Unsupervised Recovery: Adaptation Strategies by two NGOs in Post-Mitch Honduras

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A. Introduction

Concerns surrounding the stability of fragile states are increasingly salient as the rising number of disasters threaten government legitimacy and stress their capabilities. As seen with the recent earthquake in Haiti (2010), the state has had difficulty maintaining control of the country, and arguably would have failed without the support of international organizations such as the United Nations. Similar to Haiti, Hurricane Mitch (1998) highlighted vulnerabilities of the Honduran state. During the emergency response and later the recovery phase, the Honduran government had little capability to deal with the human and infrastructure toll wrought by Mitch (Jackson, 2005; Ensor et. al. 2010). International and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) thus became the default leadership. Even during the recovery phase, the state was still too weak to address long-term housing issues and therefore called upon NGOs to build and develop new and intentional communities for displaced survivors.

This paper investigates how the void left by the Honduran state enabled NGOs to implement their own disaster recovery and development agenda. After Hurricane Mitch, eight organizations founded new communities and resettled survivors in the Amarateca Valley north of the capital city Tegucigalpa, without governmental oversight. Focusing on only two NGOs, the Fundación Cristo de El Picacho (Fundación) and the Red Cross of Honduras (Red Cross), I argue that this lack of oversight permitted organizations to enact significantly different development agendas, which in turn led to stratification in long-term social health and development in their respective communities, Divina Providencia and Ciudad España. More specifically, the paper explores why the two resettled groups of survivors have had different experiences with resident feelings of insecurity, high crime, violent murders and conflict with the NGO. Lessons can be drawn from these experiences for future resettlements in fragile states.

To understand how unsupervised recovery efforts by NGOs have long-term impacts on communities, the paper will begin with a description of the methods, background on the importance of this topic, and a review of definitions as it applies to disasters, fragile states, community social health and resettlement as an adaptation strategy. The discussion will then narrow on the case of post-Mitch Honduras, illustrating how a lack of legitimacy and resources of the state enabled two NGOs, the Honduran Red Cross and the Fundación Cristo de El Picacho, to take over the role of needs provider to survivors. Each organization's

philosophy and practices will be described showing how development paradigms may have led to different social health outcomes. The paper will conclude with strategies that NGOs may utilize for the resettlement of disaster survivors in fragile states. These strategies can be applied in other post-disaster contexts.

B. Methods

To investigate how the building of an intentional community by an NGO led to different social health outcomes, I draw on historical documents including crime statistics, 932 household surveys, and 36 interviews with key stakeholders. I obtained records and documents from each NGO and community political organization, which offered perspectives of each entity concerning their role and responsibility. Complete police records from each community also provide excellent data on differences in amounts and types of crime. I also conducted a 96-question household survey as a census in Divina (N=449 of 585 homes) and a random sample in España (N=506 of 1,285 homes). These surveys provide insight into the social health consequences and opinions about organizational practices by NGOs. Additionally, I interviewed multiple Red Cross and Fundación staff to obtain a personal perspective on the philosophies and practices of the organizations. Similarly, I interviewed residents and leaders in Divina and España in order to gain a broad picture of the sense of social health and beliefs about the developmental trajectory of their communities. Finally, I lived in Divina for nine months (2009-2010) and commuted to España an average of one day a week, which provided me with an insider's view of community dynamics and community/NGO interactions and relationships.

C. Background

According to the Red Cross (IFRC, 2004), natural disasters have increased significantly since 1960 and have impacted inhabitants on every continent. Indeed, last year the European insurance company Munich RE (2011) reported that 2010 had the second highest number of natural disasters in recorded history. Additionally, low human development countries (UNDP, 2011) (which often also maintain fragile states) had a seven times higher mortality rate than highly developed countries and the number of reported disasters is rising most dramatically in the low and middle human development countries (IFRC, 2004). This concern and recent changes in the global political economy provoked the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Valerie Amos, to explain growing human vulnerability. The global economic crisis, she noted, especially historically, high food and fuel price averages and a downturn in trade, have weakened the ability of nations to withstand financial shocks, having the greatest impact on the poorest people.

Defining a fragile state, especially in the aftermath of a disaster, depends on how the label 'fragile' is characterized (Bratton, 1989). One of the most common definitions of a fragile state was developed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC, 2007): "States are fragile when state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights

of their populations". Additionally, the United Kingdom's Department For International Development (DFID) defines fragile states more in terms of its social contract with the citizenry: "those where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor" (DFID, 2011). For the purposes of this paper, I will use both definitions of fragility—a politically weak state and one that cannot fulfill its social contract through serving its constituents, especially in a post-disaster setting.

