatory research methods, in addition to the traditional methods of participant observation and interviews. In my research proposal, I stated that I would “enter into discussion with [local] groups concerning [program intervention/local community dynamics and issues]”, and based on these discussions, “seek agreement” with local women’s clubs, farmers’ *groupmans*, and the associations to which they belonged “...for their participation in a series of extended case studies. These agreements will establish specific accountability and feedback/verification procedures for the information gathered from these groups” (Vander Zaag, 1996, p. 20). I also acknowledged the necessity to maintain flexibility and responsiveness in the research process: “the process will be iterative and reflexive, [and] will respond to the information that has already been obtained, the willingness of various actors to be ‘enrolled’ in the research project, the feedback of groups to information that is shared, and my judgement of the significance and appropriateness of the various avenues that present themselves” (Vander Zaag, 1996, p. 22).

As the research process unfolded, however, I largely abandoned attempts to make it participatory and mutual.²⁵ I did not establish an explicit agreement with any local

²⁵ I did maintain my accountability to SC as the host organization, as I had agreed in the research agreement I established with its managers. This involved monthly reports of my past and planned activities, and general descriptions of research findings. I also prepared a ‘consultant’s report’ to SC at the end of the research period, outlining concrete programming recommendations in the areas of program sustainability and impact, and final copies of this thesis will be delivered to SC. Of course, I also continued to provide IDRC, SSHRC and my supervisors at Carleton University with the required updates on my work.

groups or associations concerning my research project, nor did I engage in explicit feedback, verification or results-sharing sessions. Throughout the field research, I was very aware of the relations of power, differences in identity, and the encounter of knowledges between myself and local people, and these seemed to make any easy participation and sharing of understandings impossible. Local people seemed to have difficulty understanding my role as a researcher, assuming that I must be associated in some way with a development project. Rural people seemed to have little conceptual understanding of what academic research was. It was even difficult to accurately translate the word 'research' into *kreyol* - the literal translation implied searching or seeking, and was used by local community leaders in the context of 'searching for a development project'. Other terms such as thesis and Ph.D. were also not easily 'mapped' by local people. My research focus on different 'understandings' of development seemed abstract and far removed from local people's everyday concerns and struggles to 'get development'. Most did not seem at all concerned with questioning the assumptions of the dominant development discourse, but rather were most concerned with how to manoeuvre with the SC or MPP programs (and with me, as I will describe) for their maximum advantage. I did not see how their 'research agenda' was compatible with mine. Local practical knowledges were 'discontinuous' with my 'post-developmental' knowledge of 'development as discourse'.

Because I was very aware of and sensitive to the unequal relations of power implicit in my identity as an outsider, I usually purposefully tended toward a much more passive observer mode than an active participant mode. I did this for fear of unduly influencing the course of events at community meetings. The associations seemed to be

having sufficient struggles just to organize meetings to address ongoing association activities and problems, and I did not want to ask for additional time from them to discuss my research project. When I solicited invitations to visit local *groupman* and women's club meetings, I only received a few such invitations, and the initial meetings I attended appeared to organized for my benefit.²⁶ As it became apparent to me that many individual member *groupmans* and women's clubs were only meeting irregularly, I felt establishing a schedule of visits to their 'regular' meetings would create an artificial setting, pushing them to meet more frequently than they otherwise would have met. This also contributed to my decision not to attempt to establish a formal research agreement with any of the associations. Because people were already assuming (or hoping) that I was connected to some additional development interventions that might be coming to their community, I was reluctant to create additional public research-specific interventions (such as special meetings) in the communities, for fear that these additional meetings would heighten these expectations.

These difficulties suggest that Long's (1989; 1992a) analytical framework of 'encounters' of 'discontinuous' knowledges and identities across social 'interfaces', as utilized in the rest of the thesis, can also be applied to the research process. The research process itself can be seen as another type of intervention (Long, 1992b, p. 269), through which new 'knowledge' and 'identity' interfaces between the researcher and local actors are created and negotiated. The research process can also be interpreted and

²⁶ For example, see the description in the next section of this chapter of my visit to the *Kris Kapab groupman*. On several other occasions when I visited a *groupman* or women's club meeting, it was apparent that the group had not meet for quite some time, indicating to me that the meeting may have been organized by the group leader because of my expressed interest in visiting.

deconstructed, and can be used “to bring out the discontinuities that exist and the dynamic and emergent character of the struggles and interactions that take place, showing how actors’ goals, perceptions, values, interests and relationships are reinforced or reshaped by this process” (Arce and Long, 1992, p. 214). The research process itself, therefore, can be examined as a site where the negotiation and contestation of different discourses of development are revealed. I now turn to a description of a number of incidents and events that illustrate these encounters, and reveal different development knowledges and identities, and the relations of power established and contested through them.

Research Encounters

Throughout the research period, rarely was I not aware of the differences of understandings, interpretations, and identities between myself and various local people. I often felt that people were reacting to my presence, adjusting their public ‘faces’ and statements according to how they understood my presence and identity. In this section, I describe and analyze two examples of such “reactivity”, incidents when local people were clearly reacting to the attention of my research interventions, and seeking to “manage impressions of themselves and of settings and groups with which they are associated.” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p. 222). The first is a group interview I conducted with a *groupman* near Bòdlo, and centers on an excerpt from the transcript of that interview where a member hopefully declares that my visits may mean they have ‘found’ some development. The second incident occurred during one of the focus-group sessions related to the kitchen gardens, and concerns how a woman used the attention of the focus-

group to pressure her husband for increased assistance with her kitchen garden. As Hammersley and Atkinson argue, a concern with reactivity in field research does not mean that it needs to be eliminated altogether, or that data so 'tainted' need be discarded. Rather, I argue that such 'tainted' data - i.e. inclusions of local people's statements or actions that seem influenced by my presence - reveal a great deal about local understandings and identities related to development, and thus the power relations produced by discourses of development. "Data in themselves cannot be valid or invalid; what is at issue are the inferences drawn from them" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p. 222). By adding the question 'who was I for local people?' (Tedlock, 1991, p. 77) and analyzing people's reactions to my research presence, the analysis of development interventions is deepened, since my identity was perceived to be intertwined with dominant local notions of what development was and how it operated. Thus, examining these research encounters also reveals how relations of power operate through the meanings and identities established by local development discourses.

The *groupman* in Bòdlo. As part of my investigation into the dynamics of the Bòdlo farmers' association (see Chapter Six), I had announced at one of their association meetings that I was interested in visiting individual member *groupmans*, in order to observe and inquire about their activities. After the meeting, several people came forward, and one of them invited me to attend an upcoming meeting of their *groupman*, named *Kris Kapab* [Christ is Capable]. This group had formed in 1994, after SC had capped several springs in the area and encouraged local people to 'put their heads together'. After receiving 'animation' training from the SC *animatè* and collecting

monthly dues from members, they had contributed their membership share and joined the Bòdlo farmers' association. In the spring of 1997 they had received a small loan of G1000 through the association's *IPSA* credit program, and one of their members had been selected and trained (and was now being paid a monthly stipend) by SC to conduct a literacy class in the community.

When we arrived in the early afternoon, we found the literacy class underway, with about 13 members present (5 men and 8 women.) After the literacy class finished, we waited a while as one of the members went off nearby, calling for someone, and the remaining people also sat waiting. After a while, their leader returned, yet everyone still seemed to be waiting for us to 'begin' the meeting. Marie (my research assistant) told them that 'we had not come with any agenda', but just wanted to observe their regular *groupman* meeting. Hearing this, the meeting was opened by prayer, and the admission by the leader that "it has been several months since we last met." The group discussed how they should get their 'group fund' functioning again, how they could use this fund, and how much the monthly 'dues' should be. After fixing the date for the next group meeting, they invited us to ask any questions we had.

We started asking about their *groupman*'s history, and about development activities in the area. As the discussion progressed, they commented that their locality "didn't have anything", that they needed to walk too far to get to the nearest health clinic sponsored by the NGO, and that the NGO program had not really provided anything significant in their locality. This resulted in comments on how they might get the program to 'see' them and 'put' more development in their community.

Researcher's question: But is development... Well, everyone is looking for development, but is development - is it others who should see you, or is development when you yourselves get active and put your heads together to work to change your community?

Respondent #1: We would like it that we put our heads together, but we need to have an 'over head' with us.

Q: An 'over head'?, I don't quite understand 'over head'.

R1: Someone who is bigger than us, that is to say, someone who is able to see further than we can.

Respondent #2: That is.. we are... that is .. we're looking, yes, its looking we're looking.

Q: But if you don't find [receive][it]?

R1: Well, if we don't find one, we'll stay the same, but today, here, it seems like we have found [received] one, yes!

Q: But that's what I said when I started [the group interview]; it's not a project I have, its only an investigation I'm conducting. I don't want to give you [false] hope when you see me.....[I try to explain that I am just doing research, and am not connected officially with the NGO program.]

This transcript shows that rural people strongly identified themselves as 'not having development', as being 'underdeveloped'. As one of the group members stated, they were hoping the NGO program would 'bring more development' to their locality. Development was something they were 'looking for', something they could not achieve themselves. Development was something that had to come from outside their community, and they needed someone who could 'see further' than they could in order to bring it to them. They had adopted an identity of 'underdevelopment', and the technocratic development discourse that development was a 'thing' they lacked, that needed to come from the outside.²⁷

Taken together, these local identities of underdevelopment and 'local knowledge' of how development worked combined to produce a dominant identity for outsiders in

²⁷ This is not to say that 'underdevelopment' is the only identity rural Haitian carry. Other types of social relations also undoubtedly shaped their identity: gendered relationships, relationships within families, relationships as fellow vodou adherents or church-goer, economic relations as peasant farmers of varying wealth. In addition, there is little doubt that there were elements of what James Scott (1990) calls 'public transcripts' in their interactions with me.

rural Haiti, including researchers such as myself. I was commonly referred to as a ‘*blan*’ [from the French *blanc*, meaning literally ‘white’], a category with a powerful pedigree in the Haitian imagination extending back from contemporary *blan* NGO experts and missionaries, to the *blan ameriken* who had occupied Haiti and the *blan franse* who had been the colonial masters (see Chapter Four). Thus the identity of a *blan* was forcefully located within specific relations of power related to not only race, but also (neo-)colonialism, culture, and most importantly, development. In spite of the negative early history of *blan* intervention in Haiti, since the days of the Duvalier era, *blans* and the development agencies they represent have largely been welcomed (in a pragmatic way) in rural areas. Rural people identified *blans* such as myself as the conduits through which much-needed resources emanating from the outside are channelled to rural communities. As the transcript shows, the group members were quite happy to have a *blan* visiting them that day, for here was someone who could ‘see further’, who might now bring more ‘development’ to their community.²⁸

²⁸ Another incident involving my perceived identity as a *blan* struck me forcefully when it occurred, yet also demonstrated the multiple and contingent nature of identities. It involved an exchange I had with a woman one morning as I was on my way to Anwò. As I was biking, I heard a woman call to me: “*Geev me wan dola*” [‘Give me one dollar’ - an ‘English’ phrase many Haitians learn as children to hopefully heckle local missionaries and development workers.] I looked up, and saw a woman at a small house maybe 80 meters from the path. I ignored her initial greeting, and greeted her with “*Bonjou madam, ki jan ou ye*” [‘Good morning, madam, how are you?’]. She also ignored the initial greeting she had extended to me, and instead responded, “*Pa pi mal non*” [‘Not any worse’], the standard greeting she would give to any passing Haitian. This was the extent of our exchange. While there was a certain element of playfulness and mischievousness in her initial greeting to me as a *blan*, it struck me quite forcefully that initially she had only seen a *blan* and all that being a *blan* represented, and had communicated to me as occupying that subject position. However, when I ignored her placement of me in that position, and responded in good *kreyol* with the standard, everyday greeting, she instantly reverted back to interacting with me just as a ordinary passerby on the path by her house. It seemed a stark example of my effect on local people, how they interpreted my identity and responded with a certain aspect of their own identity.

Yet this was certainly not how I identified myself and understood my research intervention. I viewed my identity, particularly when I had my field notebook in my hands, (and perhaps somewhat naively or wishfully,) as largely that of a researcher, an identity undoubtedly largely constructed within the discourses of social science, the university and postdevelopmentalism. Yet this identity had little or no hold in rural Haitians' imagination, and local people largely interpreted or constructed my identity within the discourse of development. Even though I attempted to establish my identity as distinct from any development project, and repeatedly identified myself as a researcher, the transcript shows that members of the *groupman* continued to relate to me in terms of their understanding or knowledge of development. In fact, local people were correct in assuming that I had some influence within the SC program. Despite my attempts to disassociate myself from SC, its local director and the American director in the capital were always eager to hear my analysis concerning the program, and my suggestions concerning potential planning decisions. Thus, the research process was largely interpreted and conducted within the dynamics of the power relations established by the discourses of development. People's response to me was so strongly conditioned by these discourses that the research could not escape these relations.

