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Culture Production and Social Networks
Case Studies of Local Churches in
Former Refugee and Displaced Persons Communities
in Nicaragua and El Salvador

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CAFTA	Central American Free Trade Agreement
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DHP	Human Development Project
FMLN	Faribundo Martí National Liberation
MIPIC	Pentecostal Mission of Christian Churches
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UCA	University of Central America

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates how culture is produced and transmitted within communities populated by former Central American refugees and internally displaced peoples. Local churches in these communities produce culture and form social networks that powerfully counteract the social problems created by the region's civil wars and exacerbated by poverty. Using a comparative case study approach, I argue that local churches build social capital, construct theological coping mechanisms to deal with the psychological and emotional scars of war, and have a positive impact on the economic development of communities by influencing both structure and agency.

Culture Production and Social Networks
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I. INTRODUCTION

The Central American region was convulsed by civil wars throughout the 1980s. In many cases the combat took place in rural areas; the strategy of choice was low-intensity warfare. High numbers of civilian casualties resulted, and enormous numbers of people were displaced; they either relocated within their countries or crossed national borders in search of safety. Mercifully, the 1990s brought a close to the wars in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, and people began to repopulate the war ravaged zones. Problems, however, still persist, as poverty compounds the difficulties brought by the war and the social dislocations, both of which severely damaged the social fabric of these communities.

In spite of these grim realities, there are some actors which provide hope to the affected communities. Political parties, international NGOs, and sometimes governments provide positive forms of intervention. However, this paper will focus on the impact of local churches in communities populated by former Central American refugee and displaced people, and will argue that the culture that these churches produce powerfully counteracts social problems that remain from the war, which are exacerbated by poverty.

In order to present this argument, I have structured the paper as follows. I begin with a theory section, which focuses on the link between networks and culture as the critical area for social change, and explain how local churches form networks and produce culture within them. Second, I explain the methodology I employed to carry out the study. Third, I introduce the empirical data through presenting the two cases that comprise this research. Fourth, I present three results of my study: 1) local churches build social capital in former refugee and displaced peoples communities; 2) local churches interface with the problems of post-conflict societies by constructing theologies of reconciliation; and 3) local churches have a positive impact on the economic development of communities by influencing both structure and agency. Finally, I conclude with ideas about the relevance of this work to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) involved in refugee work.

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II. THEORY

The intersection of culture and social networks affords unique insights into communities populated by former refugee and displaced peoples in Central America. Culture points us to the symbols, behavioral patterns, motivations, and goals that constitute the social interaction taking place inside these communities. Social networks help us conceptualize the kinds of social structures that run through these communities and, occasionally, connect them to the outside world.

A. Culture Production, Cultural Products

The idea of culture production has its roots in one of the original premises of sociology: That society is the source of ideas, rather than ideas having an independent existence (Wuthnow 1994). Support among scholars for this premise ebbed and flowed over the course of the last century, but in recent decades new and solid foundations have been established. Culture production, as understood in this study, is grounded in the idea that society and culture are human products that continuously act back upon their producer(s). In this dialectical process there can be no social reality apart from humans, even as humans are also a product of their society (Berger 1967; Durkheim 1912).

Examination of the links between the ‘public’ and ‘private’ spheres of modern life makes this concept more clear. Robert Wuthnow (1994) states that “a public identity, or aspects of the collectivity in which one resides, can be internalized, becoming part of one’s personal self-concept as well. Conversely, people who shared something intimate from their private experiences are externalizing that event, turning it into the shared history of the collectivity.” (Wuthnow 1994, p.10).

Wuthnow’s illustration draws attention to the fact that both the internal world of the individual and the external, public world of the community participate in what Peter Berger refers to as ‘world-building’, or culture production (Berger 1967). This is an involuntary process, in the sense that humans can only avoid world-building through death, but there is usually a high degree of intentionality about the kind of cultural production that occurs and the strategies that are used.

In spite of this intentionality, cultural products always carry both intended and unintended consequences (Berger 1967; Wuthnow 1994). Berger explains this fact through the example of language:

> Man invents a language and then finds that both his speaking and his thinking are dominated by its grammar. Man produces values and discovers that he feels guilt when he contravenes them. Man concocts institutions, which come to confront him as powerfully controlling and even menacing constellations of the external world (Berger 1967 p.9).

This paper will examine some consequences of cultural production, both intended and unintended, in two different case studies.

While all humans and all human constructions produce culture, some producers influence the overall culture of a society in more powerful ways. Who or what might possess this kind of cultural influence is of primary interest to this study. Wuthnow suggests that in determining the answer to this question, one must look at the culture that has been produced and discern how it was possible for agents to be creators. Often, the most powerful cultural producers are the coordinated efforts of several agents, and important aspects include provision of funding, physical space, and other kinds of resources. Social context must also be taken into account, as different social transitions may occur and society or the economy may create openings for certain actors to be especially influential.

B. Social Networks

While culture producers may have a concrete location, their products are negotiated, traded, and re-created along social ties and networks within the community. Ann Mische (2003) explains that networks are composed of relationships that are formulated and maintained by communication. Communication is in turn carried out through various forms of language. Language is seen as the foundation of "a towering edifice of symbols that permeate every aspect of his life," (Berger 1967 p. 6). For this reason, communication is always culturally specific, and culturally formulated communication mechanisms are what constitute social networks.

Social networks provide the space in which ideas, rituals, authorities, experiences, and practices—all of the things that make up culture—can be generated and dispersed throughout the collective. Mische explains that "social networks are seen not merely as locations for, or conduits of, cultural formations, but rather as *composed of* culturally constituted processes of communicative interaction," (Mische 2003 p. 258).

Many different networks exist in all social contexts; these networks are composed by specific aspects of culture, and may overlap one another as they compete for space. Network participants engage in multiple networks simultaneously, constantly reproducing or subtly changing the cultures that constitute these networks through their own social interaction. Mische states that network members "engage in myriad, complex negotiations among the multiple dimensions of ongoing involvements, which are often embedded in overlapping network formations," (Mische 2003 p. 258).

Content, style and strategies of communication can differ dramatically among networks. As a result, cultures and networks also vary in quality, strength, and impact. Networks can complement one another or at least exist harmoniously in the same context. But networks also come into direct contradiction with one another. It is in these cases that certain norms will come to predominate a given milieu, while others will cease to exist. As Berger suggests, "there is an inherent logic that impels every *nomos* (culture) to expand into wider areas of meaning. If the ordering activity of society never attains totality, it may yet be described as totalizing," (Berger 1967 p. 20). The ultimate goal of a culture, states Berger, is to be taken for granted. If it achieves this status, "there occurs a merging of its meanings with what are considered to be the fundamental meanings inherent in the universe," (Berger1967 p.24).

C. Local Churches

Local churches often prove to be both powerful culture producers and instrumental in constructing local networks. Durkheim lays the theoretical principles for this by stating that "by seeming to strengthen the ties between the worshipper and his god, they really strengthen the ties that bind the individual to his society, since god is merely the symbolic expression of society," (Durkheim 1912, p.171). In the U.S., Robert Putnam notes that "religiosity rivals education as a powerful correlate of most forms of civic engagement," (Putnam 2000 p.67).[3]

Part of the influence enjoyed by local churches is derived from their organizational structure. Nancy Ammerman (2005) explains that within the United States all strains of religious traditions, from Mainline Protestants to Hindu Temples, conform to three basic organizational templates: congregations, denominations, and religious special purpose organizations. The congregational organizational template (most relevant to this study) is constituted by norms of religious worship, religious education for children, social activities or fellowship, and some sort of activity designed to benefit the larger community in which the congregation is located. This may take the form of providing material aid to people or sending a missionary to teach and preach. Almost all congregations also have a physical place that is set aside for worship.

Within this organizational form, churches internalize resources from their surrounding environment in order to produce or place culture in the objective (versus subjective) sphere. Resources that are imported allow the environment to influence the kind of culture production that occurs. Ammerman states that "when congregations gather to worship and educate each other in the faith, they draw on ideas and materials beyond what they themselves produce," and that through this process local churches "are shaped by cultural and organizational resources that stretch far beyond their four walls," (Ammerman 2005 p.69). Hymn books and educational materials are prime examples of these resources, as well as finances and time.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Using the Case Study Approach & Case Selection

The comparative case study approach engages the study of culture producers through a cross-unit comparison of multiple cases. Both qualitative and quantitative comparisons can be used (Garson 2005). This approach is particularly appropriate for exploratory

[3] The refugee literature is just beginning to pay attention to religion. In 2002, *The Journal of Refugee Studies* issued a special edition dedicated to religion and spirituality in forced migration. Co-ediors Elzbieta Gozdziak and Dianna Shandy state that although religion is often the source of persecution and is central to a refugee's identity, it does often does not figure in the protection of refugees. Further, in spite of the fact that religion "crosscuts the experiences of refugees at every stage of the refugee journey… there is relatively little attention to this subject in the forced migration literature" (Gozdziak and Shandy 2002, p.130).

studies, where categories can be discovered and questions can be framed which may be used to guide future, more comprehensive research projects.