D. Post-Mitch Honduran state fragility

Although Honduras is not always indexed as a fragile state, there is considerable evidence that the government did not have the capacity to provide the basic functions needed after Hurricane Mitch. Two years before the hurricane, social scientists warned of the nation's vulnerability as it did not have the national apparatus nor the capacity to deal with disaster. Leon and Lavell (1996) publishing from Central America explained: "In Honduras and Costa Rica, community work for disaster evacuations are not usually planned, but rather are spontaneous responses and support at the time of emergency" (Leon and Lavell, 1996: 61). Indeed, even before Hurricane Mitch had finished roaring through the country, the government was already in disarray and even basic services could not be provided. Jackson (2005) points out that in the initial days following Mitch it was the World Bank, the International Development Bank, and USAID who took control of the logistical issues and decided how to organize the relief effort. In fact when asked about the Honduran emergency commission (COPECO), international financial institutions staff commented that the agency "was unprepared and had no funds. It was unable to perform at all" for emergency response and relief, let alone recovery (Jackson, 2005: 262; see also Jeffrey, 1999). Due in part to the weakness of the Honduran state to deal with the disaster and the amount of human and material capital obtained by the NGOs, the Honduran congress had little choice but to follow the programs and actions decided upon by foreign development actors (Jackson, 2005). The fragile (and minimal) social contract between government and citizenry was broken creating a space to be filled by non-governmental organizations.

The increasing presence of NGOs in the Global South and political/economic conflicts with national government were clearly seen in post-Mitch Honduras (Craig and Mayo, 1995; Fisher, 1997; Mohan and Stokke, 2000). Although there was a need for outside assistance in the relief and recovery effort, the Honduran state was concerned about being sidelined, and that reconstruction funding would bypass governmental coffers (due to concerns of corruption) and go directly to NGOs (Jackson, 2005; Bratton, 1989). The state marginalized grassroots organizations that wanted a voice in the rebuilding process. It was only during the Stockholm Summit[1] that Honduran state representatives were pressured by international donors to meet directly with representatives of Honduran civil society (Jackson, 2005).

The same fragility of the Honduran state that necessitated intercession by organizations continued in the disaster recovery phase. During the 1999 Stockholm Summit international donors and international financial institutions (IFIs) knew there was a need for significant involvement by "civil society" including NGOs. However, the Honduran state felt the threat that funding might be diverted away from them

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[1] The Stockholm meetings brought together international donors and countries affected by Hurricane Mitch with the goal of deciding upon the financial and material needs of each country and where the funding to address this need would come from.

toward organizations. Bradshaw et al. (2001: 87) found the Central American governments actively resisted the growing pressure from international donors to work with organizations and civil society in the creation of national reconstruction plans. O'Neill (2000) saw this resistance specifically in Honduras, noting:

"*One year after Mitch their* [the donors] *analysis is that the reconstruction process is going slowly and that transformation has not yet begun. In addition, during 10 months the Central Government has not opened real spaces for civil participation in the definition and management of new policies, programs and development projects.*"

However, this did not stop organizations from coming together to have a voice in the reconstruction process. O'Neill goes on to explain,

"*While governmental coordination has been virtually nil, the NGO sector has restructured regional groups and these have greatly benefited from newly created networks in Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua. In Honduras, the country with the weakest NGO capacity in the region, changes have been dramatic with the creation of Interforos, a coalition bringing together almost 500 grassroots organizations and NGOs.*"

Indeed, Espacio Interforos defined themselves in contrast to the fragility of the government, focusing on "equity in the access and control over resources and benefits; the efficiency and efficacy and transparency of the institutional state; and democratization with citizen participation" (Espacio Interforos, 2011).

The lack of state capability to address social problems that motivated Espacio Interforos also encouraged the Honduran Red Cross (HRC) and the Fundación to help resettle survivors away from high-risk areas. Both organizations built new intentional communities, Ciudad España (España) and Divina Providencia (Divina) respectively. They were constructed in the Valle de Amarateca, thirty-six kilometers north of Tegucigalpa and within five kilometers of each other. Although both communities began with many similarities, years later they have significant differences in terms of community social health. This paper will bridge the literature on disasters, fragile states, and NGOs, specifically as it relates to post-disaster recovery to illustrate that in the absence of state capability and oversight, organizations implement their own development processes creating important differences in social health outcomes.

To address the above issues, the following sections will chronologically outline the starting point and current status of each community. To begin, the next section will briefly describe the key development philosophy of each organization that was implemented in their respective community. It will then connect this practice to differential social health outcomes illustrating that without recovery oversight by government, a probable result is stratification in long-term development between intentional communities. The paper will conclude with possible strategies to encourage the highest level of social health among neighbouring post-disaster communities.