Though this incident was perhaps the most striking example of my identity being associated with 'development', it was certainly not the only example. On at least a half a dozen occasions, I was approached by people, usually claiming to represent some community group, who asked me for help in getting some development project to their community or group. For example, at one meeting of MPP SPC members (see Chapter Eight), a woman passed me a note asking if I could "make [them] get a women's club

here". At a meeting of a SC women's club, after I had asked them some questions and then invited an questions they had, they asked me "is it something you wish to see for us, is there something you hope to accomplish with us?", asking if (and implying that) I might have any 'development' plans for them. Here again, people interpreted my presence and identity as being related to some development initiative, and revealed their understanding that development required the intermediation of an more 'powerful' outsider who could make it come to their community.

Just as the *Kris Kapab* group seemed to have organized a 'regular' meeting at the end of the literacy class only after I arrived, other visits I made seemed to produce a similar situation. On numerous occasions, when I went to a community to attend a meeting that I had been told was scheduled, very few people would be present at the appointed time, and the meeting would only get started up to two hours later while they waited for sufficient people to show up. On such occasions, I would wonder "how much my presence pushing people to go ahead with the meeting, to continue waiting until enough people show up, to make it appear as if there is life in the association???" (from my field notes). Since many people understood that I, as a more 'powerful' outsider might have some influence on the delivery of development projects to their community, they of course wanted to present their group or association with a good face.

These incidents illustrate how local people in Maissade have developed a specific 'local development knowledge' of how development works (or does not work), and how best to operate with the development practices that have been dominant around them for the past several decades. Given that most development programs (both NGO and government) have been short-term, project-oriented, donor-dependent, top-down and

largely unconnected to local needs or capacity, rural people have developed quite pragmatic knowledges concerning 'development'. They have learned how to exploit, divert, and comply with project intentions according to their own short term interests. Even though the practices of development may be ill-suited to the actual conditions and requirements of rural Haitians, to a large degree they have adopted the discourse, identified themselves with it, and learned to utilize it to gain whatever benefits they can from its agents. They themselves have learned to become active agents within it, manoeuvring as best they can to make it suit their own 'projects of development'. Yet these attempts to secure personal benefits from me were more than simple "strategies of opportunism, through which individuals sought to use their participation in the research process to secure various personal benefits" (Huntington, 1998, p. 150), but also reflect deeper, more fundamental understandings of 'how their world works', and their place or identity within that world. In other words, people's responses to me (and SC and MPP development interventions) reflected the relations of power (and the associated identities and knowledges) constructed by the prevalent discourses of development in rural Haiti.

Kitchen garden focus groups. The encounter of 'research' identities and knowledges with local 'development' identities and knowledges did not only link with relations of power related to development, however. In another research incident, the relations of power established by the dominant discourse of development was used to manoeuvre within the gendered relations of power within the household. This incident occurred during the focus-group sessions on the kitchen-garden (see Chapter Seven). During the sessions, the attention that I gave to eliciting local women and men's understandings of the kitchen gardens seemed to elevate people's interest in them, to the

point that the focus-group session itself was used by one woman in an attempt to persuade her husband to contribute his labour to fencing the garden. In this case, the dynamics of my research interventions moved beyond 'development' power relations, and linked with local relations of power related to gender. .

The incident began at one of the focus-group sessions with women non-adopters, when an older woman named Elzeli admitted that her husband had not helped her install the fencing required so she could have a protected vegetable garden. In fact, she said that she had received poles from SC for the fencing, but these had dried up and died before her husband had dug the required fence-post holes. She also told us that she did all the labour in the home-yard garden, including the primary hoe-tillage, and had planted most of the plantains in her yard. "It's me, all alone, that's struggling in it", she told us, and predicted that her husband quite likely would not come to the session for husbands scheduled for the next day.

The next day was hot, so we moved the table and benches outside under a large tree, next to the Catholic chapel where we were meeting. Elzeli's husband was in attendance. As the session progressed, with each man present taking turns describing where different crops and trees were growing in his yard and answering questions, a small group of on-lookers gathered around the edge of our meeting. Marie and I noted that Elzeli and the wife of another participant woman also appeared. When Elzeli's husband's turn came to describe his yard, he also admitted that he "had been behind" in fencing the yard, and that stray animals had eaten some of the young plantains in their yard. He agreed that the home-yard 'was more important' than the big gardens, and implied that he would now make an effort to help finish the fence around the yard. While he was talking,

his wife interjected from the edge of the group, saying, “He was discouraged, now he’ll be encouraged.”

After the session, Marie, my research assistant analyzed the situation this way:

Marie: You see, she had so much hope today, not only did her husband come, she followed him and came herself. she clearly listened. The woman said, ‘Maybe he will do it now’ [help with the fence], that is to say, this here [the focus-group session] is a spring [source] for her, so she can see [the garden realized.]

Ray: Yes, they [the husbands] more-or-less promised [to help fence the kitchen garden].

Marie: They may promise there, and later they do it, because they never thought that they would be invited to this small meeting for people to ask them what they have [in their yards], there are people who will now make an effort for sure. So that another time, if they would be at another meeting like this, they would have everything they needed to have in their garden. The woman, she well knows, there, she said this, ‘Maybe now he’ll do it, that is to say, here is a source for her, as soon as she gets home, she will talk to him, she’ll say, ‘You see, the *juden lakou*, you see, it is important after all’.

As Marie pointed out, local people clearly attached importance and prestige to the fact that a ‘*blan*’ researcher was sufficiently interested in their *juden lakou* to organize meetings concerning these gardens. Similar to the first case described above, my identity as a ‘*blan*’, combined with local understandings of how development worked, meant that the focus-group sessions were interpreted as important events that might somehow lead to more development. As Marie stated, people would “now make an effort for sure”, so that if they would be questioned about their gardens “another time”, “they would have everything they needed to have in their gardens.” The ‘power’ of the official ‘development’ interventions to define what local people ‘need’ is apparent. As was also described in Chapter Seven, the gardens do not seem to be valued primarily for what they actually produce and contribute to household nutrition, but for their symbolic importance

in making people 'good' development participants, and hopefully able to obtain further development program resources.²⁹

Within this context, however, the relations of power established by the dominant development discourse became linked with local gendered relations of power. Elzeli used the local development 'meaning' associated with the research and the gardens to further her own particular gender struggle with her husband, in her attempts to get him to contribute more labour to 'her' homeyard gardens. As analyzed in Chapter Seven, SC's previous promotion of kitchen gardens within its 'women's empowerment' WCI program had elevated the symbolic importance of these gardens, and made them into a 'site' of gendered negotiation. Now my research compounded and reinforced these meanings, and allowed the continued negotiation and contestation of the related relations of power. The research process itself now became a 'site' of gender negotiation, utilizing the meanings established there by the local discourses of development. The relations of power implicit in the research intervention (because of its embeddedness in the dominant discourses of development) became linked to women's attempts to negotiate the gendered relations of power within their household.

Implications for Practice and Theory

What then are the implications of this analysis for research practice and theory? In this final section is divided into two parts: first, some preliminary reflections on how the power relations established by the dominant development discourse influence the

²⁹ In this regard, my research on the kitchen gardens was likely somewhat confusing for local people, for after the burst of attention from my focus-group sessions, no other intervention was forthcoming.

practice of development field research; and second, some theoretical reflections on the analysis of power relations in development and development research.

The first implication for research practice concerns the issue of informed consent. The power relations created by my identity as a *'blan'* meant that I had little trouble gaining access to observe the development activities in the associations. The dominant discourse of development seemed to give me a great deal of 'power' in Maissade. Even though I gave a short description of my research and always asked permission before attending any meetings or conducting an interview, I was never refused. Sometimes the very asking of permission felt awkward, with people objecting to the very notion that I might think they would not welcome my presence. It seemed that no one would think of possibly offending a *'blan'* by denying permission.³⁰ This problematization of the notion of informed consent can also be extended to a more macro, national level. I was able to enter Haiti without fulfilling any visa requirements, and without seeking any official permission or approval from national government authorities or ministries.³¹ This seemed a telling indication of how deeply, at a cultural level, the authority of development and the North have penetrated and broken down Haiti's territory. The ease in which I could engage in research therefore severely problematizes the research ethics

³⁰ Only once was I explicitly asked to leave a community meeting. This occurred at a *groupman* meeting in Anwò, when the former president of the Anwò farmers' association, who was also a former *animatè* with the CRWRC/AKED program (see Chapter Five), wanted to address the *groupman* about some issue. I was later told by another person that the issue concerned an outstanding loan he was involved with, and he did not want me to know about this 'blemish' on his reputation. On one other occasion, I sensed an indirect attempt by the MPP *animatè* to discourage me from accompanying him to a community. He did this by repeatedly predicting that his planned meeting would not succeed due to delayed messages, and encouraging me to attend another SC meeting that was also scheduled for that day.

³¹ I did present myself and my 'project' to local political and police authorities when I first arrived in Maissade, though more in the manner of providing information than requesting official permission.

concept of 'informed consent', exposing it as based on Western notions of individual rights and equality, and suggesting that it ignores the power relations that linger in post-colonial societies.

Second, the relations of knowledge, identity and power created by the research encounter make conducting participatory research difficult. As I have illustrated, local people and I each held contrasting, discontinuous knowledges about, and identities within, development and research. Thus, we each interpreted the research encounter in radically different ways. As I described in the second section of this chapter, this resulted in my not establishing participatory research agreements with the local groups. Participation was difficult for reasons of both knowledge and identity. Concerning our different knowledges, it seemed to me that concepts such as 'knowledge and power interfaces', 'sites of negotiation and struggle', 'symbolic resources' - the phrases which defined my research questions in my proposal - were too abstract and removed from the concerns and ways of thinking of local people, and so could not be understood by them. As mentioned above, the theoretical way I was thinking about development seemed so distant from the pragmatic, concrete ways they were struggling with development. At times I still fear that this assumption was, at the very least, patronizing on my part, or that I lacked imagination and nerve in bridging the gaps. Yet I think we must recognize that people in rural Haiti occupy a position within the discourses of development that are hugely different than the position academic readers of this thesis occupy. As Long states, research interventions are interface situations where discontinuous knowledges and identities meet and are negotiated and accommodated (Long, 1992b, p. 274).

Furthermore, the perceived power relations between myself as a *blan* and local people meant that it was difficult to attain non-hierarchical, non-manipulative research relations that could overcome the separation or distance between us. As I have discussed above, the discontinuous knowledges and identities established very real power relations between myself and local people. Because I was very aware of and reluctant to exploit the preferential treatment I was accorded as a '*blan*', I usually purposefully tended to a much more passive observer role than an active participant mode. Thus, I did not feel comfortable disrupting the life of the associations with the extra meetings and public attention that would be required in any attempt to make the research participatory. My difficulty in establishing genuine participation supports the increasing critical analysis of participatory research methods reported by Pottier (1991), Mosse (1994), Scoones and Thompson (1993), Nelson and Wright (1995), Rose (1997) and others.

The third practical implication is that the research remained largely extractive, because of my failure to make the research participatory. In this thesis, I have claimed that I have understood (to some extent at least) how local people in Maissade understood their 'world', particularly the 'development' interventions operating around them. I have incorporated their voices in the quotations I have included, yet during the research I did not feel I could test my interpretations against theirs, because of the difficulties of explaining my theoretical approach. My theoretical understandings and interpretations seemed to be far removed from the everyday understandings of local people.³² The

³² Here it is tempting to suggest, as deVries does, that the research is "the outcome of a confrontation between different types of knowledge - local and what is often called 'scientific' (deVries, 1992, p. 79). However, such an implied division between 'scientific' and 'unscientific' knowledge has been seriously challenged by numerous philosophical and sociological/anthropological critiques (e.g. Kuhn, 1962; Feyerabend, 1975; Appfel-Marglin and Marglin, 1990; Agrawal, 1995; Thompson, 1996).

discontinuities in our knowledges and identities remained significant barriers and prevented genuine participation, collaboration and 'sharing' of 'power' and knowledge. The research did not become a joint product.

In addition, the encounters of my research with local people in Maissade analyzed above also provide some theoretical implications for development studies. First, I think that the difficulties of participation and shared knowledge which I have outlined above are particularly acute for development research. Post-developmental perspectives make it clear that the object of such research - development - is fundamentally associated with the identity and knowledges of those who come to 'do' this development research. I am studying 'development', but as described above, but I am also inescapably identified and associated with what 'development' is. As the above discussion makes clear, the object of the research was inseparable from the process of the research.

Second, the research reinforces the post-structuralist notion that all knowledge is constructed. Contrary to some interpretative approaches, which claim that it is the task of the researcher to 'reconstruct' or 'interpret the interpretations' of those being researched, the power relations established by the discourse of development mean our interaction constructed or produced knowledges unique to the intervention in both me the researcher and those being researched. Reconstruction is not possible, for reality does not 'stand still' long enough. The research itself constructs knowledge, as in the case of Elzeli and her husband. The power relations inherent in the research encounter mean the researcher cannot simply discover an otherwise 'already-there' knowledge or interpretation. In a

However, this same critique also undermines any positivist notion that all 'knowledge' is essentially the same or easily shared (see above in this chapter).

similar manner, the research occasion becomes an occasion for performance, rather than simply the collection of information that already exists 'out there'. A 'performative' concept sees ethnographic field research "as the result of a performance carried out by both informants and researcher. Accordingly, such a performance is not merely the enactment of cultural knowledge but is also its production" (deVries, 1992, p. 79). "The [researcher's] role, then, is no longer that of questioner; he [sic] is but a provider of occasions, a catalyser in the weakest sense, and a producer in the strongest" (deVries, 1992, p. 79, citing Fabian, n.d., p. 3-5).