Proper case selection is the critical first step for the comparative case study method. Representativeness is important, but is defined somewhat differently here than in a quantitative study; rather than being representative of the entire population or a subgroup of a population of, in this case, former refugee or displaced persons communities in Central America, case studies must be representative of its dimensions within theory (Garson 2005). Karl-Dieter Opp and Christiane Gern confirm this methodological approach, stating that a representative sample in the statistical sense "is not necessary for testing theoretical propositions" (Opp and Gern 1993). Limits do exist for representativeness defined in this way, namely that generalization should not be made beyond cases similar to the ones studied. Nonetheless, the theoretical value of the study and its usefulness for future research can still be significant.

This study couples the use of the comparative case methodology with a grounded theory approach, which calls for an inductive method of data analysis (Garson 2005). Initial categories and hypotheses, which were informed by the literature, did guide case selection and formed the initial investigative strategies. However, these were considered tentative and malleable throughout the data collection process so that more authentic categories and hypotheses could emerge from the data. This strategy is preferable to the alternative: a presentation of somewhat superficial categories that had been previously devised and imposed on the present study. The inductive approach also allows for a fresher contribution to the emerging literature.

Consistent with the comparative study approach, this study chose cases which permitted a comparison of different aspects of the primary independent variable: religion. One case has a significant evangelical presence, the other is almost exclusively Catholic. I sought to control interference from other variables by selecting communities that were similar in key respects. Both communities were created as a result of the civil wars of the 1980s; both communities are rural and relatively small (between 50-110 families); both communities possess a strong identity with the political left. There are, however, some significant exogenous differences aside from the religious variable, the primary one being that, in order to make this a regional rather than a national study, I selected an evangelical community from Nicaragua and a Catholic community from El Salvador.[4]

B. Methodological Strategy within the Community

Once the cases had been selected, I conducted my research within the communities using a systematic, two-tier interview strategy designed to yield both qualitative and quantitative data. I targeted the community leadership in the religious, political, and economic spheres with qualitative interviews, as well as secondary community leaders

[4] A claim that these two communities are representative of the population of former refugee or displaced persons communities that exist in Central America does not necessary follow from this study's 'representativeness'. However, it is likely that one can find similar communities to one or both of these throughout the region.

who were important to the communities' religious networks. I then followed the various networks linking each community to its broader context, conducting qualitative interviews with relevant government, NGO, religious, and business leaders (for example, I interviewed the Parish Priest responsible for 36 communities in Nicaragua, and the president of the umbrella organization to which the local cooperatives belong[5]). Some key leaders both inside and outside the communities were interviewed more than once.

In Santa Rosa, Nicaragua, I conducted 21 in-community qualitative interviews with 13 different respondents. I also conducted nine qualitative interviews with seven respondents outside of the community. In Nueva Trinidad, El Salvador, I conducted five qualitative interviews with four leaders in the community, as well as six interviews with five different entities beyond the community. I conducted fewer of these kinds of interviews in Nueva Trinidad because there were fewer independent organizations involved in the community. The hierarchy within organizations was also different, so that several people within one organization were interviewed within Santa Rosa, whereas this was unnecessary in Nueva Trinidad. In both communities, I also conducted participant observation in informal public settings, church services, cooperative meetings, NGO meetings, and community meetings.

To gather quantitative data, I conducted a survey based on a randomly selected population sample. In Santa Rosa, I interviewed 26 respondents representing 110 families. I went to every third or fourth house, varied the time of day I visited, and interviewed only heads of households (both husband and wife qualified as head of the household; they were selected in such a way that ensured random but equal representation of gender in the sample). In Nueva Trinidad I conducted 25 interviews in a community comprising 52 families. The selection strategy was the same, except that I interviewed heads of every other household instead of every third or fourth household.[6] These primarily quantitative surveys were also a source of additional qualitative data. Response rates near 100% were achieved in both communities by meeting with community leadership before beginning the interview process to clearly explain the goals of the project. In some cases, however, when my method of random selection would have called for a female to be chosen, the female asked that the male respond to the interview. In some cases I rely on census data or data received from the Organization of American States to confirm my own findings or provide certain social statistics for the two communities. Please See Table 1 for summary data concerning the quantitative survey sample.

Table 1: Descriptive Data for Quantitative Survey Sample

Town	N	Variables	Statistics
Santa Rosa	26	No. Male Respondents --------------	12 Males
		No. Female Respondents ------------	14 Females
		% Catholic Households ------------	35%

[5] Two cooperatives exist in the community, both of which are engaged primarily in the production of coffee beans. More will be said about the role of these cooperatives in the sections that follow.
[6] In both communities I was accompanied by a national or by someone who was well known to the community. Some statistical data were confirmed by recent census data or research done by the Organization of American States.

		% Evangelical Households ------- Average Age of Respondent --------- Total No. of Households in Town ---	65% 50.5 Years 110 Households
Nueva Trinidad	25	No. Male Respondents --------------- No. Female Respondents ------------ % Catholic Households ------------ % Evangelical Households ------- Average Age of Respondent -------- Total No. of Households in Town ---	15 Males 10 Females 96% 4% 48.1 Years 52 Households
Totals	51	No. Male Respondents --------------- No. Female Respondents ------------ % Catholic Households ----------- % Evangelical Households ------ Average Age of Respondent -------- Total No. of Households -------------	27 Males 24 Females 65% 35% 49.3 Years 162 Households

C. Development of Survey Instrument

I developed the survey instrument to include questions which targeted my areas of interest. Some questions I borrowed from previous surveys interested in these variables; other questions I developed for this specific project. I used the same survey instrument in both communities; it covered a range of issues, including family, social, economic, religious, civic, professional, personal history relating to the war, land ownership, education, and migration. The basic similarities of these two war-torn communities and the adherence in the survey to the more fundamental aspects of life made the use of the same survey instrument appropriate. The categories that emerged in each community reflected these similarities, but were not identical to one another. In the evangelical case study, four categories emerged: (1) the empowering nature of their ascetic and entrepreneurial tendencies, 2) the ability to generate trust or social capital, 3) skills building exercises; and 4) the theology of forgiveness. The categories that emerged in the Jesuit-influenced Catholic case study were: 1) creation of symbols; 2) social capital and boundary creation; 3) justice theology; and 4) educational philosophy and opportunities.

IV. DATA

In this section I present the data I collected in the field. First, I introduce the two case studies. I then demonstrate the embedded nature of the local churches within the community. Finally, I discuss the kinds of networks that extend outside of the two communities.

A. Case 1: Santa Rosa, Nicaragua

1. Origins of a Displaced Community

In 1982 the Sandinista army evacuated families from the mountainous war zones of northern Nicaragua. After several weeks in makeshift camps, the Sandinistas placed these families on farmland that had recently been confiscated from a large land owner. In order to increase the families' safety (they were known to be Sandinista sympathizers), the makeshift camp/community was placed under military control. However, in spite of this precaution, the Contras succeeded in penetrating the community twice—burning it to the ground on each occasion.

The forced evacuation and subsequent Contra invasions inflicted both physical and psychological wounds on the new residents. In addition to the community members who were killed or wounded during the attacks, children in the community experienced malnutrition and lack of health care access. The psychological wounds were just as grave, with several respondents witnessing the torturing and death of family members.

2. Santa Rosa's Current Political Economy

Today, Santa Rosa's political atmosphere remains shaped by the experience of the war. More than 95% of the community identify as Sandinistas. Pictures of Daniel Ortega and Che Gueverra are found on living room walls or on t-shirts, and the red and black Sandinista flags are painted on buildings or are flying from even the most improbable perches. References to the triumph of 1979, when the Sandinistas toppled the oppressive Somoza regime, are common in the community discourse. Yet, while party support is strong and ex-Sandinista soldiers provide informal political leadership, there is not much formal political activity in the community. According to Juan Pablo, a Sandinista and a community leader, the local Sandinista chapter is "a little disorganized in this moment," and they have not had a meeting in quite some time.[7]

Santa Rosa's economy is based on coffee and banana exportation, as well as some subsistence farming. A modicum of income stability is provided through the Fair Trade Market, where much of their coffee is sold, and through organic certification, which a number community members have also received. Their shade-grown coffee is produced by interspersing large, leafy banana trees throughout their coffee crop. The bananas provide an additional income and are sold in a market near Managua.

Two cooperatives help to organize the community's products and provide economies of scale. Everyone who owns land is a member of one or the other cooperatives; a typical plot is about 5 manzanas, but size varies. Both men and women own land; in total, there are 71 members of the two cooperatives[8], although some members live a short distance

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[7] This might partly be explained by the timing of this study; the research was conducted in the middle of the election cycle, and thus at the low point of political activity.

[8] This does not mean that 71 of the 110 households in Santa Rosa had a landowner. Ten of the households possessed two landowners (both the husband and the wife owned separate plots and were cooperative

from Santa Rosa. Those who do not own land work as day laborers either for a cooperative member (which is usually preferred) or for a larger farm owner in the region. Day laborers generally make about $2/day.[9]
Basic consumption is subject to market volatilities in ways that income is not—in 2004 the price of all basic foodstuffs that are transported into the community rose by significant percentages as a result of the increase in the cost of crude oil. This forced a number of families to go without one of their normal staples (rice, but not beans, for example, or vice versa).