E. NGO response to Hurricane Mitch in Honduras

The inability of the Honduran government to confront the enormity of the disaster pushed government officials to hand over much of the recovery and reconstruction efforts to national and transnational NGOs (Jackson, 2005). Throughout my interviews with NGO staff, I repeatedly heard complaints about the lack of government involvement and support in the community building process. Organizations were encouraged to take full responsibility of their projects—issues such as water works, road construction, schools, housing, etc. were handed over by the state to the participating NGOs. Promises were made by the government to take care of some aspects of the community building process (putting in sewer lines, roads, schools, clinics, police stations, electricity, potable water, etc.) but rarely and only after significant persistence and time were some of these basic services provided. Habitat for Humanity's La Joya community is an example. Habitat's job was to build homes and move people in while the government was to provide basic plumbing and electricity (PC-Diana, 2009). Although the community was the first built in the Valle de Amarateca, it was one of the last to obtain these services precisely because they had to wait for the government to build the system (PC-Siembieda, 2010). To this day Habitat waterworks are not up to par with many of the other post-Mitch intentional communities in the valley. To contrast, according to the executive director, the Fundación did not have expectations of the government, having seen government inefficiencies on other projects. This NGO then took on the responsibility itself, to either find external funding to implement the service or persistently and through political contacts gained these services through the government (PC-Myra, 2010). Like the Fundación, most organizations needed to look for funding elsewhere, not only to build homes, relocate survivors, and offer community-building classes, but also to build the entire basic infrastructure.

The HRC is a case in point. The organization initially did not want to get involved with house building, as their historical strength and mission lie in emergency relief, not recovery and development. However, after the government petitioned the Red Cross to build a community they did so choosing to help about 800 families from Tegucigalpa (and many more throughout the country). Naomi, a top director of social projects for the nation including Ciudad España explained: "There was a commitment, the HRC would provide housing to families and the government committed to provide the land on which to build, all basic services to the population, such as education, basic health, access roads, and others. The whole process was originally going to take less than a year but the government had to prepare the land for Red Cross to build" (PC-Naomi, 2008). Yet by the time the government had the land rights and had the land terraced, more than three years had passed and not a single house had been built. This was not the only problem. The government, due in part to corruption and in part to disorganization, did not fulfill its promise to provide water for the homes. As a high level waterworks employee in España, Don Roberto explained that after years of waiting, the HRC finally gave up on the government services promised and asked the American Red Cross to build a water system for the community, which they subsequently did. The same issues occurred with building a school, a clinic, a police station, a library, roads, and a community centre—all of which were constructed by the Honduran Red Cross in partnership with other NGOs. Without state support or guidance, the Fundación and the Red Cross were obliged to do the construction, resettlement and development on their own. The following section will describe the social health outcomes of the two communities, Divina and España, noted above. I will then discuss the ways in which the freedom granted each organization shaped these outcomes.

F. Social health outcomes

Without government supervision, each organization was able to implement its own recovery and long-term development philosophy, leading to vastly different results. This section will describe the long-term social health outcomes of each community providing a foundation to understand how, without state intervention, each NGO implemented its own recovery and development practices.

How does one measure a "more successful" community in comparison to another? Currently, metrics called social indicators are being used as measures for future development strategies, government national plans, and even the Healthy Cities Initiative promoted by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2011). These can be narrow, focusing only on economic or physical health indicators, or as broad as measuring numerous characteristics from all aspects of community or national life. Costa Rica, for example, draws upon some common social indicators (such as civic participation) but also includes economic, education, and health indicators (MPNPE, 2007). Panama, in their 2006 community social wellbeing report, highlighted issues of social exclusion, conflict, social infrastructure (health and education) and access to basic services as issues affecting social health in communities (Republica de Panama, 2006). One of the most comprehensive social wellbeing reports is the recent Canadian study entitled "Community Vitality: A Report of The Canadian Index of Wellbeing" (Scott, 2010). The study pinpoints specific social health indicators which have been highlighted in the literature (IISP, 2011; Chambers, 1997; Edwards and Hulme, 1996a; Mohan and Stokke, 2000; Plunkett, 1995; Putnam, 2001; Sampson et al., 1997; Smith and Wenger, 2007).

Although vast in scope, the social indicator literature does maintain commonality regarding some basic agreed upon measures. Of these, six stand out as the most suitable to rate the social health in post-disaster intentional communities: low crime, social capital, collective efficacy, community participation, vision, and community independence. To find out which, if any, of these indicators residents and leaders were interested in, I asked each interviewee about the major differences between the two communities. Though other factors were mentioned including levels of self-organization and (in)dependence, there was unanimity in responses concerning levels of crime. Based on these responses and space considerations, this paper will focus on arguably the most significant social health indicator: crime (Sampson and Wilson, 1995).

G. Crime

One would expect that when two groups are drawn from the same population and provided with comparable economic and infrastructure resources, the groups would have similar outcomes. Yet, as seen in Tables 1 and 2 below, this was not the case for España and Divina.