Third, my analysis reinforces and supports the applicability of Foucault's 'analytics of power'. Despite the rather pessimistic implications for participatory research outlined above, the power relations established by development were not only simply unidirectional or dominant, but multiple and contested. Rural people in Maissade may seem relatively 'powerless' within the dominant development discourse that constructs them as 'underdeveloped', requiring (and seeking) 'development' to come to them from some external place via 'more powerful' social actors. Yet their apparent adoption of the dominant 'development' understandings and identities, somewhat paradoxically, allowed them to resist, subvert and manoeuvre within the relations of power established by dominant development discourses, and to use them in productive ways. As I have described in this chapter, local people certainly attempted to use the web of power relations associated with my research (power relations which I both entered into and reinforced) to advance their own material, status and gender positions. Here, Foucault's notions of power are applicable. As Foucault states, "individuals ... are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising their power..." (1980, p. 98).

This statement applies to both myself and the local people in Maissade, as we all both subject to existing power relations and exercising power. Power is “exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and nubile relations” (Foucault, 1978, p. 94). Power is productive, not simply restrictive, facilitating multiple ways for people to make claims for resources and meaning in their everyday lives. The discourses through which power relations were established can not be reduced to discontinuous, binary opposites, “a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant and the dominated one [i.e. development and anti-development discourses]; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies” (Foucault, 1978, p. 100). Foucault’s notions of power and discourse mean that there are “shifts and reutilizations of identical formulas for contrary objectives” (1978, p. 100).

Conclusion

In summary, the analysis of this chapter suggests that field research itself needs to be approached as an encounter of knowledges and identities, located within the relations of power established by the discourses of development and underdevelopment. In academic research as well as in the implementation of development assistance programs, “power is not avoidable ... and playing fields are rarely level” (Dalby, personal communication, June 1998). The researcher is left with “no clear choice of how to proceed, ... no privileged position, only a limited choice among possible courses of action, none of which live up to the assumptions of the ethical but detached researcher” (Dalby, personal communication, June 1998). Or as Butler (1992, p. 6) states, “Power

pervades the very conceptual apparatus that seeks to negotiate its terms, including the subject position of the critic...” Research and scholarship, particularly that which is committed to participatory and mutual learning, must be approached in the context and awareness of larger, on-going patterns of struggle, negotiation and manoeuvre within the social world. There is no “innocent knowledge to be had.” Rather, we must not “avoid taking responsibility for locating our contingent selves as the producers of knowledge and truth claims” (Flax, 1992, p. 447, 458).

Chapter Ten

CONCLUSIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The central objective of this dissertation has been to reveal and examine the encounter of the discourses and practices of NGO community development programs with the 'development' discourses, knowledges and identities of rural people in rural Maissade. Utilizing a series of 'sites' of encounter - farmers' and women's associations, improved home-yard 'kitchen' gardens, local NGO programs themselves, and the field research process - I have demonstrated how local women and men, through their manoeuvres, negotiations and struggles, are expressing their own knowledges and interpretations concerning development and the realities of their world. In so doing, they rework the relations of power established by the dominant development discourse of NGOs into power relations that are complex, multiple, and changing. Thus I have argued that an understanding of both 'what happens' and 'how it happens' can only be obtained by examining the encounter of knowledges and identities contained within these discontinuous discourses.

My goal in this final chapter is not to simply repeat the conclusions and analyses of the previous chapters, but to move beyond them to some more speculative and tentative interpretation. Here I follow Creswell (1998), who suggests that interpretation - "a data transformation step" - is the final aspect of research. In this step, Creswell (1998, p. 145) states:

the researcher goes beyond the database and probes 'what is to be made of them' (Wolcott, 1994, p. 36). The researcher speculates outrageous, comparative

interpretations that raise doubts or questions for the reader. Draws inferences from the data, turns to theory to provide structure for his interpretations. The researcher also personalizes the interpretation: 'this is how the research experience affected me.'

Thus, in this concluding chapter, I will explore some of the implications of my analysis concerning the operation of 'development discourses' in rural Haiti. Included in this final interpretive step are suggestions concerning the original contribution of the thesis, and consideration of implications for further research.

The chapter is divided into three sections, focusing sequentially on empirical, theoretical and practical interpretation. In the first section, I suggest some empirical interpretation concerning the issue of rural Haitian identities of 'underdevelopment'. I discuss the extent to which the data presented in the previous chapters concerning pragmatic rural development knowledges and identities of underdevelopment support the drawing of any broader conclusions regarding rural Haitian identity. In the second section, I suggest some theoretical interpretation concerning the emergent 'structures of power' (to use Long's analytical framework), or the overall 'direction' of power relations (to use Foucault's analytical approach) and examine whether a conclusion can be suggested concerning the larger scale results of the encounters of outside and local development discourses described in previous chapters. Here I also further elaborate Foucault's discussion of the 'predictable' yet 'intentionless' nature of power, and argue its applicability to rural Haiti. In the final section, I discuss some of the more practical implications of my analysis for development practice. In addition to reinforcing the critique of mainstream development approaches outlined in the introductory chapters of the thesis, I suggest that my analysis also problematizes even the most 'progressive'

approaches of participatory, grassroots, and even post-development. I attempt to grapple with the challenges posed by a 'post-structuralist' approach to knowledge, subjectivity and difference for those who remain committed to working for positive change in conditions of oppression and poverty in countries such as Haiti. Included as 'cross-cutting' themes in each section will be discussion of the original contribution of the research, and the implications for further research for each of these empirical, theoretical and practical issues.

Knowledges of development and identities of underdevelopment

In my analysis of the encounter of development discourses in the previous chapters of this thesis, I have repeatedly described the pragmatic 'local development knowledges' and associated 'identities of underdevelopment' held by rural people in Maissade. I have argued that the local knowledges and identities (concerning development/underdevelopment) held by most people in Maissade remain firmly embedded within overall dominant discourses of development. As the development industry has done, most local people identify themselves and their region as 'underdeveloped'. They eagerly manoeuvre and negotiate to gain access to development, and to have 'more' development 'come to them' from the 'developed world' and 'development organizations'. Thus, while they as 'grassroots' community organizations contest, negotiate and rework outside NGO development programs, this does not represent a rejection of mainstream development, as post-developmental and New Social Movement theorists would claim. As Rangan writes, many grassroots groups and other "new social movements in the Third World ... are not *against* the idea of

development, they are *part* of it” (Rangan, 1996, p. 206, emphasis in original). This was demonstrated particularly in the analysis of the pragmatic manoeuvres of farmers’ and women’s associations to gain access to Save the Children, MPP and other development program resources in Chapters Six and Eight.

In this section, I want to explore the implications of this analysis - specifically, to discuss to extent to which such ‘knowledges and identities’ of underdevelopment represent the ‘domination’ of rural Haitian subjectivities.

My analysis of the extent to which local people seemed to have become convinced that they lacked development, and that development was something that needed to come to them from elsewhere, would seem to support Esteva’s assertion that “for those who make up two-thirds of the world’s population today, to think of development - of any kind of development - requires first the perception of themselves as underdeveloped...” (Esteva, 1992, p. 7). As Crush, in a discussion of Escobar’s work, writes, “A threshold of internalization is crossed. People who were once simply the objects of development now [come] to see and define themselves in its terms. They [begin] ... to fight ‘not against development, but about it’” (Crush, 1995, p. 11). Such a view adopts a Foucauldian view of subjectivity, seeing identity and the self as being ‘constructed’ by dominant discursive practices. In such a view,

.. the coordinates of subjectivity [are] constituted by the practices that they seemingly described. ... Institutional practices such as the madhouse, prisons, schools, ... [and development programs], rather than containing particular subjects, actually and actively create them; thus prisons create prisoners, universities create students, ... [development programs create underdeveloped people.] [Underdeveloped people] are inconceivable outside of the institutions that give them meaning. (Pile and Thrift, 1995, p. 4)

In my view, this would be a rather disturbing conclusion, suggesting that Haitians are “in a trapped state, [in a] world that yields to true self-consciousness, but only lets [them] see [themselves] through the revelation of another world” (DuBois, 1979, p. 4, cited in Murray, p. 16). This suggests Spivak’s (1985) questions concerning whether ‘the subaltern can speak’, whether rural Haitians have any ‘authentic’ voice.

Yet as should be evident from my descriptions of the ways in which local people manoeuvre within the interventions of outside organizations who are ‘bringing’ development, local Haitians do not simply adopt or receive this ‘development’ without modification or resistance. Despite the fact that even ‘isolated’ rural Haiti has been strongly shaped by its interactions with global systems of slavery, colonialism, imperialism, capitalism and developmentalism to reach its present form (as described in Chapter Four), the diverse, dynamic, multiple and multidirectional nature of social systems means that “conquered and colonized societies [such as Haiti] ... were never simply made over in the European [or Western] image. Rather, their citizens struggled, in diverse ways and with differing degrees of success, to deploy, deform and defuse imperial institutions” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1993, p. xi-xii). While the discourse of development has become dominant in rural Haiti, this discourse never remains static. As Rangan (1996, p. 207) states, “it is as dynamic as life’s processes - coming into being as an idea, changing over time, diversifying in meaning, becoming a contested terrain, diffusing through translation and re-emerging in different forms in different regions.”

In a practical sense, the dominant modernist discourse of development is subjected to what James Scott has called ‘everyday forms of resistance’ (Scott, 1985) - the operation of the everyday understandings and actions of ordinary people to alter,

resist, appropriate, and twist the intentions of outside NGO interventions. Yet this 'resistance' takes place within and facilitates the continued operation of the dominant discourse of development. As Awanyo (1999, p. 60) suggests, such everyday resistance "does not radically transform the existing cultural/normative and socioeconomic system", but rather occurs within the existing power relations. The existing normative development system "is being worked by the dominant and the dominated in their own interests. Such resistance could be described as working the system to their minimum 'disadvantage' (Awanyo, 1999, p. 60).

Yet it is debatable how much such everyday resistance can form the basis for increasing networks of resistance, as suggested by postdevelopmentalist and NSM approaches. The hope of postdevelopmentalist writers is that with the uncovering of these discourses of resistance, putting them into wider circulation, and creating networks of ideas, the hegemonic discourses of development can eventually be challenged (Peet and Watts, 1996, p. 34). The recent anthropological literature on rural Haiti is mixed in this regard. Smucker's work in northern Haiti, discussed in Chapter Four, would seem to support a more pessimistic analysis of the degree to which rural Haitian identity has been captured by the dominant discourses of development. A more recent study by Smith, however, in the south of Haiti, reveals "the ideological rule of these vast paradigms [of the international development industry] to be thoroughly incomplete" (Smith, 1998, p. 262). She provides evidence of how rural people have "taken issue with North/Western assumptions about what development is and is not", and that though they use the terms and concepts "claimed by the 'discourse of development'", they "contest dominant 'first-world' definitions of them (Smith, 1998, p. 262). Thus she argues that, contrary to

Esteva's contention that many Third World people have "enslaved" and "contradicted" their "own intentions" for "escaping their condition" by "associating with development" (Esteva, 1992, p. 7-8), rural Haitians "have based their understandings of 'democracy' and 'development' first and foremost on their own experiences in regulating community life, organizing work, engaging with the past, and grappling with their place in the world" (Smith, 1998, p. 262).

My emphasis on the 'dominance' of mainstream discourses of development stands in contrast to Smith's emphasis on the perseverance of long-standing Haitian traditions, values and forms of local organizations, which stand in critical independence of the dominant development discourses. Thus she argues that rural Haitians are not simply 'fighting for development', but hold alternate and "counter-hegemonic" (Smith, 1998, p. 278) visions for their future based on more communitarian values. It is important to note in this regard that Smith bases her findings on her study with more 'traditional' peasant organizations (labour-exchange and collective action organizations such as *atribisyons* and *sosyetes*), which she found still functioning in her study region in the south. Neither I nor Smith (in previous work she did in a region approximately 40 km from Maissade) found any of these 'traditional' forms of community organization remaining on the Central Plateau. Thus the increased dominance of 'modernist' development discourse and imaginaries that I observed may be due to the more advanced disintegration on the Central Plateau of 'traditional' rural social structure (based on the extended family pattern of the *lakou*, and traditional work societies such as the *sosyete* and *kombit*). Such decline in traditional social structures has been noted by numerous anthropologists (i.e. Smucker, 1983; d'Ans, 1987) in various regions of Haiti. Further

research would be required throughout rural Haiti to determine the full extent of the dominance of modernist discourses of development, as well as the degree of persistence of alternate and resisting socio-political discourses.

Complicating any conclusions on this issue is the fact that the community groups I have studied are largely “community-placed organizations” rather than “community-based organizations” (Singer, 1994). Despite Save the Children and MPP’s attempts to found them on ‘pre-existing social relations’, the research has shown the extent to which local community development organizations are oriented to outside NGO development programs. Since my study was framed specifically within the framework of outside NGO programs in Maissade, and the community organizations affiliated with these programs, this may be further reason that I heard mostly ‘modern’ discourses of development and underdevelopment. Yet the fact that I did not encounter any community groups not oriented towards or affiliated with an NGO development program only reinforces my conclusion regarding the dominance to mainstream discourses of development.