3. Religion in Santa Rosa

The religious scene in Santa Rosa is dominated by a Pentecostal, evangelical church called Faro Divino and a smaller Pentecostal church about 100 yards down the road. Of survey respondents who declared a religion, 65% were evangelicals; 70% of respondents claimed that their families attended an evangelical church.

The remaining 30-35% of the community either attend the small Catholic chapel in the community or identify as non-religious (the second group is very small). Yet even these groups are heavily affected by the culture production of Faro Divino, which operates in a way that echoes Parsonian theory (Parsons 1964)[10]. Parsons suggested that, in contrast to the strategy employed by the medieval Catholic Church, Protestants do not seek to establish formal and/or structural authority over an entire society. Rather, they retreat from society and form a cultural ethos within the church. Once established, these values and ideas are able to infiltrate the rest of the community and its structures. In the case of Santa Rosa this is evident in a variety of ways, but it was perhaps never more evident than when Santiago, the Catholic lay leader in Santa Rosa told me that Catholics were not supposed to drink or smoke (although he admitted that they were a bit disobedient on these counts). Father Danilo, the priest who oversees this community but rarely visits, as he must tend to 35 other communities as well, was quite amazed by this, and assured me that Santiago was not representing a Catholic teaching. Rather, he was incorporating a hallmark of evangelical Pentecostalism into his own tradition.

Nonetheless, a residual effect of Catholic culture on the evangelical church in Santa Rosa is also evident. Most evangelicals are converts from Catholicism, and while their conversion allows them to leave important religious symbols and practices behind, more subconscious Catholic ways of organization and interaction remain in their world-

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members independent of the other's status) and some cooperative members lived a short distance outside of Santa Rosa. Finally, one Santa Rosa resident owned land and was not a cooperative member.

[9] The minimum wage in Nicaragua is about twice that, but no farm laborers ever receive minimum wage. One respondent told me that if he as an employee, or any other employee, for that matter, were to claim a right to minimum wage, he would be immediately fired.

[10] Parsons does not mention that the congregation of John Calvin himself, as well as the German Reformation (in which believers had to follow the priest) more closely resembled the medieval Catholic organizational pattern rather than the Protestant strategy Parsons outlines, and which is applicable to the Santa Rosa context.

building practices. These points of religious cross-pollination include strong pastoral leadership and respect for the pastorate, as well as a commitment to the poor.

B. Case 2: Nueva Trinidad

1. Origins of a Repopulated Community

The northern regions of El Salvador experienced social unrest in the 1960s. Land-owning elites controlled almost all of the wealth in the region; conflict between them and their workers in the *latifundia* system[11] as well as small landowners was becoming increasingly hostile. Two new actors entered the region in the early 1970s: Jesuit priests, who carried liberation theology, and the Faribundo Martí National Liberation (FMLN), which took shape during this time and grew rapidly in strength and influence. Further agitation in the region resulted, and in the late '70s the government sent troops to quell the uprisings. The massacres that ensued have been well-recorded; our interest lies with those who escaped across the border into Honduras, and after being sheltered or put into hiding in a variety of border towns, eventually landed in an United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) refugee camp called Mesa Verde.

Founded in 1981, the Mesa Verde, Honduras camp quickly became the size of a small town. It was originally constructed for 2,000 inhabitants, but by 1984, 10,300 refugees were living there (Guest 1985). Issues such as malnutrition and infant mortality were managed adequately, in spite of the close quarters. To maintain orderliness, the refugees, many of whom had either come alone or with just a few family members, were placed into ten-house units, each of which had a 'coordinator'. These units became small neighborhoods that eventually were asked to plan together how they might one day return to El Salvador as unified groups.

Their return, however, tarried longer than most had ever imagined. Many stayed at Mesa Verde for 10 years or more; people married and had children, and children became young adults without ever leaving the camp. The UNHCR provided an elementary school; since further education was not an option, some students decided to go through 6th grade several times (it is unlikely, however, they would have advanced even that far in their original communities). Mesa Verde also provided rich informal educational opportunities because of the unceasing Jesuit presence, as well as interaction the refugees had with numerous other international development workers in the camp. Such international exposure was a novelty for people who hailed from isolated, rural areas, and over the course of time these relationships and experiences provided—especially to the young people—the ability to understand and interact with a wider world.

Toward the end of the 1980s a real end to the war became imaginable. Those managing both the war and the international aid began to strategize accordingly. Thus, refugees felt pressure from two different sources to return to El Salvador. The first source was the FMLN; the refugee camp was comprised only of *FMLNistas*, and FMLN military leaders

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[11] The *latifundia* system dominated Latin America and was considered the most important form of economic organization in the 19th century. Simply put, the system concentrated land and labor into the hands of the elites, and allowed them to develop and harvest export-oriented crops.

hoped to improve their negotiating position by repopulating the still-contested areas in the north with their supporters. The second source was the UNHCR. In 1989-90, Mesa Grande experienced large financial cuts. The NGOs that were subcontracted by the UNHCR to do the day-to-day camp administration began to receive only half of the promised UNHCR funding. Refugees also complained that foodstuffs and other basic necessities were becoming scarce. Official UNHCR policy remained the same: people could voluntarily leave or stay. However, life in the camp became increasingly uncomfortable (Interview with David Martin 2004).

Within this context, a group of 50 families decided in 1991 to leave Mesa Verde and repopulate a town called Nueva Trinidad. Although most had lived in other locations previous to their refugee experience, they embraced Nueva Trinidad as their new and permanent home. However, like many other groups in the camp, they moved back before the war was over, and several people who were either born in the refugee camp or had waited patiently for more than 10 years before moving back were killed within days of their arrival.

2. Nueva Trinidad's Current Political Economy & Its Fusion with Religion

Issues of security were eventually resolved and the former refugees began to rebuild both their lives and community. Their efforts were buoyed by both the encouragement and the financial assistance of the international community. Since 1992, houses, streets, community centers, schools, water systems, electricity, phone lines, a medical clinic, and an immaculate soccer field have been constructed, each marking another accomplishment for the Nueva Trinidad residents.

The rebuilding effort has also included a reconstruction of the community's social identity. Politics and religion have been fused together, as liberation theology melds well with socialist ideology. Community leadership is united in this fusion, with leaders of the various social spheres mutually supporting each other. During Catholic Mass, for example, the priest voiced anti-free trade sentiment and preached about how communities can distribute resources more equally, explaining that the theology of liberation demands such equality. Nueva Trinidad's mayor articulated the critical role of the Catholic Church in promoting the family and protecting the youth from materialistic influences. An education professional offered acidic comments about the current (rightist) government and then extolled the virtues of liberation theology and its importance to the entire community. The general population is just as united as the leadership: 100% of Nueva Trinidad's residents support the FMLN, and all but two community members (both of whom have converted to evangelicalism within the last three years) are Catholic.

Nueva Trinidad's economy is structured on and sustained by international donations they receive for public works projects (i.e., the schools, community centers, etc.). Money is usually channeled through the mayor's office, and generates jobs for community members in the areas of brick masonry or other manual labor. Other forms of employment are also generated; one community member, for example, opened a repair shop for machines and tools used in construction.

These local government-run public works projects make up nearly the entirety of Nueva Trinidad's economy; they are buttressed only by subsistence farming. Changes, though, may be on the horizon for this economic model. One could argue that Nueva Trinidad already has too many public buildings and more projects like these cannot be justified. Also, the regional economic climate appears set to change with the passage of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Some economic actors in the community are beginning to position themselves in anticipation of these changes, but it is still too early to tell exactly what the impact on the community will be.

C. Church Embeddedness in Santa Rosa and Nueva Trinidad: Network Analysis

In order to see more clearly how churches produce culture in these communities, I analyze the extent to which different social institutions are embedded in the public spheres of Santa Rosa and Nueva Trinidad.

1. Network Analysis within the Public Arena

When examining social networks of organizations within the public sphere, the concept of embeddedness becomes useful. Embeddedness indicates how closely tied to other entities in a community one agent might be. In order to ascertain which social organizations in Nueva Trinidad and Santa Rosa are most deeply embedded in their communities, I examine two levels of social networks. First, I examine the social networks among 'rank-and-file' community members. Second, I test who the community perceives their leaders to be, and examine the leaders' organizational affiliations. Both levels of analysis show that local churches dominate the public arenas of Santa Rosa and Nueva Trinidad.

As established in the theory section, multiple social networks link community members to one another, and each of these networks is composed of culture. In the public arena, the organization that establishes the strongest networks is likely to produce the dominant culture in that arena. Social networks among 'normal' or rank-and-file community members serve to embed an organization in a community. The more ties that members of an organization have to other organizations, the more deeply embedded their organization will be.

Social networks among community and organizational leaders also matter in culture production. An organization has more influence in a community if its leaders are also perceived to be community leaders. Conversely, organizations with only weak ties to the community leadership network run the danger of becoming marginalized (Cornwell and Harrison 2004).

Rank-and file embeddedness, according to Cornwell and Harrison, "is primarily uncoordinated, unplanned, and unstrategized," (Cornwell and Harrison 2004 p. 864). These authors, whose study's primary focus is labor unions, point out that in spite of the apparent disorganization, such ties can foster a sense of solidarity, contribute to community cohesiveness, promote feelings of mutual protection, trust, and friendship and produce shared feelings and norms.