Table 1. Criminal Activity in Divina and España - 01/2004 to 12/2009+

	# of full-time police	# of homes	Do you feel you can report a crime that happens in the community? (%)	Are you afraid to go out at night? (%)
Divina	1-2	586	Yes - 86%**	Yes - 6**
España	2	1364	Yes - 62%	Yes - 24

Z-test significance at *.01, **.05

+ Data provided by the communities and author's survey

Table 2. Criminal Activity in Divina and España - 01/2004 to 12/2009+

	# of crimes per 1,000	Average # of crimes per year	Murders per 1,000	Kidnappings per 1,000	Rapes per 1,000	Thefts per 1,000
Divina	95.4*	42*	0*	.7**	.7	12.1**
España	270.7	116	3.42++	.514	1.37	8.9

Z-test significance at *.01, **.05

+Data was obtained from each community's police station records

++The homicide rate in España (.49) averaged annually is still half of that in Tegucigalpa (1.13) (Honduras Weekly, 2011).

Tables 1 and 2 illustrate that there are significant differences in crime between the two communities even when population is controlled for, and when there is a higher underreporting in España[2]. España citizens are significantly more afraid to go out at night due in large part to the high crime in their community. Additionally, when residents in both communities were asked to compare the delinquency rate of their pre-Mitch community with their current one, 96% of Divina residents believe it is less while only 34% of España citizens do. Based on the crime indicator alone, the difference in social health between the two

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[2] Through interviews with España and Divina leaders and residents, España citizens are less likely to report crimes as they trust the police less.

communities is alarming. Although there are many factors that affect crime rates, residents and leaders repeatedly pointed to different NGO practices as the significant single factor in affecting crime rates.

Often with any significant intervention there are unforeseen consequences. The Fundación does find a way to protect the community from crime especially murders—a major feat in the country with the highest murder rate per capita in the world outside of a warring country. Yet, the Fundación's paternalist approach to community development also may have created a more dependent community while the Red Cross partnership approach permitted a less secure but more independent environment. The following sections highlight which practices contributed to the broad differences in levels of community crime and dependency.

1. The Fundación and Divina Providencia

The Fundación believed their role in community building was that of a parent to a child. Doña Rosa, board member of the Fundación, would often use the metaphor of a parent caring for her child to define NGO/community relations. "The parent had to raise the child, teach the child right, accept the pushback of the child, and eventually let the child go." She believed the role of the Fundación was to teach the child through the sternness of formal and informal means of social control as well as through the encouragement and positive support of resident goals. Doña Rosa later related to me: "Many of the residents here never paid for or even had services such as water or trash. Many lived next to the river and would just throw their trash in the river and it would float away. We had to teach them not only how to put the trash in the trash can, but also how to learn to live for the wellbeing of everyone, not just themselves" (PC-Rosa, 2009). Divina residents had to be taught how to live in the community—leaving it to residents would, in the minds of the Fundación, lead to a regression to their previous life as it was in Tegucigalpa—a state of poverty, violence, distrust, crime, and moral failure.

Paternalism continues to be a contentious concept in literature ranging in diversity from philosophy to development. Drawing on the philosophical understanding of paternalism (Dworkin, 2010), I define it in the case of the Fundación in Divina adopting a specific strategy of paternalism with three characteristics: the NGO's involvement on behalf of the welfare of the Divina community, the organization's involvement of Divina leadership's autonomy, and the NGO's involvement without the consent of residents. A few examples will illustrate this development strategy.

Neither the Fundación staff nor residents would deny that the organization interceded into the affairs of the community (mostly for its beneficence) on an almost daily basis. During the work week, the organization had between 4-5 employees working in the office located a hundred metres from the central park of the community. The employees, a secretary, an accountant, an engineer and two social workers, were constantly working on projects for the community. An office worker, Kara, interacted with each head of household on a monthly basis as they came to the office to pay a mortgage. The engineer, Santiago, was constantly working throughout the community, directing the repair of a water pipe, building a new fence, or designing a new soccer field for the high school on the other side of town. Berta and Oscar, the social workers, not only acted as intermediary between the Fundación and residents, they also solved problems (such as arguments between neighbours, fighting adolescents, or bridging political rivalries), initiated new capacity-building classes, and encouraged civic participation. In addition to the

full-time staff, the Fundación had also brought in a number of specialists over the years to encourage startups of micro-enterprises, community development initiatives, and classes. From tortilla making, to sewing, to welding, to growing and selling *pastes* (luffa-like plants), the NGO worked closely with other organizations to bring in economic opportunities for residents.

This integrated management by the Fundación also bleeds into community autonomy in its politics and decisions concerning the use of the community development fund. The Cómite Cívico Social (CCS), the political head of the community, was a form of community governance designed by the Fundación. Two of the seven members, the President and legal counsel of the CCS, are not voted on by the community but are two Fundación board members appointed by the Fundación board of directors. Although mostly symbolic, these two members hold two significant positions on the CCS, a point that creates anger among some residents.