In the end, however, one of the important contributions of this research has been to show the inadequacy of attempting to analyze NGO development interventions in simple bi-polar terms of either dominance/subjection, or empowerment/powerlessness. It has shown the weakness of analyzing the multiple discourses of development that I have described in terms of either ‘traditional’- ‘grassroots’- ‘alternative’ on the one hand, and ‘modern’ - ‘developmentalist’ on the other, or of the simple dominance of one or the resistance of the other. As Escobar writes concerning a broader area that includes Haiti,

Latin America is seen as characterized by complex processes of cultural hybridization encompassing manifold and multiple modernities and traditions.... the hypothesis that emerges ... is of a hybrid modernity characterized by

continuous attempts at renovation. ... It does not imply the belief in pure strands of tradition and modernity that are combined to create a hybrid with a new essence; nor does it amount to the combination of discrete elements of tradition and modernity, or a 'sell-out' of the traditional to the modern. Hybridity entails a cultural (re)creation that may or may not be (re)inscribed into hegemonic constellations. (Escobar, 1995b, p. 220-221)

My analysis has certainly shown how women and men in rural Haiti have reinterpreted outside, idealist discourses and programs of empowerment and capacity building in terms of pragmatic local strategies of survival and 'working the system'.

The effects of development programs

Despite the discussion above of the nature of the dominance of western discourses of development in rural Haiti, the analysis of the thesis clearly shows that the goals and intentions of outside NGO interventions based on these discourses are rarely fully realized in Maissade. Previous chapters have detailed the immediate effects of the encounter of NGO and local development discourses in Maissade: moderately successful community associations which none-the-less remain largely dependent on their sponsoring NGO program; neglected, contested kitchen gardens; and pragmatic manoeuvres to obtain maximum resources from local NGO development programs. In this section, I will explore the larger-scale 'emergent' effects of the encounter of development discourses in Maissade, and the overall 'direction' of power relations that result from this encounter. I also address the question of the intentionality and/or predictability of the impacts of these encounters.

The theoretical foundations for this exploration rest on Foucault's assertions concerning the 'subjectless' or 'intentionless', yet 'directional' nature of power relations, and James Ferguson's distinction between the intentions of development program

interventions and the effects of their work (see Chapter Two). As Ferguson states, “it may be that what is most important about a ‘development’ project is not so much what it fails to do but what it does do; it may be that its real importance in the end lies in the ‘side effects’” (Ferguson, 1990, p. 254). Thus, even if SC’s (and MPP’s) attempts to produce community development through the promotion of local community organizations has had only limited success, it is clear that their interventions have had important ‘side effects’, which may have more important and long-term ‘emergent’ impacts on the Maissade region and rural Haiti in general.

The previous chapters of this thesis have started to describe these emergent effects of the encounter of development discourses. These include the perpetuation of local identities of ‘underdevelopment’, continued NGO attempts to plan and implement ‘empowerment’ and ‘participation’ through the establishment of community organizations, and the resulting dysfunctional and dependent relationships between NGO development programs and local communities. Given rural Haitians’ conviction that ‘development’ exists ‘out there’ and needs to be ‘brought to their community’, as well as their accumulated pragmatic knowledges of how to get along with the multitude of development interventions that have come to their communities, and given the technocratic, managerialistic knowledges prevalent in development planning approaches, with their easy assumptions of empowerment and transfer of knowledge, and the inevitable superior neo-colonial ‘developer’ identities of their staff, it is predictable and perhaps even inevitable that the outcomes are characterized by misunderstanding, different intentions, dysfunction, public performances, manipulation, misrepresentation, reinterpretation, and pragmatic manoeuvres. The ‘emergent’ structure that results from

these encounters is the dysfunctional and frequently unsuccessful but ongoing NGO development industry that can be observed throughout Haiti, and the associated proliferation of many struggling and dependent local community organizations.

This dysfunctional result, Ferguson suggests, emerges “counter-intentionally through the working out of a complex and unacknowledged structure of knowledge in interaction with equally complex and unacknowledged local social and cultural structures” (1990, p. 270). It is not “the simple, rational projection of the interests of [any] subject ... that secretly will it” (Ferguson, 1990, p. 271). In this Foucauldian conception, ‘community development practice’ “is not the name of an actor, it is the name of a way of tying together, multiplying, and coordinating power relations, a kind of knotting or congealing of power” (Ferguson, 1990, p. 273). It is not simply ‘NGO power’, conceived of as an entity possessed of power. Rather the emerging result in rural Haiti is “a characteristic mode of exercise of power, a mode of power that relies on [NGO development programs]³³, but exceeds them (Ferguson, 1990, p. 273). Such a development apparatus does not necessarily expand the capabilities of NGOs and rural development programs, conceived as unitary, instrumental actors (in the service of some neo-colonial western development conspiracy), nor does it really empower or ‘develop’ rural people and their communities. Rather, the nature of the power relations established by the encounter of various development discourses is such that “specific [interventionist]

³³ Ferguson is writing of ‘bureaucratic state power’ in these passages, as his analysis has been on the nature of the expansion of this ‘anti-political’ bureaucratic power through the operation of the World Bank-CIDA project in rural Lesotho. I have ‘borrowed’ his analysis and applied it to the effects of NGO development programs.

knots of power are implanted, an infestation of [development interventions] wielding petty powers” (Ferguson, 1990, p. 273).

These emerging structures or ‘knots’ of power relations that I have described above and in previous chapters “really does just happen to be the way things work out” (Ferguson, 1990, p. 256). Utilizing a Foucauldian ‘analytics of power’, it is not necessary (or possible) to say that the outcomes described in previous chapters serve particular interests. Given the nature of local and outsider knowledges and identities, they are inevitable, but they are not intentional. They are simply the result of the encounter of these specific, discontinuous discourses of development, but this does not mean they are planned or intended. Thus this thesis supports a key feature of Foucault’s approach to power, and illustrates, in the context of NGO community development programs, how power operates through a net-like organization, how it reverses, and always produces its own resistance. The overall effects of the operation of development discourses is beyond the intention and strategies of any given social actor - it is subjectless, but it is also intelligible.

Implications for NGO Development Practice

As I stated at the beginning of the thesis, its purpose has not been evaluation - to determine the appropriateness or effectiveness of particular NGO development interventions in achieving their goals. Yet though my focus has been on providing a “better theoretical grasp of the problems of planned interventions” (Long and Villareal, 1993, p.140) through an analysis of ‘how’ development interventions operate, this must in the end be connected in some way with the practical concerns of development practice.

As I stated in the opening chapter, “such [a theoretical] understanding can lead to better and different practices in the future.” Thus it is appropriate that I discuss, in this final section of the final chapter, some of the implications of my analysis for NGO development practice.

The reader of this thesis may well conclude that my focus on local people’s pragmatic manipulations of SC (and MPP) interventions, and the discontinuities between NGO and local understandings and intentions means that I am largely critical or unsupportive of the efforts of these community development programs. I want to emphasize that it would be wrong to simply read this thesis as an exposition of the flaws and systematic failures of Save the Children and community development programming in general, and the prediction or promotion of their demise (Rocheleau and Ross, 1995, p. 423). It would be easy but irresponsible to simply advocate the addition (or the continued categorization) of community development, women’s empowerment, or local organizational development on the list of ‘hopeless populist projects’. ‘Community development’ is neither simply either good or bad, oppressively dominating or empowering and liberating. Rather, it is multivalent, subject to change and multiple uses in the ebb and flow of ongoing struggles.

Therefore, though I have been quite critical of the functioning of the community associations affiliated with the Save the Children program, this does not mean that they are ‘failures’, or that the SC program has been poorly managed. In fact, compared to many NGO community development programs, the SC program is well managed and can rightly be thought of as a success. The farmers’ and women’s associations are functioning, they are managing significant amounts of communal assets, and their leaders

largely fill their responsibilities to be the best of their abilities, while learning important new skills in project planning and implementation. Though it is too early to tell if they will be able to function independently after the end of the Save the Children program, (and I am somewhat pessimistic in this regard), they do hold the potential to become valuable vehicles for increased and continued community mobilization.

As I have emphasized in the previous section of this chapter, however, the overall effects of the development interventions in Maissade are beyond the specific intentions of SC or local people. Yet because these overall emergent effects also remain 'intelligible' and 'directional', it is tempting to attempt to prescribe specific changes and policies that would 'improve' the direction and impacts of outside development interventions. It would be tempting to say that because "development practice fails because its monolithic assumptions do not allow for the complexities of local social and political structures" (Mohan, 1997, p. 318), obtaining 'better' knowledge of these local 'complexities' would result in better development practice. Undoubtedly this is so, and therefore the best possible investigation and understanding of 'local development knowledges' would reduce the discontinuities between outside interventions and local understandings. Certainly a strong practical implication of the analysis of this thesis is the importance of reducing the level of discontinuity and 'encounter' between outside and local development discourses, through various participatory and grassroots methodologies. Such a conclusion is in fact a fairly 'standard' recommendation of ethnographically-oriented studies of mainstream development programs. "Anthropologists tend to call for the same solutions: local participation, awareness of social and cultural complexities, and

the use of ethnographic knowledge at the planning stage” (Gardner and Lewis, 1996, p. 63).

A stronger practical implication of this research, however, is the extreme difficulty (and perhaps even impossibility, though I hesitate to make such an absolute assertion) of overcoming discontinuities of discourses, knowledges and identities. Perhaps such a view is inevitable, given the post-structuralist theoretical foundations (and their emphasis on difference and multiplicity) of this thesis. Thus, in the end, my view concerning ‘development’ is not optimistic. Better planning and better sociological, cultural or anthropological knowledge will not necessarily ensure that development programs succeed. Rather, the very nature of human relationships, the nature of power relations (and its mediation through systems of knowledge) mean that ‘helping’ across borders of culture will always be difficult. Due to the complexity of social life, development programs, however well intentioned and well planned, will continue to be subverted by women and men with different ways of living and understanding.

Yet it is also not realistic for those who are critical of the mainstream development to simply advocate the ‘end’ of ‘normal’ development practice, given the dominant position it holds in the imaginary of both the North and the South. Like it or not, ‘development’ will continue to define north-south relationships, as well as social relations within the south, for a long time to come. Though some post-developmentalists such as Escobar expect that the inevitable ‘subversion’ of development programs “by ‘real’ people through various acts of resistance” will “build[] up into an alternative politics *outside* of development as we know it” (Mohan, 1997, p. 318, emphasis added), I would argue that very few political and social structures remain ‘outside’ of development.

At least in Haiti, I would say there is not longer any 'pure' subject positions untouched by the discourses of development, no 'real' people who have not had their subjectivity and identity moulded by development. Rather, following the lead of Foucault again, it should be recognized that the power relations established by the dominant discourses of development inevitably produce their own forms of resistance. As described above, the operation of power is always multivalent, subject to change, producing its own reversals and deviations. The complexities of local situations operate within the development discourse, are shaped by it, actively negotiate and manoeuvre within it.

Yet adopting such a view also implies that development practitioners should strive to analyze and acknowledge the differential power relations inherent in the discourse of development in which they work. NGO workers should attempt to understand what happens in specific places and specific times (Fisher, 1997, p. 449), through analysis of the particular relations of power in each of the contexts in which they work. They should conceive of their programs as "an arena within which battles from society at large are internalized" (Clarke, 1996, p. 5, cited in Fisher, 1997, p. 449). This also implies the need for further studies of the micro-politics of NGO programs, which deepen the analysis which has begun in this thesis and extend it to other countries and types of development programs.

In the end, there can be no final chapter on the effects and impacts of the encounter of dominant and local development discourses in Maissade, for this drama continues to play on and on. There can be no final determination of whether the SC interventions were 'successful' in creating local organizations, local empowerment and 'development'. Therefore, the principle practical implication of my research is that since

multiple and competing discourses of development are an established aspect of social relations through most of the world and particularly in rural Haiti, we are left with little choice but to work within these discourses for the values and principles in which we believe. As far as development practice is concerned, it reinforces the perhaps common-sense and un-theoretical observation that working for social change is more an art than a science - the art of helping enough to produce change and make a difference, but not so much that local understandings and intentions are distorted and overwhelmed by the outside resources and practices.

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Appendix One. Questions Used for *Jaden Lakou* Focus Groups

A. Individual Questions (to be asked individually of each participant):

What plants did you plant in the *jaden lakou* this year?
How do you use each kind of plant that was grown in the *jaden lakou*?
What is the difference between a *jaden lakou* and a *jaden klotire* [fenced garden]?
Who prepared the ground in the *jaden lakou*? in the *jaden klotire*?
Who decided what you would plant in the *jaden lakou*? in the *jaden klotire*?
Who did the planting in the *jaden lakou*? in the *jaden klotire*?
Who did the weeding in the *jaden lakou*? in the *jaden klotire*?
Which crops in the *jaden lakou* had the most value for the house?
Which garden gives more food for the house, the *jaden lakou* or the big garden?
Which garden has more value for the house, the *jaden lakou* or the big garden?
What importance does the *jaden lakou* have for you?