The level of an organization's embeddedness matters for two reasons. First, it serves to strengthen the organization. Second, it serves to increase an organization's contribution to the community. "As union members become more embedded in the organizational community, solidarity within the community can be increasingly attributed to unions," (Cornwell & Harrison 2004 p. 865). In this study, I will assume that the same is true of churches as is true for unions. Interestingly, in spite of their focus on unions, Cornwell and Harrison found that churches were "by far" the most embedded type of organization in their US-based study. (Cornwell & Harrison 2004 p.870).

2. Methodology

I borrow and simplify the model of network analysis devised by Cornwell and Harrison (2004) to measure the networks in Santa Rosa and Nueva Trinidad. I measure individual-to-organization ties; I do not directly measure organization-to-organization ties, or individual-to-individual ties. In doing so, I assume that if a person is a member of several associations, that person serves as a latent tie between these organizations.

In carrying out the rank-and-file level of analysis, I asked each of my quantitative survey informants to name the community organizations in which he or she participates. In cases of local government participation where elected terms had recently concluded, I registered informants as currently part of that organization. I also consolidated distinct entities into categories. For instance, I placed the multiple local government committees and those who mentioned political party affiliation into a single category entitled 'local government'. Political parties do not participate in the public arena in the same way that these organizations do, (only one person mentioned their political party when asked this question) so they did not receive their own category. I also placed multiple entities into the categories of 'church', 'cooperative', and 'NGO'.

In order to test who the community perceives their leaders to be, I asked each quantitative survey respondent whom they considered the three 'most able' leaders in the community. I then assigned three points to the first person they mentioned, two points to the second person, and one point to the final person. I tallied the total number of points for each community member mentioned as a leader. The three top point-getters appear in Table 2. Finally, I listed their organizational affiliations and their leadership positions.

Table 2: Rank-and-File Summary Statistics

Santa Rosa Rank-and-File Summary Statistics

	Rate	Ave. No.	This/Other	Other/This
Local Gov	0.15	2.25	0.75	0.12
Church	0.88	1.13	0.70	0.87
School	0.08	2.00	1.00	0.08
Cooperative	0.42	1.73	1.00	0.44
NGO	0.42	1.73	1.00	0.44

Nueva Trinidad Rank-and-File Summary Statistics

	Rate	Ave. No.	This/Other	Other/This
Local Gov	0.48	1.42	1.00	0.48
Church	1.00	0.92	0.72	1.00
School	0.16	2.00	1.00	0.16
Cooperative	0.04	2.00	1.00	0.04
NGO	0.24	1.33	1.00	0.24

Rate = proportion of community members in this organization
Ave No = average number of other organizational affiliations
This/other = proportion of members of this organization who are in other organizations
Other/This = proportion of members of other organizations who are in this organization
* Model for this Table developed by Cornwell and Harrison (2004).

3. Results

Table 2 shows that church is by far the most significant civic organization in either community among rank-and-file members; 88% of Santa Rosa and 100% of Nueva Trinidad respondents claim to attend one of the churches in the community. In Santa Rosa, cooperatives and NGOs are the second most significant organization, each with 42% community membership. In Nueva Trinidad, the local government has the second most active membership, with 48%. Both Ammerman (2005) and Cornwell and Harrison (2004) state that in the United States, those who are involved in church are more likely to be involved in other organizations as well. This is likely to be equally true in the former refugee and displaced persons context. However, because such a high

Table 3: Community Leadership Ratings

Santa Rosa Leaders			
Name	Leonsio	Roberto	Adelaida
Leadership Ranking	1	2	3
Total Points Received	47	25	13
Leadership Positions	Cooperative Officer School Committee Water Project Pres. NGO Rep. Faro Divino Member Music Group	Pastor, Faro Divino School Committee Water Project Treasurer OAS Peace Committee NGO Counselor	Highest Local Government Officer Catholic Church Member

Nueva Trinidad Leaders			
Name	Julio	Jose Raymundo	Faustino
Leadership Ranking	1	2	3
Total Points Received	46	39	22

Leadership Positions	Religious Leader Librarian School Committee Youth Ed. Project Community Committee	Mayor of Municipality Cooperative Member Church Member Soccer Team Project Committee Chair	President of Village Church Member Soccer Team

Ranking based on informants' response to the question of who the three most important leaders were in the community. 3 points received for 'most important' 2 points received for 'second most important' 1 point received for 'third most important'.

percentage of people attend church in these communities, it is difficult to show statistically that this tendency holds true in the case studies presented here. What can be seen is that the church has more total ties to other organizations than any other organization within the community. However, when measuring the average number of ties or the proportion of members of this organization who are in other organizations, other organizations show higher outcomes in both communities primarily because all or nearly all members of other organizations are also church members. If the proportion of members of other organizations who are in this organization is measured, the church possesses the highest ratio in both communities, thus exposing the depth of its community embeddedness.

The church's prominence at the leadership level reinforces the findings at the rank-and-file level. Roberto, the primary religious leader in Santa Rosa, was the second most recognized leader in his community. Julio, the primary religious leader in Nueva Trinidad, was the most recognized leader in his community, leading both the mayor of the municipality and the president of the community committee. Roberto is heavily involved in interlocking in Santa Rosa; he is a member of the school board, served as treasurer on the water project, consults with the leaders of the NGO, sits on the peace committee sponsored by the Organization of American States, and regularly interacts with the office holders in the local cooperatives. Only Lensio, the leading vote-getter in Santa Rosa and a long-time and charismatic community leader, is as active in formal community leadership activities as Roberto. In Nueva Trinidad, Julio serves both as the local religious leader (under the direction of the Jesuits who visit frequently) and the community librarian. He chairs a committee on which the community President, Faustino, sits, and regularly visits the mayor, the school, and the community health clinic. That he received a higher leadership rating in Nueva Trinidad than both the mayor and the community President is a strong and, according to the qualitative data, accurate indication of the respect he commands and the leadership he provides.

One note of interest: only eight community members in Nueva Trinidad received leadership votes, whereas 27 community members in Santa Rosa received leadership votes. Certainly, the fact that Santa Rosa is a larger community contributes to this phenomenon, but the fusion of societal spheres in Nueva Trinidad may lead to both more concentration of power and a clearer ability of community members to identify who their leaders really are. It may also reflect the different network strategies and authority structures employed by evangelical and Catholic communities, respectively.

In conclusion, the data presented in this section prove that the local church is the central organization in community life in both Santa Rosa and Nueva Trinidad. The culture it

produces benefits from this dominant position. *As a result* of this position, both the extant literature and this empirical work suggest, community organizations as a whole are better off. That is, because of the culture produced by local churches, there should be more organizations in communities where local churches exist; and the organizations that do exist should be stronger because of the presence of local churches. Reasons for this include social capital creation and skills building construction, which are brought about in different ways in Santa Rosa and Nueva Trinidad.

D. Networks

1. Community Networks in Santa Rosa

Evangelical networks possess distinct organizational tendencies. According to Phillip Berryman (1999), these include horizontal integration, flexibility, adaptability, rapid and context-sensitive responses, and 'decentralized concentration'. David Martin notes evangelical networks' primary participants are those who have recently left or been freed from "constraining vertical and horizontal ties," and states that the re-formation of ties within the evangelical schema "is part of the rapid expansion of the range of cultural communication and the differentiation of society," (Martin 1990, p.108). David Smilde notes that these networks help to shape an evangelical cultural identity which might be helpful for those in anomic situations (such as former refugees and displaced persons): "The evangelical meaning system presents individuals with a way to get a cognitive fix on the processes that are affecting their lives, and provides a basis for forming new social relationships and overcoming the obstacles to associational mobilization" (Smilde in Smith & Prokopy 1999 p.129).

Another characteristic of the evangelical networks in Santa Rosa is their location at the grassroots, micro level. This is manifested in two ways: a) the denominational network of Faro Divino; and b) evangelical churches in (relatively) close geographic proximity. Faro Divino's denomination, the Mision Pentecostes de Iglesias Cristianas (MIPIC), branched off of another indigenous denomination in 1976. The denomination consisted of 12 churches at the time. Today there are 200. While they have grown rapidly, they have remained in the north central region of Nicaragua. The denominational headquarters and the pastoral training center are in the city of Matagalpa, about a four hour bus ride from Santa Rosa. MIPIC manages very little capital, but they are deeply committed to a participatory and democratic, although disciplined, style of organization. In line with these goals, there are frequent votes on both leadership personnel and key denominational issues. They have developed an organizational structure of various committees and commissions, creating posts that are filled by clergy, in addition to the ministries in their local churches.