An example of the conflict this created between the resident CCS representatives and the Fundación was illustrated in the ending of meetings between the CCS and the NGO. From the beginning of the community, the representatives of the CCS met with Fundación board members in Tegucigalpa on a monthly basis. This ended in 2008 with a disagreement about the implementation of a cell phone tower. The Fundación wanted to put in a tower, which would bring revenue to the Fundación for rental of the land. The residents did not want it because of the possible physical harm the constant cell signal might have on residents. Myra, a high level employee of the Fundación, explained that the resident representatives just stopped coming to the meetings. There was a disagreement, but the residents would not listen to the expert opinions about the safety of the tower; they were stubborn. On the resident side Victor, an interim board member of the CCS, explained: "The Fundación has changed over time. It has moved from a mission of solidarity and humanitarianism to a realistic and mercantilist approach to the community." The cell phone tower is only a single example of the community pushing back against the will of the Fundación.

The Fundación also interferes in the community development fund. Even as the fund is financed by resident mortgage payments, it is the Fundación board, not the CCS or the community, that decides which projects to pursue with the funds. In addition, the Fundación has withheld from public knowledge how much money is in the fund and what it has been spent on throughout the life of the community, leaving residents to wonder where exactly all of their payments have been going.

In sum, the Fundación has created and upholds a paternalistic philosophy and practices toward Divina Providencia. The organization continues to intercede in the political, social, and economic aspects of Divina's development. From the Fundación's viewpoint, their work is seen as necessary and beneficial. From the residents' perspective, the Fundación is often controlling and overstepping its role. A more objective standpoint illustrates that the Fundación's paternalism may have been one of the most significant and beneficial factors in the long-term social health of Divina.

Since the hurricane the Fundación has played a major role in the lives of Divina community members. The NGO was a consistent and strong presence and intervened in the social aspects of community life, encouraged economic development and even used the mortgage payment as a social control mechanism (the Fundación took homes away from residents who sold drugs [who also were not paying their

mortgage], were unwilling to pay their mortgage, or who were "bad influences" on the community). According to staff from both of the NGOs, police officers, and residents from both communities, it was this involvement that protected the community from the encroachment of crime. HRC however took a different approach and therefore had different results.

2. The Red Cross of Honduras and Ciudad España

In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, the Honduran Red Cross, along with its international partners, were the first on the scene with emergency relief and aid. As hours turned into days and days into weeks, the organization quickly put up large groupings of temporary housing, called *macro-albergues,* for survivors who had been displaced. These wood and plastic shelters became home to thousands of survivors in the major cities. While working in the *macro-albergues*, the HRC was asked by the government to build a new housing settlement for survivors in and around the Tegucigalpa metro area. They initially refused on account that it was not their work to do community development (PC-Naomi, 2008). Faced with such overwhelming need, however, the HRC agreed and spoke with its international partners, notably the Red Cross of Spain, Switzerland, and the United States. With this alliance and land donated by the government in the Valle de Amarateca, Ciudad España was born (RCH, 2004).

As noted in the Ciudad España Plan, the goal of the HRC was: "A comprehensive intervention aimed at developing a new, safe and healthy sustainable community" for survivors of Hurricane Mitch. The HRC took a partnership approach to building España. NGO partnerships with citizens (sometimes called collaboration, coalition, accompaniment, and development alliances) can be summarized as: "a working relationship that is characterized by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate" (Lister, 2000: 228). The organization focused heavily on empowerment and capacity building, offering dozens of classes that provided different types of employable skills to survivors. Once the community was built and residents resettled, the HRC stepped back, respecting the autonomy of the community to manage itself. As Naomi explained to me: "We only give them (España) the orientation of how to do it and where to go. If they need something—advice, support—well, we give it to them, but we are not over them. It is only little by little [we provide] because the community is relatively young." She goes on to explain that their goal was community self-sustainability. By creating clear guidelines concerning their role, the organization wanted to continue to serve the people through support but also letting the community develop on its own terms.

According to Fiona, a HRC social worker and staffer in Ciudad España for the entirety of the development process, the motto in addressing resident concerns was the following: "We wanted residents to come to us for help. But we were not going to help them. We were only going to show them which other doors [e.g. government departments] they needed to knock on." Knowing that the organization was not going to be around forever, the HRC focuses on breaking any sense of dependency the community may have gained over the years. Their hands-off approach put the responsibility back onto the community, especially community leadership, with varying degrees of success.

Another clear practice of partnership was the decision by the HRC to use a participatory model to owning a home. Unlike the Fundación model in Divina in which residents take on a fifteen-year mortgage paid to the Fundación, the HRC had residents literally build the community from the ground up to encourage

greater commitment to the community and avoid incurring debt; with the extra disposable income residents would be able to spend it on living essentials rather than a mortgage or rent (PC-Naomi, 2008). One member from each family had to commit to working 40 hours a week for 40 weeks on building homes and infrastructure for España. Once their work was completed, residents would be given the keys to their new home through a lottery system. A similar housing development scheme was used by other organizations working in the Amarateca Valley including Habitat for Humanity and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.