Kreyol Individual Questions

Ki plan nou te plante nan jaden lakou a ane sa?
Ki jan nou sevi ak chak kalite plan ki genyen nan jaden lakou a?
Eske gen diferans ant yon jaden lakou ak yon jaden klotire?
Ki les te prepare tè a andan jaden lakou a? jaden klotire a?
Ki les te deside ki sa nou pwal plante andedan jaden lakou a? jaden klotire a?
Ki les te plante andedan jaden lakou a? jaden klotire a?
Ki les te sakle andedan jaden lakou a? jaden klotire a?
Ki plan ki genyen nan jaden lakou a ki gen plis valè pou kay la?
Ki les jaden bay plis manje pou kay la, jaden lakou a oubyen gwo jaden an?
Ki les jaden gen plis valè pou kay la, jaden lakou a oubyen gwò jaden an?
Ki enpotans jaden lakou a genyen pou ou menm?

B. Group Discussion Questions:

Where did you first hear about the *jaden lakou*?
What made you interested in having a *jaden lakou*?
Where did you learn the techniques for making a *jaden lakou*?
Who went and learned these techniques?
How did you decide the position of the *jaden lakou*?
How did you talk to your husband (wife) to convince them to agree to give the land for the *jaden lakou*?
How did you get the garden fenced?

Did you grow green-leafy vegetables (such as *gombo*, *lalyan*) before you had a *jaden lakou*?

If you didn't grow them before, did you get them from other places, or buy them, or didn't you use them at all when you prepared food?

Is it only in the *jaden lakou* that you now get green-leafy vegetables, or do you still get them other places too?

What are the problems that you have in having a *jaden lakou*?

Kreyol Group Questions:

Ki kote ou te premye tande sou jaden lakou?

Ki sa te fê ou enterese gen yon jaden lakou?

Ki kote nou te aprann teknik pou fê yon jaden lakou?

Ki les te al aprann teknik sa yo?

Ki jan ou te deside pozisyon jaden an?

Ki jan nou te pale ak mari (madam) nou pou li te dakò bay pozisyon pou jaden an?

Ki jan ou te rive klotire jaden an?

Eske nou te plante plan fêy vèt (tankou gombo, lalyan) avan nou te gen jaden lakou a?

Si nou pat plante yo, eske nou te konn jwenn fêy vèt lot kote, oubyen nou te achte yo, oubyen nou pat sevi ak yo menm lè nou te fê manje?

Eske se selman nan jaden lakou a nou jwenn fêy vèt konyà, oubyen nou toujou jwenn lòt kote tou?

Ki pwoblem nou toujou genyen pou nou gen yon jaden lakou?

Appendix Two. Survey Questionnaire on Women's Role in Agriculture

See following pages.

ANKET SOU WOL FANM NAN AGRIKILT.

Non patisipan: _____ Konbyen ane ou gen: _____

Nimewo kay la: _____ Non groupman oubyen klib kote ou manm: _____

*(Eske mesye kay la prezan pandan ouap poze kesyon yo? Si wi, bay non li: _____)**(Si li prezan, mete yon 'F' akote kesyon fanm nan reponn, e mete yon 'M' akote kesyon mesye a reponn.)*Eske gen mesye nan kay la ansanm ak ou? *wi / non*

Si non, se paske ou poko gen mari. oubyen ou separe. divoze. oubyen vèv?: _____

Konbyen piti ou genyen? _____ Konbyen pitit ou genyen ak mari ou? _____

Eske ou se katolik oubyen konveti? *katolik / konveti*Eske ou ka li ekri? *wi / non*

TRAVAY JADEN	Jaden tè pèsoneel (tè achte, tè tit, tè eritye.)	Jaden ki te pou fanmi ou (tè endivize.)	Jaden ou lwe oubyen fènye (tè fèm, tè dematye.)
Eske ou fè jaden, ou-menm pou kont ou? (si wi, ki kalite tè:)			
Si wi, konbyen tè?			
Ki sa ou te plante nan jaden sa yo ane sa?:			
Ki les te responsab pou prepare jaden sa yo? (ou-menm, jounalye, mari ou, oubyen ansanm.)			

Eske mari ou konn achte jounalye? *wi/non* Eske ou-menm konn achte jounalye? *wi/non*Eske mari ou konn vann jounalye? *wi/non* Eske ou-menm konn vann jounalye? *wi/non*Eske ou konn fè komes? *wi/non* Konbyen jou chak semenn ou fè komes? _____Eske ou konn prete lajan pou fè komes? *wi/non* Konbyen lajan ou konn prete? _____Konbyen bet ou genyen pou kont ou-menm? poul _____ kodenn _____ kochon _____
kabrit _____ bourik/milèt _____ bef _____

Konbyen pye banan kap donner ou gen andedan lakou ou? _____

Konbyen bwa fwi grefe ou gen andan lakou ou? _____

Eske ou gen jaden lakou kote ou plante legim ak fèy vèt? *wi / non*Ki legim ou te plante nan jaden sa ane sa? _____ Eske jaden sa klotire? *wi/non***Responsabilite nan Kay la.**Ki les ki gen **plis** responsabilite pou pran desizyon nan kay la sou zafè:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. manje: | <i>fanm nan / gason an / tou de ansanm</i> |
| 2. gwo jaden yo: | <i>fanm nan / gason an / tou de ansanm</i> |
| 3. jaden lakou: | <i>fanm nan / gason an / tou de ansanm</i> |
| 4. edikasyon timoun yo: | <i>fanm nan / gason an / tou de ansanm</i> |
| 5. ti elvaj (poul, koden, kabrit) | <i>fanm nan / gason an / tou de ansanm</i> |
| 6. gwo elvaj (bef, kochon) | <i>fanm nan / gason an / tou de ansanm</i> |
| 7. komes: | <i>fanm nan / gason an / tou de ansanm</i> |
| 8. plante bwa andan lakou a: | <i>fanm nan / gason an / tou de ansanm</i> |
| 9. jere lajan kay la: | <i>fanm nan / gason an / tou de ansanm</i> |

(Poze kesyon 1 a 5 pou chak nan rekòt anba yo.)	1. Eske nou te vann <i>mayi</i> pandan ane sa?	2. Eske nou te vann <i>mayi</i> sou pye ane pase?	3. Pandan <i>mayi</i> ap grandi jis li bon pou rekolte, ki les ki responsab pou dirije li?	4. Ki les nan kay la responsab pou vann rekot sa yo?	5. Le nou vann rekot sa yo, eske lajan rete pou mesye a, madam nan, oubyen pou tout kay la?
Mayi, pitimi (danre)					
Banann					
Rapadou (kann)					
Manyok					
Fwi (mango, zoranj, ets.)					
Chabon					
Lot Bwa (planche, poto)					
Ti bèt (poul, kabrit)					
Gwo bèt (kochon bèf)					

Aktivite Group (swa klib oubyen groupman miks).

1. Eske group la toujou aktif? _____
2. Ki sa se pi gwo avantaj ou te jwenn nan groupman/klib sa pandan denye ane a? _____
3. Ki lòt avantaj ou te jwenn nan groupman/klib sa? _____
4. Ki lòt aktivite genyen nan groupman/klib sa? _____
5. Depi konbyen semenn groupman/klib an te gen denye reinyon? _____
6. Ki sa nou te diskite nan reinyon sa? _____
7. Eske sekrete groupman an genyen yon kaye pou kontwole byen groupman an? *wi / non*
8. Eske li te bay yon rapo sou kès group la nan denye reinyon an? *wi / non*
9. Eske groupman/klib la manm yon asosyasyon? *wi / non*
10. Ki pi gwo avantaj ou te jwenn nan asosyasyon an pandan denye ane a? _____
11. Dapre ou-menm, ki sa ki bi asosyasyon an? _____
12. Ki sa ki pi gwo pwoblem andan asosyasyon an? _____
13. Ki sa ki koz pwoblem sa a? _____
14. Eske gen (te gen) klas alfa nan group sa? Si wi, pou konbyen mwa ou te patisipe? _____
15. Si wi, ki chanjman aprann li ekri pote nan lavi ou? _____

16. Eske group la gen yon proje kredi? Si wi, konbyen lajan chak manm te jwenn? _____
 17. Si wi, ki jan ou te sevi lajan sa, e ki chanjman kredi sa te pote nan lavi ou? _____

-
18. Eske ou manm nan lòt groupman toujou? *wi / non* _____
 19. Si wi, avek ki lòt projè devlopman groupman sa travay? _____
 20. Ki aktivite groupman sa genyen, ki avantaj ou jwenn nan groupman sa? _____

21. Pouki sa ou manm nan 2 groupman - ki diferans genyen nan 2 groupman sa yo ki fè ou patisipe nan chak? _____

Wol Fanm nan Kominote a.

1. Antan ke fanm, ki sa ou ka fè ke manman ou ak grann ou pat ka fè lontan pase? Pouki sa? _____

2. Ki chanjman ou ta renmen wè toujou pou pitit fi ou yo? _____

3. Nan kominote ou a, ki aktivite pi rapote lajan pou fi? _____

Eske sa chanje depi lontan pase yo? Si wi, ki jan? _____

4. Ki chanjman ou wè nan relasyon fanm ak gason pandan denye 10 an yo? _____

5. Nan ki domenn eske fanm toujou gen pi gwo difikilte nan lavi yo?:

- kontwole kantite pitit yap fè _____
- jwenn lajan pou bay manje nan kay la _____
- jwenn lajan pou voye timoun lekòl _____
- gason ki pran lòt madam akote _____
- jwenn swen sante pou yo menm ak pitit yo _____
- jwenn lajan pou fè komes _____
- jwenn tè pou fè jaden _____
- kont ak lot moun nan vwazinaj _____
- lòt _____

Si li reponn 'wi' pou plis pase 2 domenn, mande li chwazi 2 ki bay **pi gwo** difikilte (mete '√' akote yo.)

6. Dapre ou-menm, ki pi gwo pwoblem fanm konfronte nan domèn agrikilti? _____

7. Ki sa ki koz pwoblem sa a? _____

8. Dapre ou-menm, ki pi gwo pwoblem fanm konfronte nan domèn sante? _____

9. Ki sa ki koz pwoblem sa a? _____

10. Dapre ou-menm, ki pi gwo pwoblem genyen nan peyi a? _____

11. Ki sa ou-menm ap fè nan nivo lokal la pou eseye ede rezoud pwoblem peyi a? _____

Mesi anpil pou patisipasyon ou nan anket sa!

Appendix Three. Declaration of Women's Associations of Anwò

“Resolution from the Section of ‘Timonn’, which includes women from Anwò, Bazin, and Kabrit.”

“Where we’ve come from: We the women of Hatty, we were in a difficult situation, we didn’t know our rights in society, our children were dying easily, we weren’t organized, we didn’t know when they did violence against us, we didn’t know how to do [primary health care] prevention for our children. we were dying while having children because we didn’t see a doctor when we were pregnant, our children were dying from malnourishment, we didn’t have anywhere to get primary care when our children were sick, we didn’t have assembly post where we could get our children vaccinated and weighed. We never knew that women had a day of the year set aside for them, we didn’t know about becoming literate, we didn’t talk in society, we didn’t participate in making decisions in our homes, we didn’t know how to unwind [liberate] ourselves, in sum, they considered us as domestic slaves.”

“Where we are today, thanks to SC: Now, we have already left the level of *groupman* or club, we have arrived at the level of an association, a part of us has already benefited from literacy, we have become more-or-less solid as a result of the presence of the *animatrisés* who have [trained, supervised]³⁴ our clubs, we have become able to claim our rights in society, we have come to know where the idea that women are inferior to men came from, we have come to know how to take care of our children better so they don’t get sick, we participate in making decisions within our houses, we have health centers in our areas, we have numerous assembly posts for vaccinations, a good number of us have benefited from credit from the community bank, we do family planning so that we can limit the number of children, can take care of them better and send them to school, we know how dry mangos so we have them when there aren’t any, we know the importance of house-yard kitchen gardens, we have come to see the danger of borrowing from the local money-lenders [loan-sharks], we know how to do a little bit of soil conservation.

“Where we want to arrive: We need for the associations to fly with their own wings, we need to have legal recognition (so that the state recognizes us), we need a revolving loan fund within the associations, we need for all women who are in the associations to receive credit, we need all women who are in the associations to have a meeting hall, we need a lot of training, we need to visit other women’s associations which exist in the country, we need to receive aid for us to set

³⁴The *kreyol*/french term is *encadrer*, which can be translated as ‘to train students, to supervise employees’. As I heard it used frequently in the SC program in reference to the work of the *animatris-es* and *animatè*, it had a stronger meaning than simply to train, but not quite the sense of supervision. The term reflected the powerful yet somewhat ambiguous task of the *animatris-es* and *animatè*, of ‘framing’ the work of the community groups.

up community stores, we need aid for us to set up bakeries, to set up a cassava-bread-making workshops, we need to get good water to drink, we need roads, we need to finish our mango-drying workshops. we need to get employment, we need to get food aid. we need to celebrate March 8 in our local regions, we need to know if the Minister for Women, if she represent us women, and what her vision is, what she is doing, we need to have contact with the Minister.

Appendix Four.

EVALUATION REPORT

SAVE the CHILDREN Maissade Community Development Program

Submitted to
SAVE THE CHILDREN
Haiti Field Office
Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Raymond Vander Zaag
February 1998

BACKGROUND.