Second, Faro Divino networks heavily with other evangelical, particularly Pentecostal churches in the surrounding areas. Groups of churches merge together for crusades. A pastor of a nearby church, for example, invited Faro Divino and three other churches to join in an evangelistic crusade. Faro Divino returned the invitation for a crusade that they hosted three months later, but invited two different churches that were not at the first crusade. Invitations to join crusades are rarely turned down, even though they can imply

an entire congregation traveling two hours round trip *on foot* three nights in a row.[12] There are also pulpit exchanges among pastors in the area, and every year significant organizational preparation goes into The Day of the Bible, when all non-Catholic churches across the country (in a few areas, Catholic churches have also been known to participate) gather to march in centrally located municipalities.[13]

These two overlapping networks allow for the transferal of various resources. First, information flows into and out of the community through these networks. As one of the two primary networks (the other is the Sandinista network) which connect Santa Rosa to the 'outside world', the evangelical networks serve as an important way in which information is transferred over geographical barriers. It helps to remove the possible feeling of isolation that might be felt in this rural area, where the roads can be treacherous and other infrastructure is lacking. Second is the accountability that is brought by the networks. The discipline of the church, which has spilled over into the community, is internally imposed, but motivation to maintain discipline is enhanced when colleagues who have similar commitments are 'around'. Third, the network provides access to leaders. Roberto, for example, came to Santa Rosa through the denominational network six years ago. He did not live through the Contra invasions of the early 80s. He was serving in the Sandinista army in a different region at the time. When there was an opening, though, the denomination sent him to Santa Rosa.

In Santa Rosa, the evangelical networking system overlaps with the Sandinista network, or field. Interestingly, while a political party is most influential in creating this field, the activity within the field is definitely economic in character. The two cooperatives in Santa Rosa both have Sandinista roots, and the markets that are found for the coffee and bananas were found through the Sandinista networks. Appendix 1A illustrates how these networks interact.

2. Networks in Nueva Trinidad

The Jesuit networks and organizational strategy allow significant resources to be drawn into Nueva Trinidad. These resources are added to by the political networks of the FMLN and the international development community. Each of these three networks converges in Nueva Trinidad, creating what I have termed the Alternative International Field. It is alternative in the sense that the actors involved sought a space that was not governed by state or state-sanctioned multi-lateral institutions. This proved possible because of the weak state features of the Salvadoran government, as well as the strong support from anti-state sympathies by many people and organizations with resources in both the United States and Europe. It was within this field that Nueva Trinidad was

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[12] These group travels are a template that has historical precedent in the religious pilgrimages much more common among Roman Catholic adherents. For these converts from Catholicism, this is a form of religious activity which may have been adapted to their new environment and applied to different activities.

[13] While these kinds of activities provided significant relationships at the leadership level, they did not seem to result in significant interactions between members of different churches. Church members reported going in groups and enjoying corporate worship with other churches, but rarely interacting with others at an individual level.

formed and has been developed. Please see Appendix 1B for an illustration of this concept.

V. DISCUSSION

The data presented above indicate the importance of churches to the communities. This section addresses the nature of the culture they produce and its impact on the community in overcoming problems presented by a post-conflict society, as well as by poverty.

The purpose of local churches in post-conflict communities is no different than it is in other towns: It is to create community and have communion with God (Warner 1993). The churches in this study do this through events and rituals that include forms of worship (in Santa Rosa, worship is animated and often impromptu, in Nueva Trinidad, it is corporate and subdued); sets of symbols (in Santa Rosa, words of evangelical identity, such as reference to a fellow member as 'brother' or 'sister' are employed, in Nueva Trinidad, images of war martyrs are prominently displayed); celebrations of the achievements of congregants, funerals, fun and fellowship, prayer and Bible study; provision of assistance to the needy; and standards of behavior (a very tight asceticism in Santa Rosa, a code of community participation and mutual support in Nueva Trinidad).

E. Local Churches Build Social Capital

1. Trust and Social Capital in Santa Rosa

In creating community, the local churches also build trust and social capital. The churches of Santa Rosa do this through a heavy programming schedule: Faro Divino has services 6 days a week, with two services on Sundays. Additionally, the church stages evangelistic or healing crusades three or four times a year, enters regularly into 40 day periods of prayer and fasting, frequently conducts all night prayer vigils, and often participates in leadership workshops—all of which are quite well attended.

Even without special crusades, evangelicals in Santa Rosa attended services more than three times a week *on average.* This is significantly more than any other group in the study. Even the devout Catholics in Nueva Trinidad pale in comparison—they attend a church event just over two times per month. Within Santa Rosa's evangelicalism, the intense level of social interaction becomes fertile breeding ground for both strong and weak ties. Trust in both people and community institutions increases as these ties become more intense, and transformation takes place at both the personal and the communal levels.

2. Skills Building Exercises

Local churches also play a central role in developing civic skills (Putnam 2000). David Martin writes that Latin American evangelicals "acquire skills of organization, of self-help, of self-expression which make them articulate and self-reliant. They understand what it is to create a new social cell," (Martin 1990, p.108). Techniques for civic engagement, such as public speaking and group organization are fostered within the

evangelical context. Finally, individuals are being molded with a sense of their own selfhood and capacity to choose; this process within evangelicalism is quite possibly building up a constituency well-disposed to a capitalistic form of development (Martin 1990, p. 231).

Skills-building is facilitated by a lay-driven model of church life employed by both evangelicals and Jesuit-influenced Catholic churches. At Faro Divino, all the programs and activities mentioned above must be planned and organized. To this end, a robust system of committees has been developed. The Friday service is Youth Night, for example. A committee of four youths (a category that captures young adults ages 15-29) is responsible for planning that service. Roberto requires the service to be planned four weeks ahead of time, which means that at any given time the next four services have already been planned. Roberto also usually teaches only in Sunday morning Bible School and preaches in the Sunday night service. Not only, then, are other people responsible for leading songs and prayer, providing personal testimonies, playing instruments, taking offering, counting the money, and planning the services, they also shoulder part of the preaching load.

In short, the evangelical form of community ensures that almost all members find some niche in which to participate actively, thus constructing important skills and attitudes that can be applied in economic, social, or political areas of life.

3. Social Capital & Boundary Creation in Nueva Trinidad

In Nueva Trinidad, different strategies are employed in the production of both culture and social capital. Here, work by the local church is important, but a strong international and outside support network buttresses the work at the grassroots. Jesuits are the primary carriers of this outside support. Several Jesuits actively support Nueva Trinidad. Mauricio Gaborit, for instance, is Honduran by nationality, and has degrees from Michigan and Harvard. He teaches psychology at the University of Central America (UCA) in El Salvador's capital city, but frequently passes his weekends in Nueva Trinidad. A second Jesuit UCA professor, Roberto Valdez also visits, bringing college students with him weekly to tutor Nueva Trinidad's high schoolers. Both Mauricio and Roberto supplement the ministry of a third, U.S.-born Jesuit, who lives nearby and presides over the parishes in this region.

The Jesuits, then, are not community members, and were not considered such by respondents to the survey. Yet they are both deeply trusted and deeply respected by the community. Their position of being a "near outsider" gives them significant leverage within Nueva Trinidad, allowing them to influence the direction of the community's development. Their presence provides Nueva Trinidad with access to both highly developed international human resources (the Jesuits themselves) and their impressive and active networks.

It is from this position that the Jesuits produce social capital. According to Mauricio, "the community is far more organized than those that were not affected by the war. There are high levels of participation from all age groups." Maintaining the current high level of participation is a priority for community leaders like Julio, Jose Raymundo, and

Faustino. At a practical level, participation is critical to the functioning of collectively owned stores and cafeterias. Other social structures, such as the committee charged with cleaning the streets, also depend on voluntarism.

Beyond such practical concerns, the community leaders also see social capital as central to the community's health. Julio pointed out that the indices of violence in Nueva Trinidad are very low, which is remarkable given that El Salvador is a country with unusually high rates of crime and violence. Julio attributes the low level of violence in Nueva Trinidad to the trust people have for others in the community. This trust has also been helpful in addressing the trauma symptoms some have had since the war. Trust, in turn, finds its source in religion, as well as the shared refugee experience. As Mauricio suggests, "The processes of liberation, reconciliation, and reconstruction of community cannot be understood without understanding the religiosity of the people." The figure below outlines the simple argument being made here.

Figure 1: Reduced Violence in Nueva Trinidad

Another dynamic of social capital in Nueva Trinidad are the bright boundaries that have been created around the community. For community insiders (and their Jesuit friends) the social capital that exists here is high even in comparison to that of Santa Rosa. However, outsiders are regarded with deep suspicion. Twelve years after the peace accords were signed, this community is still deeply opposed to integration into the broader Salvadoran society. Distrust of government is pervasive throughout Nueva Trinidad, which is natural considering that it continues to be run by the 'other side' of the armed conflict. The symbolism in the churches preserves the feelings of animosity, and recent social battles ranging from benefits for ex-combatants to privatizing the health care system have kept the two political sides very far apart.

As a newcomer to the community, I was accompanied in my research by an international development professional who had worked for three years in Mesa Verde, and who had maintained his relationships with the refugees there ever since. I was told by interview respondents that they did not know who I was, but since David brought me here, they would talk openly. I could, for example, have been just another CIA agent doing an investigation. The structure of my interviews included numerous questions asking about names of friends, fellow church members, or leaders in the community. In one interview (interestingly, it was with one of the community's two evangelicals) the respondent avoided providing me with a single name. Suspicion, it seems, still lingers about people affiliated with the United States.