The HRC staff also had different expectations of their role in the post-disaster recovery effort. Naomi and her co-worker Ignacio, who also ran social programs in España, (2009) noted that the HRC did not necessarily want to be involved in community development projects. They did implement a few social programs to build community, but as Ricardo (2010) describes, they were too late. The Red Cross "came to work in the social area the last two years, after all of the houses had been given away. [At that time] It was almost impossible to make people think in a different way." A community culture had been created and the moment to change (or create) resident's expectations and vision of community had passed, leaving people to return to previous ways of doing things. In addition, the organization was involved in multiple community development projects throughout the country; indeed, after Hurricane Mitch, the different international arms of the Red Cross through HRC had worked in over 500 projects helping more than 1,000,000 citizens from 1998-2008 (IFRC, 2008). Unlike the Fundación which directed their energies at only one project, the HRC was spread thin in service to multiple communities.

A final illustration of the partnership paradigm was the HRC's non-interference with España leadership. Implementing the most widely used political setup in Honduras, España residents wanted a *patronato* (similar to a board of directors) to run their community. Made up of seven members, it is a winner-take-all slate system. While returning democracy to the hands of the people is a great idea in theory, it seems that España may not have been ready for such a system, as general malaise and corruption soon plagued the administration. In speaking with the longest serving board member of the *patronato*, Ricardo, he explained that the current appointed officials have done little to improve the community. This was echoed by multiple other residents I interviewed and anchored by the fact that although the *patronato* was supposed to hold elections in 2008, the community had no leadership until elections were held in early 2011. Additionally, members of the *patronato* engaged in corrupt dealings, stealing from the community coffers in 2006 and more recently from the water works fund in 2009-2010. Even though the España community was far less dependent on an outside organization for resources and support, it also had to wrestle with significant governing inefficacy that Divina did not.

Disorganization and corruption have not been the only problems. As noted above, there is a major difference in both the number of common and violent crimes committed in each community; there is also residents' feeling of security. Maritza, an España resident since the beginning, explained that "We always leave someone in our house. If my mom, my sister, or I were not here, they would break in and steal everything." She has reason to be concerned. There has been an average of two murders per year in the community, the Methodist church has been vandalized and broken into and even the police have been assaulted and hospitalized by residents (PC-Eduardo, 2009; PC-Officer Tomas, 2009). Gangs also had a strong presence in España until the government in 2004-2005, at the request of the patronato, raided the community and took many known gang members to prison (PC-Ricardo, 2010). Born from this was the

community's negative reputation. Tegucigalpa residents continue to be afraid to visit or even having their car break down in the Amarateca Valley as they are concerned about being robbed or perhaps worse (PC-Santiago, 2008).

The HRC of Honduras utilized a partnership development strategy that also had strengths and weaknesses in affecting community social health. While avoiding dependency and encouraging citizen participation, the actions of residents illustrate that greater involvement by the organization may have been beneficial. However, without strong oversight, a long-term involvement strategy, significant engagement in all aspects of community life (especially politics), and a strong social control mechanism to evict problem residents, the Red Cross could not prevent the encroachment of violence and crime into the community. This is not to say they did not try, but the overarching philosophy was to empower/partner and not to use their power to impose social order.

H. Resident opinions about the NGO

To further illustrate the particular nature of the relationship between NGO and resident, I surveyed residents in seven new intentional communities concerning how they felt about the sponsoring organization. The questions were designed to recognize different aspects of the resident's opinions about the organization's role vis-à-vis paternal/partnership development spectrum. All questions were statistically significant as illustrated by the standard (Z) score. Below are my findings.

Table 3. In the last few years, do you wish the NGO would have:

	Left as soon as possible	Had less influence	Had the same influence	Had greater influence
Divina (N=441)	7%	13%**	34%	46%**
España (N=447)	7%	5%	29%	60%
Average of five communities (N=932)	7%	4%	33%	56%

Z-test significance at *.01, **.05 compared to the average of five communities

Table 3 highlights the desire of Divina residents for the Fundación to have had less influence within the community than the average of the six other communities. Indeed, more than 2.5 times more residents had wished the Fundación played a lesser role in community affairs than Ciudad España (it was also significantly higher than any one community). This sentiment is supported by many informal conversations I had with members who feel the Fundación has interfered in community issues and/or overstayed its welcome and should move on. On the other hand, residents in España would have liked the HRC to have had a greater influence in the community, highlighting that the partnership could have been strengthened.

Table 4. Have you had problems with the organization?

	No	Yes
Divina (N=447)	91%*	9%
España (N=503)	98%	2%
Average of other five communities (N=959)	96%	4%

Z-test significance at *.01 compared to the average of five communities

Similarly, Table 4 illustrates that a significantly larger percentage of residents have had problems with the Fundación than España residents with the HRC. Although this could have been for many reasons, the four most common explanations I heard from members were: 1. having to pay the mortgage when they had no money; 2. the lack of transparency by the organization in its financial accounting; 3. the poor treatment of some residents by the Fundación, especially those who have been evicted; 4. the religious nature of the organization and its treatment of non-Catholics. Even though Divina as a whole had higher social health indicators (especially lower crime) than España, individuals still had to wrestle with the Fundación concerning the issues noted above. España residents, however, had very few problems with the HRC and reported the fewest problems of any community studied.