This evaluation report is based on 11 months of observations in the SC Maissade program area (February to December 1997) while the author conducted field research for his Ph.D. degree. This research was focused on investigating how local community groups have interacted, interpreted, and negotiated with local NGO development programs, particularly that of Save the Children. While the research primarily had theoretical goals (such as analysing the development interventions in Maissade using a framework that emphasized concepts such as the different 'knowledges' of different social groups and genders, and the active 'agency' of gendered social actors in interpreting and acting according to these knowledges), the extended period of field observation also produced insight into various practical and strategic programming issues. These observations have been shared with SC in informal discussions and activity reports with various program staff during the course of the research period. However, SC staff felt it would be beneficial to have a more concise and complete record of these observations, analysis and recommendations, to feed into SC planning and evaluation processes. This report is that record. It is hoped that this report will be more immediately accessible and useful to SC than the more theoretically-oriented thesis that is now being written.

RESEARCH METHODS.

The research methods utilized were primarily participant observation of farmers' and women's group and association meetings, and semi-structured interviews with community leaders, participants and program staff. While this research was focused primarily in only 2 farmers' and 2 women's associations (out of a total of 7 farmers' and 8 women's associations in the SC program), SC staff indicated that these two communities were representative (in terms of level of capacity) of the other community associations.

The author also observed and participated in numerous SC staff meetings and seminars, held many informal discussions with SC staff, observed daily staff activities at the SC field office in Maissade, and had access to program documents (grant proposal, program plans, reports, evaluations, computerized health database.) Other specific methods used included a series of 8 focus group sessions investigating gender relations around women's role in agriculture, and a re-survey of 70 women who had participated in a 1992-3 baseline survey on women's role in agriculture. Throughout the research period, the author lived with his family in Maissade, and enjoyed a very open, collaborative and supportive relationship with both SC field and management level staff, though he did not have any official role in the program.

Because principles of informed consent and confidentiality were followed during the course of the research, the identities of specific people (community members and SC staff) and communities will not be disclosed in this report, nor will recommendations be provided at the level of specific communities or personnel.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT.

The report will be organized into a number of sections, each focused on a particular programmatic issue or area. These are:

- a) some general observations about the SC program in Maissade
- b) phase over of program interventions to community management
- c) financial self-sufficiency of community development activities
- d) training needs of community associations
- e) SC staff training needs and team structure
- f) strengthening the integration of gender issues in programming
- g) monitoring and evaluation issues
- h) SC longer-term (phase-out) strategy in Maissade

For each area, the author's observations will first be provided, and then any specific recommendations will be detailed. However, since these program issues are interrelated, some overlap and repetition may be noted.

NOTE: The report focuses primarily on the community development components of SC's program in Maissade, and less so on its community health and education interventions. However, to the extent that the long-term sustainability of the health and education activities also depend on developing local community organizational capacity (in areas such as: revenue generation; financial management; program planning; networking and partnering with outside supporting organizations; and community accountability), the analysis and recommendations should also be relevant to these sectors.

A. SOME POINTS OF DEPARTURE CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT IN RURAL HAITI.

Perhaps the following observations and statements will be obvious to some, but it seems important to be reminded of some basic realities about the development context in rural Haiti. These facts form the foundation for all of the observations, analysis and recommendations that follow.

1. NGOs are one of the few providers of social services in rural Haiti. Government ability to provide basic services in education, health, and rural development are very weak. Thus in the commune of Maissade, SC is the major provider of these services, the largest source of outside investment into the commune, and probably the largest employer.

2. Rural Haitians have traditionally been dis-empowered. The political and economic centers of power have traditionally been distant and arbitrary (though the impacts at the rural level have been real enough), and rural Haitians have adopted very pragmatic and 'survival oriented' strategies in response. This situation also extends to development projects. The historically short-term, 'project', and donor-dependent nature of most state and NGO social-service interventions means that most social services have been delivered in a top-down and arbitrary manner (i.e. they are not necessarily initiated in response to levels of local need or capacity, nor are projects necessarily renewed based on project performance.) Local people do not feel empowered or heard in this context, and as a result, they have adopted very pragmatic

orientations toward development projects. Project benefits are exploited in the short term, while longer term project objectives for local institutional capacity development are discounted, since new projects rarely build on institutional structures developed in previous projects.

3. Local people's response to SC's programs is very much shaped by both their knowledge of the dominant social-service-provider role that SC holds in Maissade, and their pragmatic attitude toward development projects. SC interventions are highly valued and appreciated, yet remain understood within the larger framework of NGO development projects outlined in 2 above. As a result, interpreting local community responses to SC interventions requires discerning both authentic attempts to use these interventions for self-help and local social change, and pragmatic attempts to capture short-term project resources.

4. SC long-term presence in Maissade provides it with both advantages and disadvantages. SC long-term commitment has allowed it to slowly build a significant degree of institutional capacity at the level of farmer's and women's associations. SC has proved itself to be a reliable and committed intervenor in Maissade, producing on the commitments and promises it has made. However, its long-term, relatively large-scale presence in Maissade also has created a certain level of dependence on its services, and has made SC itself an important local institution. Thus the ground work has been laid for the establishment of local organizations that can carry on parts of SC services, yet the sheer size of SC interventions will be difficult to maintain by these local organizations. The reduction in the level of these services will likely create negative impressions of decline and abandonment. This negative psychology may counteract other positive local achievements facilitated by SC.

B. PHASE OVER OF PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS TO COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT.

1. SC program interventions respond to important needs in the communities. Specific interventions in the areas of literacy training, micro-credit, agricultural technical training, and support for fruit-drying revenue-generating activities are all highly valued by the communities. Though less concrete, SC support of community (farmers' and women's) associations through the regular visits and training of its animation staff give these communities an important sense of empowerment and capacity for participation in development. Even more valued are the high level of health services (child health services, dispensaries, health education, etc) delivered by SC. Taken together, all these interventions have already started to produce long-term change in local lives.

2. The majority of program interventions are still managed directly by SC from the SC office, and involve little community participation or management. For example, in the literacy program targeted to the women's associations, SC hired the literacy monitors, and supervised their work directly using supervisors it hired. The women's credit program has been managed directly by SC staff. The agriculture monitors were hired directly by SC, and accountable to and supervised by SC staff. All these interventions reinforce notions that these projects are being done by SC (rather than by the community), and that community members who are employed as monitors and supervisors are working for SC (rather than for their community.)

In all of these programs, there is little community participation in program planning or delivery. Therefore, they do not contribute as much as potentially possible to the development of local community management capacity and ownership. While direct SC management likely has the advantage of ensuring timely delivery of outputs specified in project grant documents, it does little to develop local management skills, or reduce dependence on SC and set the stage for phase-over and self-sufficiency.

Recommendation: SC should cease direct implementation of all interventions targeted to the farmers and women's associations. In place of direct implementation, SC should put in place joint partnership agreements with the associations in which both SC and the associations carry specific responsibilities for their implementation, in ways that build local management capacity and ownership.

For example, in the literacy program, SC could offer literary training grants to the associations. Associations would be required to submit a basic grant proposal to SC, which would outline objectives for the number of people to be trained, who the association would engage to conduct the classes, and how the classes would be supervised and evaluated. A partnership agreement would then be established with SC which would outline the responsibilities of each party. Initially, SC field staff would likely need to provide considerable facilitation and coaching to the associations in the preparation of the proposals and in the subsequent management of the activities, but with the goal of slowly creating increased organizational capacity. As well, the program could also build in requirements (and strategies) for increasing community financing of these activities in subsequent years of the grant (see section C. below on Financial Self-sufficiency.) Similar agreements could also be put in place for other interventions in agriculture training (see below), health training, dispensary management, water supply, etc.

3. Phase-over to community management also has implications for how SC field staff intervene at the community level, and how SC senior staff plan and manage their sectoral activities. These need to become more participatory, and need to become more focused on facilitation, training and the promotion of local capacity. This in turn suggests specific needs for SC staff training (see E. below.)

C. FINANCIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.

1. Given the size of SC interventions in Maissade, it is not reasonable to expect the local community to be able to self-finance all these interventions. They simply do not have the financial and management capacity to do so.

Recommendation: SC needs to carefully examine which of its current interventions have the potential of becoming self-sufficient (self-managed, with internal or stable alternative outside resources), and focus program efforts on the training and facilitation required to reach this goal. Other interventions which do not have this potential (i.e. which depend on heavy SC subsidy) should be phased out as soon as possible. If non-locally-sustainable interventions are continued until just before SC completes its phase-

out from Maissade, this will contribute to a negative psychology that will also discourage local efforts to carry on with those activities that are locally viable. SC should also evaluate all new proposed interventions against the criteria of their potential for local self-sufficiency.

2. Given the perceived 'riches' of SC and the direct support it has given to the majority of its interventions in Maissade, local people do not see the urgency for requiring community financial self-sufficiency for these activities. Community members are more interested in seeing that profits from current revenue-generating activities be distributed to members, rather than be invested in community activities (which are currently supported by SC 'subsidies'.) Therefore it will be difficult to develop commitment for community investment in and support of communal development activities (such as health care activities, literacy activities, other training activities.) These activities need to be transparently managed, and produce clear communal benefits, in order to attract and retain community support.

Recommendation: SC should encourage community associations to implement a policy in which a fixed percentage (for example, 25 percent) of all profits from association income-generating activities are allocated to supporting joint communal projects or interventions (literacy classes, water systems, health centers, agriculture training, etc.) Alternately, specific income-generation activities could be designated as 'community income-generating activities', and all profits from these activities be allocated to such communal activities. Such policies should not be imposed by SC, but could be a concrete outcome of more foundational discussions about sustainability and local institutional development between SC and the community (see G. below.)

3. The majority of farmers' and women's groups and associations no longer have a practice of requiring regular financial contributions from members. Now that start-up group assets have been established, and groups have contributed their 'membership share' to their association, the initial practice of weekly or monthly member contributions has ceased. Another reason contributions have ceased is because the groups and associations lack profitable activities in which to invest these contributions, or they lack the management skills to make given activities profitable. Members quite rightly feel they can utilize the money more profitably in their individual economic activities. Thus the initial sense of investing in the common good of the group or community has faded, and now most members expect that the groups and associations should be producing and returning direct material (if not necessarily monetary) benefits to them.

Recommendation: The balance between common community benefits and individual benefits needs to be rebalanced if SC expects community associations to contribute significant financial resources to support community services in health, literacy or education. This is not an easy task, and will likely require a combination 'carrot and stick' approach. This means that SC should employ various matching grant strategies, that encourage and reward communities that do contribute their own resources with additional SC resources for community activities, and exclude communities that are not willing to contribute their resources.

4. Another reason regular member contributions have declined is many members view their contributions to their group funds as 'lost money'. They are not assured that they could have

their contributions refunded if they decided to leave the group, even though verbal assurances may have been given, since the records are only kept in the group treasurer's record-book. Members have no record-in-hand of their contributions.

Recommendation: Institute a 'passbook' system, in which each member received a small passbook in which all contributions (and loans, loan repayments, interest and dividend credits) are entered. (Such a system currently is used at the *groupman* level by at least one farmers' association. Each member *groupman* has a passbook in which its assets invested in the association are recorded. This amount is updated when dividends are distributed.) This passbook would remain in the hands of each member, and would provide an increased sense that their 'investments' or 'savings' in the group remain in their own name and are potentially accessible. This would encourage continued pooling of resources. The passbooks could also be used to link member contributions to credit access - loan amounts could be based on member savings in their group. This system would require setting up a credit-union type of financial accounting system in each group/association. This would also require considerable training for group and association treasurers (see Section D below.)

(NOTE: Both 3 and 4 cannot be undertaken in isolation, but as part of the larger discussion that needs to be initiated concerning the larger questions of SC's phase-out strategy in Maissade. See sections D. and G. below.)

5. Agriculture remains the productive backbone of the rural economy in Maissade. Increased local incomes ultimately depend on increased productivity in agriculture, and therefore on social and technical investments that can increase agricultural productivity. While agriculture is not a priority domain for SC programming, it can also be viewed as the prime area of economic opportunity in Maissade. Economic opportunities in grain storage, marketing and fruit drying, as well as increased community economic capacity to support ongoing health, education and other social services, depend on a productive agricultural base. Further, past SC investments in this area mean that SC has a core of competent field staff and trained community-level ag. promoters. Therefore continued benefits can be achieved with relatively low additional investments.

Recommendation: SC should maintain a basic level of support for agricultural activities. This is justifiable within the focus on promoting economic opportunities. However, this support should also be implemented in a manner which supports local organizational development. A number of options are possible, similar to those proposed for the literacy activities:

Option A: Agriculture training activities could be managed as an initiative (project) of the farmers' associations and not SC. If the farmers' association view these training activities as valuable, they should be willing to be responsible for planning and managing these activities. SC could establish a partnership agreement with each farmer's association, in which the associations are responsible for engaging and supervising the local agriculture monitors. The ag. monitors would thus become 'technical support staff' for their local association, and not SC employees (as they currently perceive themselves.) SC would negotiate a partnership agreement with each association which would specify the training outputs to be achieved and the level of SC financial subsidy to the

association. The agreement should also specify a plan for increasing local community financial responsibility for this training activity.

Option B: The agriculture training activities could be managed as a project of AGPM. SC could encourage the ag. monitors to form an informal 'professional association' under the umbrella of AGPM. SC could establish a partnership agreement with AGPM to implement the agricultural training activities, via its team of ag. monitors. This agreement would specify the training outputs to be achieved and the level of SC financial subsidy and technical support. Locating responsibility for ongoing agricultural training and support activities within AGPM could also increase the 'attractiveness' to other outside agencies of financing agricultural activities with the farmers' associations.