F. Reconciliation Work by Local Churches

The low intensity guerilla warfare employed in the Central American civil wars was extremely disruptive both socially and psychologically. It forced community members to take sides within communities, to suspect neighbors and relatives of spying for the other

side, and it eroded belief in their own safety. (Spalding 1999). It was also characterized by terribly inhumane acts penetrating the lives of all who lived there. Those surveyed knew of a person who was suspected of being an informant, and for this reason had his tongue cut out. There were occasions when skulls would be placed on fences that lined the side of a country road. Torture and rape were common; sometimes they were strategic, intended to gain information, at other times they were simply random acts of violence.

Although both El Salvador and Nicaragua have clearly transitioned out of war, patterns of war-time behavior are perpetuated, at times through police brutality in the region (Canas and Dada 1999). In El Salvador especially, indices of violent crimes have remained high since the end of the war. Although there has been some decline in recent years, this trend has primarily been attributed to new policing strategies in urban areas (USAID 2005); no evidence suggests that crime has begun to dip in the rural parts of the country. In Nicaragua crime is also an issue, and landmines that were planted during the war continue to be set off by unsuspecting agricultural workers, or simple passers-by.

Individuals remain traumatized by their own experiences, which are seldom addressed in a way that allows for psychological recovery (Cabrera 2000). War victims are now transmitting trauma to their children by re-enacting the destruction of primary relationships in the family (Dickson-Gomez 2002).[14] At the community level, crime and violence erode social capital at the same time local churches build it up; social capital was severely damaged during the war through espionage and inhumane activities that were carried out at the grassroots level. In many communities, a pervasive culture of fear and suspicion exists that discourages neighbors from trusting each other and from participating in community projects. (Prins, Forthcoming). In short, in many former refugee and internally displaced communities there is a high crime rate, a nearly complete lack of trust or social capital, and the continued disintegration of social institutions, not least among them the family.[15]

The churches in Santa Rosa and Nueva Trinidad fight off the symptoms of post-conflict societies through doctrines of relational healing. Indeed, themes of reconciliation run deep in most strains of Christianity. In the Pentecostal evangelicalism of Santa Rosa, this

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[14] These findings are consistent with the theory presented in Section Two. Berger explains that "Every society that continues in time faces the problem of transmitting its objectivated meanings from one generation to the next. …. The individual not only learns the objectivated meanings but identifies with and is shaped by them. He draws them into himself and makes them *his* meanings. He becomes not only one who possesses these meanings, but one who represents and expresses them," (Berger 1967 p.15).

[15] This paper argues that there is high social capital in Santa Rosa and Nueva Trinidad because of the local churches. A second causal agent for increased social capital can, however, be found within the wartime experience of the two communities. When Nueva Trinidad residents were in the refugee camp and when Santa Rosa residents were placed under military control, suspicion of neighbors and acts of espionage were no longer primary concerns. In fact, social cohesion seems to have actually increased as a result of the common, outside enemy against which everyone was united. Ties outside the community, however, remained severely affected by the war—in some cases even ties to relatives of community members outside the community were ruined.

is articulated as a theology of forgiveness. In the liberation theology of Nueva Trinidad, it appears as a theology of justice. Each will be explained in this section.

1. Theology of Forgiveness in Santa Rosa

The relevant theological principle is that only through God's forgiveness of human sin—and the cleansing nature of Christ's atonement—are humans able to enter into a relationship with Him. In Santa Rosa, this idea is applied in human-to-human relationships, where evangelical leaders teach their congregants to forgive those who have sinned against them.

The simple, direct application of this concept somewhat short-circuits a more complete reconciliation process, in which most schemas call first for truth to be exposed, and then for repentance to be sought by the perpetrator of the wrong. It is only after these steps are taken that the victim is called upon to offer forgiveness to the perpetrator.
Within the Santa Rosa context, however, the opposition has 'dissolved', in that the Contra army no longer exists, and the specific soldiers that executed the raids on Santa Rosa are not likely to reappear in the community. Because the ideal reconciliation process is thus not an option, the church leads its congregants on this more difficult and somewhat stilted process of forgiving those who, for all practical purposes, exist only in their memories. It is, then, an internal forgiveness process that confronts the culture of war where it is socially located—in the memories of the community members. Incomplete though the process may be, church members bear witness to the fact that they have given over to God the pain, hate, and desire for revenge.

The woman who lost her niece and brother-in-law, for instance, said that when she wasn't a Christian she felt very 'maltratado', but she became a Christian after the war, and she has now been able to put these feelings in the hands of the Lord. Only God could help her, she said, so after the war, it was worth it to become a Christian. In many respects, the process allowed her to live again. "Without God," the woman said, "we are nothing."

2. Justice Theology in Nueva Trinidad

Symbols are an important part of the different type of approach the local church has taken in addressing the culture of war. For example, the symbolism in the nearest 'official' Catholic Church to Nueva Trinidad (Nueva Trinidad has a smaller but still adequate chapel) is consistent with the fusion of religion and politics. At the front of the church hangs Christ crucified. Two large posters of Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was martyred during the war, hang on both sides of Christ. Flanking both posters of Romero are dozens of framed pictures of men and women, most in guerilla uniform, who also lost their lives during the civil war. The Stations of the Cross decorate the sides of the church. A mural depicting a period of these communities' historical journey stands next to each of the stations, in this way identifying the experience with a specific Station. In Nueva Trinidad's chapel, large, graphic murals grace all four walls. Blood flows freely from wounds inflicted in battle, and Salvadoran martyrdom is depicted in disturbing (but

roughly historically accurate) ways.[16] In short, churches have become a place where Christian symbolism is melded with the history of the Salvadoran resistance movement; one cannot go to pray without remembering the civil conflict that engulfed the country more than a decade ago.

Another Biblical account, the Exodus story found in the Old Testament, is also used to create a close identity between Christianity and the history of these communities. A reflection by Mauricio describes this most clearly:

> I interpret the trajectory of these communities as an exodus, a path that has eventually led them to the land of milk and honey, after crossing a sea painted in blood… and these experiences form a community, a community that walks, that discovers, that constructs their own history and that understands in a very profound way the process of liberation. This is precisely the mythology that Christianity has.

Community members embrace the identity that this narrative and the afore-mentioned symbols create. Their view of their community, their church, and God is profoundly shaped by them.

It is not surprising, given this symbolic context, that there is no desire on the part of the religious leadership of Nueva Trinidad to enter into a one-sided reconciliation process. Religious leaders do see the value of undergoing a more traditional, complete reconciliation process, and feel that the church's role in reconciliation is important. However, it is just as unlikely in Nueva Trinidad that such a process could ever be created as it is in Santa Rosa. Why not, then, opt for the kind of process that is occurring in Santa Rosa? Mauricio responds that when discussing forgiveness, "the question that comes up immediately is, who has asked forgiveness?" If no one has done this, and further, if the petition has not gone through a judicially overseen process and been duly recorded, then an effort to forgive is psychologically harmful. In Mauricio's words, "The forgiveness that comes with impunity creates pathology."

Justice is thus still being sought by Nueva Trinidad for the things that have happened here, but the rhetoric of revenge is rarely employed. Lack of revenge-seeking is attributed by some to the role of the church. Julio recounted to me the teachings of Archbishop Romero. According to Julio (a narrative that is consistent with historical documents), Romero did not condone the acts of violence that the guerillas carried out. Certainly Romero had a preference for the poor, but perhaps because of Romero's teachings, there is also at least a subconscious awareness that the actions of the FMLN, and by inclusion those of the community, were not always righteous. There is never any suggestion that people in the community owe the opposition an apology, but an ability to analyze the conflict somewhat objectively, and even to put it in the global context of the Cold War period, was demonstrated by several members of the community. This is summed up most concisely by Mauricio: "I have heard for a petition of justice, yes, but

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[16] Spanish Catholicism has an ancient and deep sense of suffering, often graphically portraying violence to the Christ figure or one of the saints. The symbols and images of Nueva Trinidad represent a unique adaptation of this, but remain very much within their larger tradition.

never revenge. And I believe that this comes in part because of the understanding of the message of one named Jesus."

G. Local Churches and Economic Development

Poverty compounds the problems left by the wars in Central America. Longstanding macro-economic structures have consolidated wealth into the hands of the very few, and created a widespread and largely oppressed peasant population. Frequently occurring natural disasters create even greater poverty in the region. Most people have very little access to health care, education, or housing. Often families of six or more live in single room houses, and signs of malnutrition persist in children throughout the poorer parts of the region.

Just as local churches carry tools to combat the lingering culture of war in these communities, they also have an impact on a community's economic development. In this section, the consequences of religious production on development strategies within Santa Rosa and Nueva Trinidad are considered.