Table 5. Are you concerned that the organization can take away your home for your poor[1] behaviour in the community?

	No	Yes
Divina (N=443)	28%*	72%
España (N=495)	40%*	60%
Average of other five communities (N=949)	49%	51%

Z-test significance at *.01 compared to the average of five communities

Finally, Table 5 underlines the apprehension residents feel with the Fundación. Almost three-quarters of the community are concerned that the Fundación will evict them for behavioural issues (such as selling alcohol in the communities, domestic violence, selling their home, maintaining a billiards hall, gambling, not paying their mortgage, etc.). This is in contrast to just over half of residents from the other communities on average (this is also true of the communities individually). The Fundación maintains a level of social control over residents that is seen on their own part as benevolent but understood by residents as an impediment to their autonomy. The fear that their house could be taken away is very tangible, as it has happened to residents in the past. Yet, España residents are significantly less concerned,

even though residents have also had homes taken away. The reasons for this are not completely clear, though it seems that the eviction process and the mortgage payments play significant roles in their experience.

I. Lessons for future post-disaster resettlement as an adaptation strategy

There are four concrete lessons to be drawn from this comparative case study. First, on a general level, it appears that resettlement works. With the help of the Fundación and the Red Cross, survivors were able to move out of the *macro-albergues* not to return to unsafe hillsides or along high-risk river banks but rather to well-planned and disaster-safe communities. When residents were asked if their lives today were worse, the same, or better than before Mitch, a substantial number believed their lives were better and at least 84% in any given community believed it was the same or better. Although Divina and España were different within this question, the high positive response to the question illustrates a significant satisfaction. In both the interviews and the surveys, residents were happy to have the opportunity to own a home and to have a healthier natural and social environment than in Tegucigalpa[3]. While resettlement is always a contentious process (Oliver-Smith, 2006), as an adaptation strategy it may be a significant way to mitigate future vulnerability[4].

Graph 1. Life Improvement
Generally, is your life situation worse, the same, or better than before Hurricane Mitch?
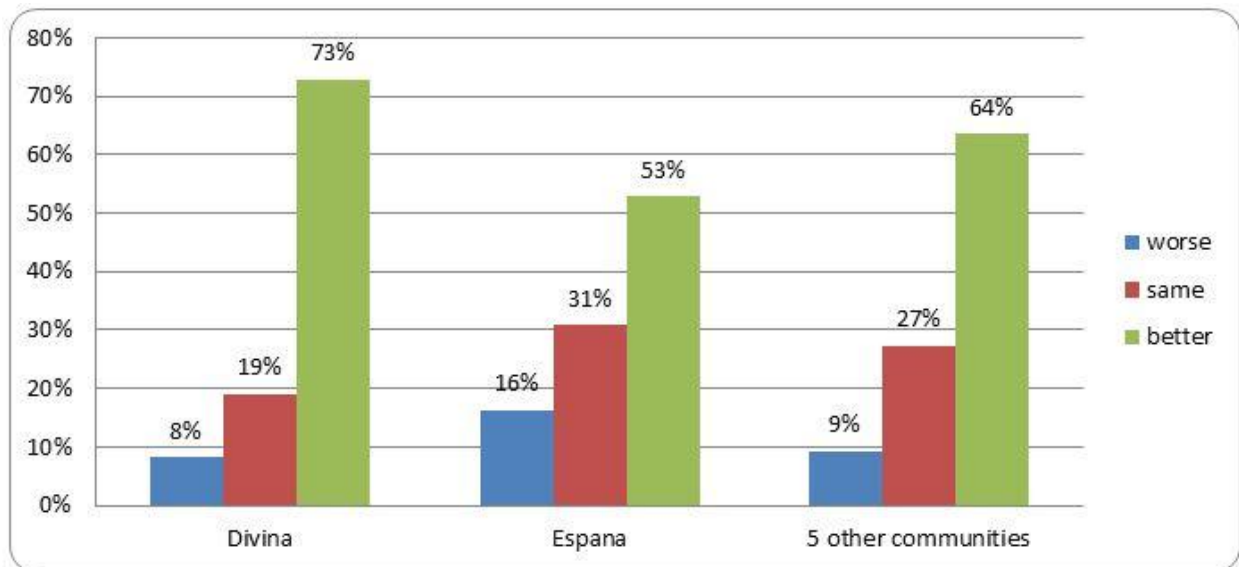
Second, fragile states like Honduras are highly vulnerable to a lack of capacity to deal with disaster recovery, and may regularly be forced to hand over responsibility to a NGO. This can create stratified development among communities, which lack broader oversight by the state. A possible preventative measure would be to have a government-point person maintain contact with all NGOs working in

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[3] The Tegucigalpa metro area's water, land, and air are very polluted. Since the city sits in a valley, low-lying smog is not uncommon. Socially, much of the city is unsafe after dark for Honduran or foreigner.
[4] However, resettlement must be done well. As noted earlier the building of homes and leaving residents to their own devices is not a successful model.

resettlement and conduct quarterly meetings with staff to share strategies and maintain common guiding principles in the development process. Having this in place before a disaster occurred would potentially mitigate the narrow organizational focus (based on donor desires) of each NGO.