6. There is little technical agricultural expertise within SC management staff, and SC is perceived in the community (particularly by [male] farmers) as having lost interest in agriculture. There is a distinct danger that advances and investments made in this area will be lost because they have not been 'institutionalized' within any local community structures, nor have sufficient linkages been made with other outside institutions that could provide ongoing technical and program support.

Recommendation: SC should help an association of agriculture promoters (structured within or outside of AGPM - see 5. above) to establish/improve networks with outside institutions (such as the Ministry of Agriculture in Hinche, the FAO, the ECC). These institutions should recognize them as a competent channel through which they can deliver program services to farmers in Maissade.

D. TRAINING NEEDS OF COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS.

1. Apart from the SC program interventions mentioned in section B. above, the farmer' and women's associations do have on-going activities that do not depend on direct SC support. In the farmer's associations, these are primarily grain storage and credit to member *groupmans* (both using capital funds established through the sale of donated corn in 1995-96.) In the women's associations, these activities are primarily small-scale grain storage, very small-scale member-club credit, and the mango-drying activities. Yet the management of these activities does still depend to a considerable degree on the presence and active leadership of SC animation staff. This is particularly true for the activities of the women's associations (which have only been in existence for 2-3 years, and whose leaders generally have less experience in leadership and management skills due to women's historical position in society.)

Recommendation: The farmers' and women's association leadership both urgently need increased training to ensure the sustainability of their on-going activities. In part, this training needs to be provided through seminars, but more importantly, through a modification (re-orientation) of the field-intervention styles of the SC animation team away from direct management to a focus on training (see section E. below.) These training needs are discussed in more detail below. Since the situation of the farmers' and women's associations are different, some of the analysis and recommendations are made specifically for each.

2. A key factor in creating and maintaining member confidence and interest in any community organization is their confidence in the group or association leaders' abilities to actively and honestly manage group resources. To maintain confidence, there must be transparent management of these resources (i.e. decisions on how and when to invest the group funds in an activity such as grain storage must be made in an open participatory manner, and members must receive regular and complete reports on group assets and activity profits.) However, some group leaders lack either the skills, experience or willingness to allow them to manage in this manner. As a result SC animation staff often play a key role in managing association assets, ensuring regular reports are provided to members, enforcing norms of accountability, and generally fulfilling a neutral, third-party 'auditing' function that gives ordinary members confidence that their assets are well-managed and protected.

Recommendation: Since the 'auditing' function of SC animation staff is currently vital in maintaining member confidence in association financial management, yet some staff (particularly the *animatrice* staff) have weak skills in this area (see section E. below), SC could establish an 'financial auditing and training' team (drawn from the current credit program staff???) which could both provide direct services to the farmers and women's associations, but in a manner that also emphasizes training and local capacity development.

3. Both the farmers' and women's associations have a similar two-level structure: local level *groupman* or women's clubs, with 8-20 members each, and the umbrella associations, each with 12-18 member *groupman* or women's clubs. The health and effectiveness of associations depends on the linked strength of each of the two levels which compose them. Without strong local groups, association activities tend to become too 'distant' from individual members, and become dominated by the executive committee (who often appear to have fairly permanent positions - elections do not appear to be held regularly) Local groups can more easily organize together to work for mutual benefit, since they have stronger interpersonal relations and therefore have relatively effective informal mechanisms of accountability and mutual support. Association activities need to support these concrete local activities that maintain member interest. Yet without an umbrella association, individual local groups do not have sufficient 'critical mass' in various areas such as management capacity, voice in communal affairs, and access to larger 'outside' resources and services. The associations can also function as a 'higher court' to enforce norms of accountability and collaboration in local groups. Thus, ideally, both the umbrella association and the local groups reinforce each other.

Over the past few years, the functioning of the local groups (*groupman* and women's clubs) has declined as the number of SC animation staff have been reduced and their attention has been focused on the strengthening of the umbrella associations. Many local groups only meet infrequently, and do not have active local projects which profitably invest their group fund. On average, the women's clubs are probably more active than the farmers *groupmans*, as the clubs meet when there are literacy training activities being supported by SC, or when club delegates have received new health-related messages to disseminate after a seminar. But most *groupman* and clubs do not seem to have a continued system of member contributions, nor well-managed income-generation activities that invest and increase group assets. Without active local groups, the associations tend to become entities unto themselves, pursuing their projects (whether grain storage or some other activity) but providing little concrete benefit to their individual members

(either in the form of specific services or distribution of profits.) Members become discouraged, but maintain their membership in the associations, since they do not want to lose their claim to their share of the association's capital in case it should be distributed, and to retain their ability to claim their share of any project resources which happen to appear through this channel.

Recommendation: It is not realistic, at this stage of SC's program, to go back to investing scarce SC animation staff time in revitalizing the *groupmans* and clubs through visits and training with individual local *groupmans* or clubs. SC could organize some regional training session for group delegates and leaders, in an attempt to increase their skills and encourage increased group functioning. SC could also encourage local group functioning by providing matching credit funds to local groups based on local contributions. These funds could be used in rotating credit schemes. Beyond this, SC should accept that some local groups will decline in functioning.

4. The farmers' associations generally have fairly strong management skills, and profitable activities. Of considerable importance to the success of these associations is the relatively large capital fund they have acquired from the sale of donated corn, which allow the associations to engage in the storage and credit activities which members value highly. Because the initial capital fund has had the condition attached to it that it cannot be distributed to individual groups, but are to remain for collective community activities, even when some difficulties arise (i.e. due to the association executive committee's poor management), group members remain motivated to work to resolve these difficulties in order to retain their access to the capital fund. Even if the local *groupmans* to which each member belongs are not particularly active, members retain their interest in the association to maintain their claim to participate in the profits and benefits of association resources. Association executive committee members generally have sufficient skills to carry on the established and routine activities of their association. Yet critical problem-solving and auditing functions are still performed by SC animation staff. As well, current association leaders only have limited skills or motivation to innovate and initiate new association activities that respond to community needs.

Recommendation: Training should be provided to association leaders on community problem identification, proposal writing and networking skills. This training could be supported by a 'small projects fund' which could supply matching funding for new community initiatives or projects that respond to identified needs.

5. While the farmers' associations that have been successful have been so in part because they have significant pooled financial resources, one of the difficulties that the women's associations face is their lack of capitalization. Most only have relatively limited capital funds, generated from the shares individual women's clubs contributed when the association was formed. Their under-capitalization limits their potential for making substantial profits, and the lack of substantial profits in turn reduces member's motivation to contribute time and energy to making the association function well.

Recommendation: Significant amounts of capital assets need to be made available to the women's associations. SC should consider 'endowing' each of the women's associations with a capital fund, which they could manage for association and local club projects. These funds could be drawn from the current credit capital fund, or could be

solicited from other donors. However, just adding a sizeable capital fund to each women's association will not make them successful - they could overwhelm limited organizational capacity, creating the conditions for failure or temptations for mismanagement. These funds could be provided in parallel with financial and management training and coaching (see nos. 3 and 5 in this section.) These funds could also have appropriate conditions placed on them related to each association's achievement of specific capacity indicators.

6. In the women's association, the only concrete locally-managed activities are some grain-storage activities, some limited group credit activities, and the mango-drying activities. Yet even these activities depend to a large extent on the facilitation and supervision of SC animators to ensure they are well-managed. The current program coordinators have identified urgent training needs for the women's association leaders (cf. *Analyse de la Capacite de Gestion des Associations de Clubs de Femmes de Maissade*.) This analysis also proposes a draft 'operational plan' which includes numerous training seminars, covering topics such as coop management, income-generation project planning, project management, marketing, human resource management, etc.

Recommendation: While the aims and direction of this training plan is to be supported, care should be taken to ensure that this formal training receives much support and coaching at the community level once the trainees return to their associations to implement these new skills. Given the background and inexperience of these leaders in these areas, much practice and trial-and-error application will be required before these new skills are firmly adopted. The SC animation staff will play a key role in this coaching and facilitation process, and so they should receive the appropriate training and supervision to ensure they are able to do this (see Section E. below concerning the re-orientation of the animation staff's interventions away from a management focus to a training focus.)

7. The proposed formation of a Federation of Associations of Women's Clubs (cf. *Analyse de la Capacite de Gestion des Associations de Clubs de Femmes de Maissade*) (FAM) needs to be developed cautiously, to ensure that the vision is owned by the community leaders, not just SC field and management staff. Formation of a federation will not automatically ensure the durability of the women's associations. The management and leadership capacities that will be required by this federation will represent a new level of experience for the women's association leaders. As well, it should be considered that formation of FAM will put considerable demands on the limited time of each association's key leaders. It is these leaders who will inevitably be selected to represent their association in the federation, and many of these leaders already feel a considerable burden in their (essentially volunteer) duties as association leaders.

Recommendation: SC's facilitation of the formation of the women's federation should proceed slowly. SC should be aware that it will take an sustained effort over 4-5 years at least in order to develop a capable organization. Key to the durability of the federation will be generation of sufficient resources and activities that produce tangible benefits for member associations, and the establishment of links with other outside agencies that can provide training and services. (also, see section E. below for recommendations on SC animation staff roles in both farmers' and women's federations.)

E. SC STAFF TRAINING NEEDS AND TEAM STRUCTURE.

1. Because there are no established monitoring systems in place related to community organizational capacity, by default the performance of SC animation staff is mostly evaluated ('rewarded') according to the outcomes of the community association activities. Staff are seen to have done a good job when their associations have 'successful' activities (i.e. grain storage activities are profitable, large quantities of mangos are dried and delivered, credit is repaid.) Therefore SC staff tend to step in to ensure good community performance even if this means usurping functions that community leaders themselves should be performing. Staff tend to intervene for short term performance, rather than longer-term capacity development.

Recommendation: SC staff need to re-orient their work with the community associations and groups away from a 'supervising and managing' mode towards a 'facilitation and training' mode. This will require constant and consistent reinforcement from field staff supervisors, since current patterns of intervention are well established, and are supported by cultural expectations of hierarchical 'patron-client' relationships. Field staff performance evaluation criteria and job descriptions should be revised to reflect this increased emphasis on facilitation and training. Another strategy would be to limit SC animation staff visits to association executive committee planning meetings only, and instruct them not to attend General Assembly meetings. This would help to orient their interventions to training and capacity building, and avoid their direct intervention in association business.

2. Little time appears to have been invested in field staff training (for community organizational capacity development) during the past few years. Staff express a strong desire for more training in how to help the community associations achieve 'independence'. (Staffing shortages at the senior level are the main reason this training has not occurred.)

Recommendation: A comprehensive staff training plan needs to be established. Because there are already heavy demands on existing senior staff, consideration should be given to contracting out this training. However, seminar-type training in itself is not sufficient, but must be supported with in-the-field supervision. Thus the involvement of supervising senior staff is still required. Much of this kind of training involves 'learning-by-doing', and regular (monthly) de-briefing sessions should be held with field staff and their supervisor. These sessions would allow field staff to discuss and reflect (and learn from each other) about their progress and difficulties in facilitating community organizational capacity.

3. Some SC animation staff lack sufficient skills in the area of financial management. While most know basic accounting skills, some are not sufficiently confident or competent to be able to train community groups to financially manage group economic activities (this involves accounting for group assets, which may be divided into several different 'accounts', each invested in a particular activity, each with different fiscal periods and levels of profits, allocating profits to the 'shares' of each member group, managing credit activities, and eventually utilizing more accounting principles such as assets, liabilities, and equity.)

Recommendation: The training plan for field staff should also include training in this domain. While the basic training can be delivered in the form of seminars, in-the-field supervision and support of staff is also required to ensure that the training is applied.

4. In the long-term, the expertise and experience of local SC staff (i.e. the current animation staff) will continue to be required by local successor development organizations (i.e. AGPM, the proposed Federation of Women's Associations.) As mentioned above, they currently play key roles in most local associations. The two federations are much less further developed (the women's federation has not even been formed yet), and they both will require even more complex and advanced organizational competencies (in areas such as financial control, project planning, networking for technical and financial resources, maintaining communications and accountability with their membership base.)

Recommendation: SC should consider if it can integrate some or all of the current (male and female) animation staff into the respective leadership structure of these local umbrella organizations. Allowing these local staff to develop a local organizational base from within which they could continue to exercise their valuable skills would ensure that these skills would continue to be available to the local community. Initially, SC could establish a partnership agreement that would grant support for the salaries of these staff. This agreement would also establish a plan for each federation to gradually increase its financial responsibility for these staff (through accessing other outside funding sources or internally generated funds)

(A potential danger of such an arrangement is that these staff would likely tend to dominate the leadership of these federations. Even if they were officially accountable (as federation employees) to an elected executive committee of (volunteer) local association leaders, their superior training and past roles would likely result in a significant imbalance of effective power. A possible alternative arrangement would be for the animation staff to establish an independent association of development animators, which could contract (on a project basis) with SC and/or the associations for the services they would provide.)

5. The coordinator responsible for local institutional development is a key management position in the current conjuncture of the SC Maissade program. It is questionable if this person has sufficient time to fulfill all the responsibilities of the position (which also include responsibility for education), particularly if a significant proportion of the recommendations in this report are adopted.