1. Asceticism, Moral Entrepreneurship and Tithing in Santa Rosa

a. Asceticism in Santa Rosa

I was reminded of the prominent place of asceticism in evangelical culture during an interview with a new convert. "We're behaving ourselves now!" she beamed, with a proud and somewhat impish smile; and indeed they are, as the asceticism put forth by Faro Divino is severe. Alcohol and tobacco are strictly prohibited, and those who do not comply are faced with church discipline. Both haircuts and the manner of dress are also regulated. Women wear head coverings in church, although no church rules exist to enforce this custom. It is also customary for women and men to sit on different sides of the church, although the women fill up their side on Sunday morning, and some spill into the back rows of the men's section.[17] These practices, particularly the prohibition of smoking and alcohol, constitute a significant break from normal Latin practice. As others have discovered in Latin American communities, (Brusco 1986) this is particularly true for male behavior. Money that was being siphoned off to support alcoholism is now channeled toward more productive family activities, and men consider their roles within the family context differently.

b. The Moral Entrepreneur

Thus, the evangelical culture, combined with the nature of their networks as described in previous sections, helps to remove obstacles for agents within that culture and allows them opportunity for success. In many cases, especially in rural areas, the most appealing opportunity for advancement resides in local religious leadership. Such a

[17] In these instances of spillover, it does not appear to be particularly problematic if a man and a woman are sitting next to each other. (In the Catholic church down the road, people are free to sit where they want, or even to stand casually against the wall during the service.)

structural opening is in no small part responsible for the phenomenon that I will now discuss: The moral entrepreneur (Martin 1991).

Evangelical pastors possess certain skills and personal traits that allow them to enter leadership positions within the church and the community. In this way they increase their social and economic standing, the former often outweighing the latter in order of priority within Latin American culture. Two church practices, that of church planting and of tithing, are especially relevant to the ascent of the local evangelical pastor.

Evangelical and Catholic teachings on the tithe differ dramatically in northern Nicaragua. Father Danilo assured me that Catholics would never force the practice of tithing on *campesinos* as humble as those in Santa Rosa; such a practice, from his point of view, would be akin to stealing from the poor. In contrast, Faro Divino makes the practice a prominent part of church life. Both the motivations for this strategy and the impacts it has on the community are worth considering in some detail.

There are two primary motives for the practice of tithing. The first is that it is a principle that is strongly advocated in the Bible. The act of giving the tithe occurs during the service, and is an important form of worship. The second motive is financial. No external resources help support the church; they must cover their own costs or cease to exist. The primary cost is the pastor's (Roberto) salary; the denominational policy is for the pastor to receive the weekly tithe less 13%. The remaining 13% is used for administrative and maintenance costs. Clearly, if church members are unfaithful in their tithe or if church membership dwindles, Roberto's salary suffers. Because these two motives co-exist, religious fervor can become entangled with economic incentive.

Further entanglement is implied when one considers that sharing the gospel and bringing others into the church is perhaps *the* defining faith practice for the evangelical. But success in this area means, of course, that more tithers enter the church, thus increasing Roberto's salary. There are many instances in which 'religious entrepreneurs' in similar situations become distracted by the dollars and cents that can be gained.

The strategies Roberto employs, as the chief evangelist and motivator of others to evangelize, do not, however, indicate that he has chosen this path. The evangelistic model Roberto most regularly uses is church planting, where he helps to form new churches in neighboring communities. Once a nucleus is formed, the church may provide compensation to Roberto for a short time, but Roberto moves quickly to insert another pastor into the new church, channeling the resources from this new tithing body away from his own pockets. This model has proven highly successful in spreading the *evangel*, but is remarkably ineffective in increasing Roberto's individual wealth. Thus, while religious and financial incentives are not easily teased apart, religious motivation remains the stronger driver of the two, at least in the context of Santa Rosa.

There is, however, a third dynamic that must be taken into consideration: clientelism. In Latin American society, power and influence are gained by causing people to become indebted to you. In Roberto's case, his ability to start a church and then place another pastor in that church allows him to have a permanent position of influence over both the pastor and the church. His personal networks are extended, and he becomes more

powerful both within the denomination and in the local evangelical circles. As has already been mentioned, pastors wield significant social authority in Latin America; through this process of church planting, Roberto becomes influential not just at the local level, but also in the surrounding areas. While the empirical data presented here leave the question open, it is entirely possible that this motivator might be stronger than either the desire to spread the *evangel* or the financial gains that increased numbers of tithers bring.

c. Tithing and the Community

Beyond the specific religious leader, tithing has had a striking impact on the community in several ways. First, because the church is self-supporting, members feel a strong sense of ownership. Levine (1992) asserts that a sense of ownership of religious practices as well as the local organizational presence is essential to any empowerment or social change that religion might bring. Levine acknowledges that 'outsiders' or missionaries have a catalytic role to play, but in Santa Rosa, even this has not been necessary, as the church was founded by a group of displaced persons who were already evangelical when they arrived in 1982. The religious practices, codes of behavior, and symbols are fully owned by the community; a sense of trying to comply with an imperialist's religion is completely absent. Second, the discipline of tithing forces at least some modicum of fiscal organization on the community. In order to know how much to tithe, one must have some idea of the income one has. In one exceptional example, a community member showed me an exhaustive chart of his total family income, and then his monthly expenses throughout the year, which vary from month to month. Expenses were divided between family consumption and the costs that come with preparing and cultivating their small plot of land.

Related to this discussion is the fact that one of the cultural products of resource scarcity is short term planning. Each year coffee farmers with small plots of land have the opportunity to sell their coffee to a multinational company and receive compensation immediately. Or they can sell their coffee through their cooperative to a Fair Trade broker and receive a significantly higher price (how much higher depends on the price of coffee on the New York markets), but they must wait several months for payment.

Farmers usually base this decision on how urgently the family needs money. This, in turn, is the result of the income received during the previous year (size of the harvest times price at which they sold the coffee plus income from various informal activities) plus the consumption patterns they have engaged in over the last year. A third factor is the size of the loan they may have received for agricultural inputs, and its accompanying rate of interest. When the outcome to this equation is not favorable, the choice the farmer has is reduced to just one: they must take the more immediate, significantly lower payment offer from the multi national corporation. When this occurs, it becomes more likely that they will be forced to make the same decision the following year, and the cyclical nature of resource scarcity (poverty) is reinforced.

2. Educational Philosophy and Opportunities in Nueva Trinidad

Whereas the ascetic culture of Santa Rosa allows for entrepreneurship and feelings of ownership to empower the community, in Nueva Trinidad it is a culture of education that

provides a comparative advantage for the people who live there. The number of students who have gone away to the university from Nueva Trinidad is staggering for a rural community. This kind of success can be attributed to the conflagration of a commitment to Freirian educational philosophy[18], the importance Jesuits place on literacy and education, the educational networks made available by the Jesuits, and the kinds of exposure the people had to the international development community during their time in Mesa Verde.

Empirical evidence bears this out: The mean education for Nueva Trinidad residents is 4.62 grades; the mean education for Santa Rosa residents is 1.58 grades. The difference is statistically significant. Several factors converge to create this difference, but one of them is certainly the Jesuit emphasis on education and the possibilities for higher education that are opened through the Jesuit networks. Age explains variance in both communities more than religion, but it is clear that at every age group, Nueva Trinidad has a higher level of education than their counterparts in Santa Rosa.

Access to education ultimately changes the nature and character of the community. The kinds of professions people have in the community begin to change; often students go to the capital city for a university education and do not come back. But perhaps in part due to the strong sense of community in Nueva Trinidad, a surprising number do return and live in the community. Some find jobs in Nueva Trinidad, working at the health clinic or teaching at the local school. Some, though, continue to live in Nueva Trinidad and commute long distances to make use of their professional skills.

To the extent that Nueva Trinidad can use their educational advantage, they will be able to transition more smoothly if and when CAFTA is ratified. Those with land will be able to shift more quickly into non-traditional agricultural products that may yield a profit; those with professional jobs have a comparative advantage over others in the region, and should be able to keep those jobs.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper argues that the cultural production of churches combats social problems found in post-conflict societies, such as lingering behavior patterns shaped by the war and the problems brought by poverty.

These findings should matter to NGOs that work among former refugee and displaced peoples communities. NGOs, whether they are faith-based or not, should not ignore what is often the only functioning civil institution in a former refugee community. Rather, they should be willing to employ the assistance of religious professionals in their own programming, as the UNHCR did with Jesuits and others in Mesa Verde, Honduras in the 1980s. NGOs should also see how they can encourage and facilitate the programming of local churches. In these two communities, this might mean boosting efforts to increase