Third, NGOs may be the right agents to resettle displaced populations in fragile states. In the case of Honduras, both organizations were efficient and transparent with their resources (the HRC to international Red Cross donors and the Fundación to the Honduran government). As noted earlier, Honduras has one of the highest corruption rates in the world, and it is unlikely that with the same resources the government could have done a better job than each NGO. The recent United Nations World Conference on Reconstruction (Migiro, 2011) found that "well-planned and coordinated recovery achieves better results at lower cost, and supports sustainability and disaster-resilience. Leadership, partnership and coordinated support from the international community are essential to success". This was the case in Honduras. Lastly, each NGO was well connected to the communities; each organization was present for multiple years, they implemented many grassroots social programs for community building and they were available for immediate advice and assistance for residents. With a state unable to meet the needs of its population, NGOs were a positive and active force in resettling survivors.

Yet there is also risk involved. Independent development of communities without a centralized and shared vision can mean a messier and stratified development for residents in these intentional communities. The paternalist work of the Fundación did lead to better social health outcomes as seen in crime rates. The organization also had more success in creating collective efficacy, community participation, and a unified vision for the future of the community (Alaniz, 2011). At the same time, the highly structured organization and strong influence of the NGO in all areas of social, political, and economic life led to some degree of dependency by residents on the organization, which did not happen in Ciudad España. Where the balancing point is (or margin of error) concerning NGO involvement and community participation, at least in these cases, is complicated and needs further research.

In addition, without an umbrella reconstruction plan, it is unlikely that organizations will obtain similar levels of social health (however this is defined) within their resulting communities. An additional problem is the nature of resettlement. Within the context of a fragile state and without the benefit of centralized planning, the Valle de Amarateca in Honduras saw ad hoc management and planning by NGOs. When I asked Fundación and HRC staff what type of philosophy or theory they were drawing upon for community development, both exclaimed that they were drawing on none—they were doing the best they could with what they knew (PC-Rosa, 2009; PC-Naomi, 2008). This lack of holistic vision and 'winging it' can lead to significant future problems, the least of which is a stratification of development. Depending on which community a survivor ended up in, as in the case of these communities, their life chances may be significantly different. The long-term consequences of this difference on the next generation will arguably also be significant (Shanahan and Macmillan, 2008).

Finally, NGOs can also work at odds with each other. An example of this is the conflict between whether to give people their homes (Habitat), make people work 40-hour weeks for their homes (HRC), or make people pay a fifteen-year mortgage on their homes (Fundación). Since the three communities are located within five miles of one another, people talk and frustrations rise concerning the work versus pay model for their 'donated' homes. Had the organizations strategized together, there might have been inherent

benefits such as implementing cost-cutting measures (buying in bulk), sharing best practices, and defining a holistic vision for the Valle instead of creating three different agendas. Also, unlike re-building in a neighbourhood, relocated survivors are forced to rely almost completely on the support of relief agencies for their livelihood. This dependency on an organization can limit residents' ability to voice opposition. A final consideration is that NGOs historically have been found not to be sustainable in the long-run (Edwards, 1999; Edwards and Hulme, 1996a). NGOs are limited by resources, donor demands, and time; they must be forward thinking on how to create a healthy 'exit strategy' so their work is sustainable.

J. Conclusion

In conclusion, this comparative case study of two intentional communities built for resettled survivors of Hurricane Mitch offers numerous generalizable lessons for other fragile states. As illustrated above, when a strong state is not present, NGOs have broader opportunity to shape their prospective communities as they see fit, creating stratification among disaster resettlements. As was the case in the Valle de Amarateca, Divina and España had significantly different outcomes. Divina, due in part to differences in philosophy, time commitment and resource allocation and management, had significantly better long-term social health than its counterpart España, even though they had similar material inputs and drew residents from the same pool of survivors.

Changes in growing economic vulnerability, weakening of undeveloped nation-states, and growing natural vulnerability to disasters, have created a perfect storm of high disaster risk. Since there is only so much that can be done to mitigate these issues, scholars and NGOs must consider future post-disaster adaptation strategies. This study illustrates that although some difference in community development is a natural outcome, resettlement may be a plausible strategy that mitigates future vulnerability and provides survivors with a better life. If a country chooses to hand over the relocation of survivors to NGOs, a secondary recommendation is to encourage NGOs to work together to share strategies and ideas concerning philosophy and best practice, leading to a more standardized recovery process (and hopefully a healthier outcome). At the very least, a more standardized process will enable organizations to share ideas, resources, possible costs, and avoid conflict that may come up between communities and their respective organizations.

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