Recommendation: SC should consider splitting the current responsibilities of this position into two positions, one responsible for education and the other for local organizational development. This would allow the required intensive implementation of training and P/ID activities that are essential if successful phase-over is to be achieved.

F. STRENGTHENING THE INTEGRATION OF GENDER ISSUES IN PROGRAMMING.

1. Though accepted gender roles and relationships are largely established and passed on through broad and diffuse socialization processes, considerable negotiation, manoeuvre and variability still occurs at the level of each household. Within the accepted gender norms, a range of more or less equal gender relationships exist, as the woman and man in each particular household (or potential household - some of the negotiation and manoeuvre occur at the 'renmen' stage before the household is permanently established) establish the specific gender divisions of their relationship. This negotiation occurs in mostly 'private' spaces within the household, not in public spaces, and is therefore difficult to see or influence. More importantly, women who do attempt to renegotiate these roles have little support, since their efforts occur in private.

Recommendation: SC should seek to establish more 'public' spaces in which both women and men can discuss and redefine gender roles and relationships. The two specific cases in which this could be done are discussed in the two recommendations immediately below. This would support women's otherwise mostly private attempts.

2. To a certain extent, gender issues ('women's empowerment') have been 'ghettoized' (isolated) in the programs targeted toward the women's associations. The existence of the women's associations has a tendency to cause staff and community members (particularly men) to assume any gender issues should be dealt with by these women's associations. The farmer's associations are assumed to be free to go about 'business as usual' with regards to established gender roles. (For example, if more women should be leaders, let them become leaders of the women's associations. In this regard, it is telling that the farmer's associations are commonly referred to by both SC staff and community leaders as the 'men's associations'.) However, if gender issues involve the redefinition and 'rebalancing' of gender roles and relations, both men and women are implicated and need to be involved and targeted. In the past, it appears that gender-focussed messages (i.e. the animation lessons given to women's clubs when they were forming) have been targeted almost exclusively to women.

Recommendation: If resources permit, educational materials could be developed for use in the agriculture groups or in the literacy classes which would challenge both men and women to examine gender roles and relations, and their equity. These educational materials could include 'animation' style lessons which use participatory and discussion-based methods which encourage participants to actively debate and integrate these issues with their own life experience. However, given the goals for community self-management and SC phase-over, SC should not create new dependencies by directly hiring monitors to deliver these lessons. Rather SC should offer these resources (with accompanying training and perhaps some matching grants) to interested associations. The associations would be responsible for selecting (and remunerating) volunteer delegates from their member groups who were interested in providing this training in their groups.

3. The proposed formation of a Federation of Associations of Women's Clubs (FAM) also carries the danger of isolating gender issues. Though the formation of a separate women's

federation is likely preferable to integrating (subsuming!) the women's associations into AGPM. effort needs to be made to link the efforts of these two federations where appropriate.

Recommendation: In its training and facilitation, SC should encourage a complimentary and supportive (rather than competitive) relationship between AGPM and FAM. Both have much to gain if they are supportive of each other's efforts. Since AGPM has several years experience already, SC could encourage AGPM leaders to provide some training and mentoring to the new FAM leadership. They could also combine forces and resources in the supply store that AGPM is developing.

4. In addition to specific gender issues, most 'child survival' health messages (related to children's health) have also been targeted almost exclusively to women. Though this recognizes that women traditionally have primary responsibility for child care and health, the empowerment of women would seem to also require that their male partners also become knowledgeable and committed about these issues. Educating men about the requirements for good child nutrition and health (including birth spacing), and their role in contributing resources to allow these requirements to be attained, will provide important support for women who otherwise would have to attempt to negotiate and educate their partners on their own at the individual household level.

Recommendation: Health education materials could be developed for use in the agriculture groups. These lessons would have the objective of improving men's knowledge concerning children's health and changing their attitudes toward their roles in supporting children's health. Since many of the farmer's groups do not have on-going educational activities at their local group level, these lessons could also provide a renewed focus for local group activities. These lessons should be delivered on a locally-managed, volunteer basis (similar to that described in 2 above.)

5. Related to the above, most men and women publicly endorse the idea that gender relations in the household should be based on principles of consensus decision-making and joint control of economic resources. Most people agree that households in which the husband and/or wife maintain separate economies are less than ideal, and indicate difficulties in the relationship. This of course does not deny the fact that many - if not most - households fall short of this ideal, and that it is used by men as a public discourse to protect the status quo. (In an interesting counter to the International Women's Day slogan that "Women are the centre-post of development", men counter that "Men are the corner-post - and everyone knows that the corner-post is more important in holding the house up than the centre-post.") In the end, most will acknowledge that both women and men are essential for good development, and a harmonious, mutual relationship is needed for a household to advance. The existence of this relatively progressive ideal and discourse can be used to promote increased gender equality and voice for women in households.

Recommendation: The gender-focused training materials described in 2 and 3 above can use the proclaimed ideal and discourse of consensus decision-making and joint economic control to promote increased equality in gender relations.

G. MONITORING AND EVALUATION ISSUES.

1. There are no established monitoring systems in place related to community organizational capacity. Staff and community associations broadly understand that the associations are expected to attain levels of independent functioning, yet there are no defined parameters or timeframes to allow monitoring of progress to these goals. In large measure, there has been no sustained and participatory dialogue with the community association leaders to define together what 'independence from SC' and 'institutional capacity' means for the associations. This means that both the community leaders and SC field staff do not have a strong sense of 'where they are going'. I heard numerous examples of this vagueness from association leaders (including some unrealistic expectations about what things would be like "when SC is not longer in Maissade.")

Recommendation: SC staff need to make it a priority to establish a participatory process with association leadership which will establish a monitoring tool with clearly spells out the organizational capacity goals to be reached in each six-month interval between now and when SC phases out of Maissade.

Such a organizational capacity monitoring tool should define the 5 or 6 key domains in which organizational capacity needs to be developed, and then establish a series of progressive indicators that provide a comprehensive description of increasing capacity within that domain.

As a suggestion and example, possible organizational capacity domains could include:

- a) financial control skills (related to accounting, budgeting, auditing, banking.)
- b) governance skills (related to democratic community control of the associations, executive committee accountability, annual elections, etc.)
- c) technical skills (related to agriculture, grain storage, fruit drying, credit, other income generation activities.)
- d) management skills (related to annual planning, project management, monitoring and evaluation, etc.)
- e) networking skills (related to establishing and maintaining relationships with other development support organizations, writing funding proposals, obtaining outside technical support, etc.)
- f) community services skills (related to identifying and responding to broader community needs, inclusivity, gender equity issues, etc.)

However, it should be emphasized that such a tool should not be developed by SC alone and then presented to the community associations. It needs to be developed in a participatory manner, so that association leaders are able to explore and together define, with SC facilitation, their goals for their associations. The development of this tool can be an important training opportunity, as well as creating a common vision and ownership for local association organizational capacity.

Recommendation: To increase the local ownership of capacity development monitoring, SC could encourage peer monitoring and evaluation among the associations. After a locally-developed (and therefore, hopefully, locally understood) monitoring tool is developed, SC could encourage associations to send peer monitoring and evaluation

teams to neighbouring associations. These inter-association events would encourage continued dialogue about progress toward independence, and also encourage some healthy rivalry and motivation within the associations' leadership.

H. SC LONGER-TERM (PHASE-OUT) STRATEGY IN MAISSADE.

1. SC current program strategy emphasis on Partnership/Institutional Development responds to an urgent need, and needs to be emphasized in all programming decisions. Yet past tentative steps in a similar direction (i.e. staff strategic-planning discussions in late 1994-early 1995 on Institution Building) that were subsequently not fully pursued may have reduced staff's sense of urgency regarding this strategy. Further, the past management style within SC do not seem to have been particularly participatory (i.e. field staff reported to me that they do not feel like they have much input into programming decisions, nor have they had much information concerning future programming timeframes.) Finally, local field staff, at a certain pragmatic level, do not have much motivation to create self-sufficient local institutions, since this would imply 'working themselves out of a job.' Even if they are convinced that their expertise will be required in any future local institutions, the current (rich, foreign) employer they know is likely preferable to some future, peer-directed local organization they do not yet know. While I do not discount the professionalism of these local staff, at minimum it should be recognized that the P/ID strategy does create uncertainty and ambiguity for these staff.

Recommendation: A frank and open discussion should be initiated with SC field staff to address and explore these issues. The SC animation field staff possess considerable entrepreneurial skills, which should be harnessed in searching for new flexible organizational arrangements that could allow them to provide continued development leadership in Maissade. (See section E. above for additional discussion of this issue.)

2. As indicated in the introductory observations in section A. above, and again in section C. concerning community financial self-sufficiency, there are fundamental differences in local and outside (SC) attitudes toward program phase-over. SC tends to see phase-over as a positive, essential part of 'authentic' development, while many community members see it as negative, try-to-avoid-it-if-you-can part of the way NGOs and projects operate. These reflect basic differences in understandings about what 'development' is and how development projects 'work'. While SC has engaged in various discussions with local community and association leaders about issues of sustainability and phase-over, these discussions have not been systematic or comprehensive. Rather they seem to have been undertaken whenever SC was confronted with the 'need' to adjust its program strategy, due to funding changes or other changing priorities.

Recommendation: Similar to the discussions with SC staff, SC needs to engage in basic, comprehensive discussions with local community and association leaders about foundational understandings concerning development and sustainability. Such discussions will allow SC to promote understanding and acceptance of its concepts of partnership and institution development. These discussions should conclude with the establishment of a public, comprehensive phase-out strategy and timetable for the Maissade program. Though such discussions will not likely produce complete agreement or acceptance regarding local self-sufficiency and phase-out, they at least should provide

some understanding for SC's goals and strategy. It is important to attempt to create a positive rationale for this phase-out strategy, rather than allow it to be perceived as a situation of NGO project fatigue, poor project performance, or a decline of commitment. Allowing the phase-out to be surrounded by a 'negative psychology' will seriously harm those involved in the local organizations that do continue on as SC phases out.

3. The process of creating community organizational capacity and successful phase-over is a long and slow one. Given the relatively large scale of past SC interventions, and the minimal community participation and responsibility in their planning and management, it should not be expected that sufficient local capacity can be created in a matter of a few years. Even with intentional and intensive focus on P/ID, it is a process that will take at least 5 years. Even then, SC should not be surprised if some of these community organizations mutate and transform into unforeseen structures as SC withdraws its support.

Recommendation: SC needs to establish a public target date for final phase out of direct programming interventions in Maissade. Given the long-term nature of organizational development, this date should likely be about 5 years in the future. Even if this date is later revised, a concrete date would make SC's intention to phase out much more real for local staff and community leaders. It would provide a specific timeframe in which to plan required organizational development activities.

FINAL COMMENT.

This evaluation report may carry an overall negative tone, for it has tended to focus on identified problems and deficiencies in the SC program in Maissade. Perhaps I should have taken a more 'appreciative' approach, and attempted to identify and build on 'best practices.' Old habits die hard. Yet I do want to end this report with some encouraging and positive comments. There is much to commended and appreciated in the SC Maissade program. A solid foundation of local organizations has been built that already supports the delivery of important services to local people. The task that remains, to create sufficient capacity in these organizations so that they continue to mobilize and service local people, should not be underestimated. Overall, the focus should not be on the specific organizational formations that emerge, but rather the capacity and vision of the PEOPLE in these organizations. The organizations will likely change over time, but the investments in people will continue to produce benefits for years to come.

Annex. A THEORETICAL POINT CONCERNING INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS.

This appendix raises a minor point concerning Institutions and Organizations and the difference between them, which yet seems to me to hold some important strategic implications with regards to SC's proclaimed strategy of Institutional Development. Institutions can be defined as "stable, valued, recurring systems of norms and patterns of behaviour." Some institutions are organizations, others are not. For example, money is an established institution that is not an organization, while an organization such as the Central Bank (or Federal Reserve in the U.S.) is so well established and accepted that it is also an institution. However, the 'First State Bank of

Westport' is an organization that is not an institution, since society would continue pretty much as we know it even if it disappeared. More relevant to this evaluation, NGOs and community associations as a class or type of organization have become institutionalized in Haiti, but specific NGOs or community associations (such as SC or the Farmer's Association of Madame Jwa) are relatively temporary development organizations that could easily disappear, though they do embody the norms and values of NGO and community development institutions. The key development concept of sustainability is comparable to the concept of institutionalization, of becoming "stable, valued, recurring systems of norms and patterns of behaviour." Yet development programs have difficulty affecting (non-organizational) institutions that result from the informal and evolutionary result of dispersed actions. Thus development programs focus on the specific development organizations that influence and embody the institutions of a society. "Day to day institutionalized social behaviour is largely expressed by the work of , and interactions between, people in organizations." (Fowler, 1992, p. 15). Thus, I think SC should think of its work in Maissade more in terms of organizational development, rather than institutional development. Underlying its objectives in helping develop strong local organizations is the goal of promoting norms of community cooperation, self-help, education, etc. But it should not delude itself that it is creating institutions, and it should be prepared and accept that the organizations it helps create will change, evolve, even fall apart and reform in different configurations. That is not as important as whether the norms of cooperation, self-help, good community management are established in whatever local organizations appear.