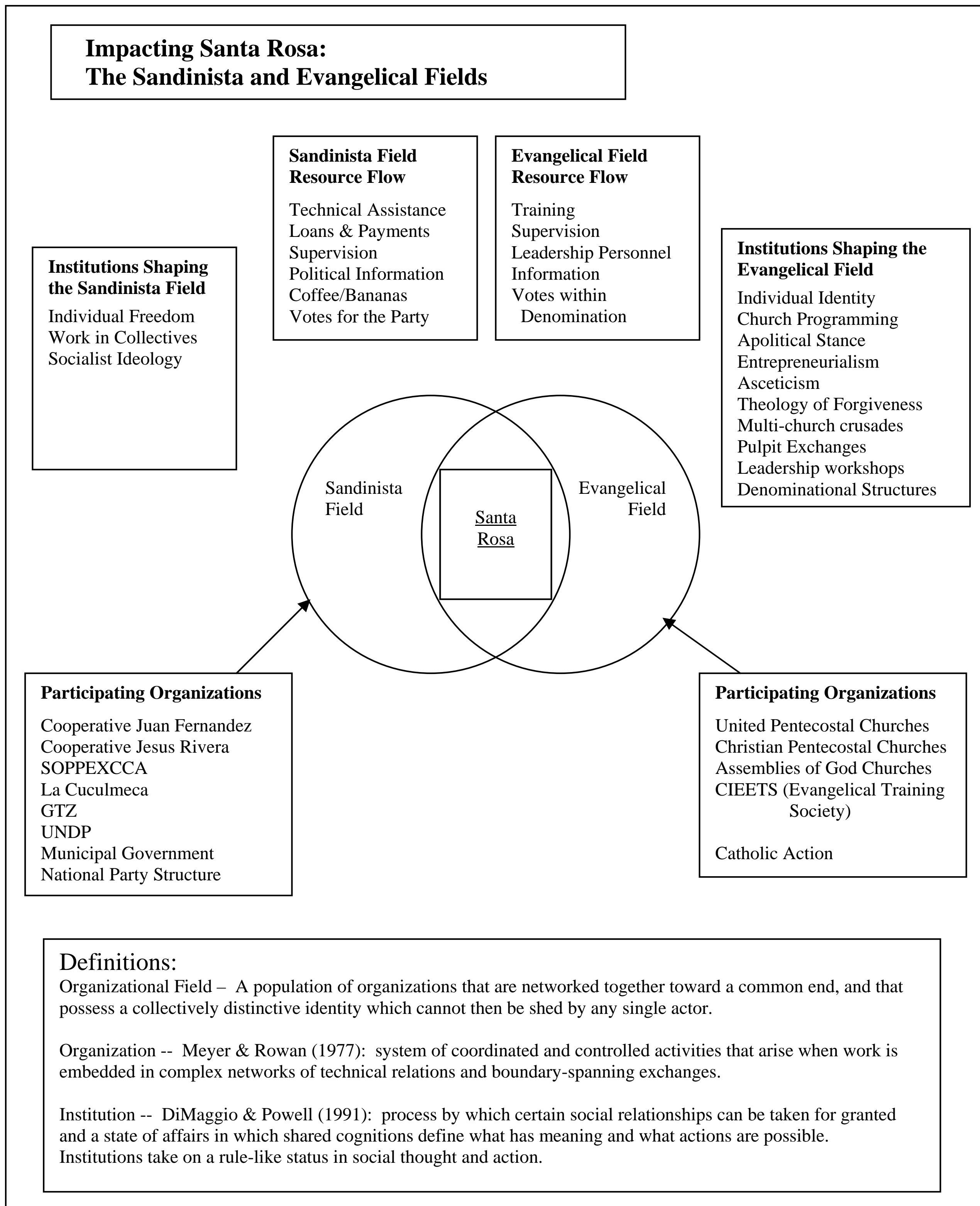
[18] Paulo Freire (1921-1887) was a Brazilian educationalist who wrote *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* He focused on informal and popular education, emphasizing dialogue rather then curriula. Education, in turn, was designed to inform action and to develop consciousness.

social capital, augmenting or channeling churches' efforts to bring reconciliation, or utilizing the openings to economic development that churches might provide.

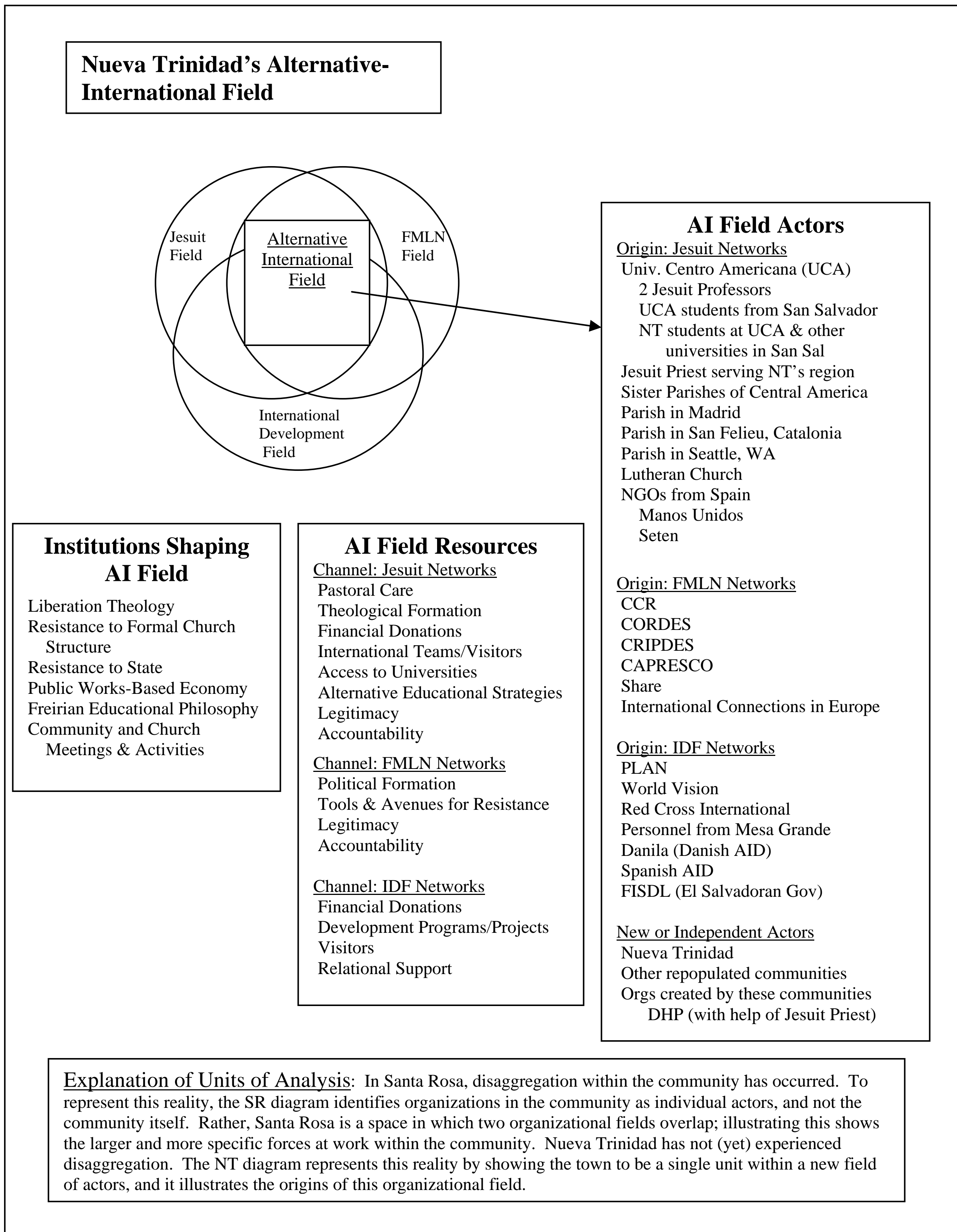
NGOs must also recognize the limits to local church bodies, remembering what exactly it is that they exist to do. Asking a church to carry out programming or to pursue agendas that fall outside their mission and purpose will only serve to weaken the church and reduce the positive impact it can provide. There is, however, much room for innovation and creative links with local churches; as noted by Gozdziak and Shandy (2002), the international humanitarian community would be much the richer if it more deeply explored possible links between religion and refugee assistance.

VII. APPENDICES

A. Appendix 1



B. Appendix 2



Explanation of Units of Analysis: In Santa Rosa, disaggregation within the community has occurred. To represent this reality, the SR diagram identifies organizations in the community as individual actors, and not the community itself. Rather, Santa Rosa is a space in which two organizational fields overlap; illustrating this shows the larger and more specific forces at work within the community. Nueva Trinidad has not (yet) experienced disaggregation. The NT diagram represents this reality by showing the town to be a single unit within a new field of actors, and it illustrates the origins of this organizational field.

C. Note Of Explanation On Appendices

The definitions of 'organizational field', 'institution', and 'organization' are taken from new institutionalism, perhaps the dominant school of organizational studies within sociology today. It addresses the problems central to the current sociological project, including the micro-macro dynamic. Specific claims in this area include Walter Powell and Paul DiMaggio's assertion that institutions act as restrictions on human agency, but that institutions are more importantly products of human actions. More generally, new institutionalism draws heavily from theorists such as Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu as it frames questions about organizations, organizational change and the environments in which they operate.

Other academic disciplines contain schools of thought that are named 'new institutionalism', but definitions of key terms and basic assumptions differ significantly. Thus, while distinguishing itself from economic (more so) and political (less so) versions of new institutionalism, the primary drivers of the sociological version actively seek to engage and incorporate many of the various theoretical schools that exist within sociology itself. Through this effort, the new institutionalists have structured a complex theoretical foundation comprising of the key contributions to theory since the beginning of the cognitive revolution. Ethnomethodology (Garfinkel), phenomenology (Berger and Luckmann), practical consciousness (Goffman and Collins) and symbolic interactionism help to shape the approach new institutionalism takes as it addresses issues of change, power, efficiency, the political elements of action and institutional change(Powell and DiMaggio 1991, Introduction). *New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (1991), edited by Powell and DiMaggio, contains the core theoretical articles on which new institutionalism has been built, including John Meyer and Brian Rowan's seminal article entitled "Institutionalized Organizations – Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony" (1977).

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