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Title: <u>Beyond Buzzwords: A Case Study of U.S. NGO Implementation of Sustainable and Participatory Development in Rural Guatemala.</u>

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Over the last several decades, the narrative around international development has shifted away from neoclassical models towards an increased focus on sustainability and community-driven participatory approaches. However, there is a lack of research looking at whether these theoretical concepts manifest in practical realities that avoid the imperialistic flaws of previous development approaches. This study asks: Are the broad theoretical shifts in international development toward a more sustainable and participatory paradigm reflected in a practical shift in the operations of NGOs? These dynamics are explored through semi-structured interviews and participant observation in this qualitative case study about a U.S. grassroots sustainable development NGO that works in Guatemala to provide education, employment, and environmental stewardship to a rural indigenous community. This is a most likely case study which hypothesizes that the operations of the NGO studied do in fact reflect the broader theoretical shift. The theory of social constructivism serves as a framework to examine how key concepts such as 'development' and 'sustainability' are defined across cultures and socially constructed. An analysis of responses from community members and NGO staff shows that the NGO does deviate from the development approaches of the past, yet does not confirm the hypothesis because it does not wholly reflect the theoretical shift toward a sustainable and participatory paradigm. These results can help inform international development policy and other foreign NGOs endeavoring to balance aid and international influence with local community involvement and sustainability.

Beyond Buzzwords: A Case Study of U.S. NGO Implementation of Sustainable and
Participatory Development in Rural Guatemala

By

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APPROVED:

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Elizabeth Schroeder, representing Economics

I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Sarah Boege, Author

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Abstract

Over the last several decades, the narrative around international development has shifted away from neoclassical models towards an increased focus on sustainability and community-driven participatory approaches. However, there is a lack of research looking at whether these theoretical concepts manifest in practical realities that avoid the imperialistic flaws of previous development approaches. This study asks: Are the broad theoretical shifts in international development toward a more sustainable and participatory paradigm reflected in a practical shift in the operations of NGOs? These dynamics are explored through semi-structured interviews and participant observation in this qualitative case study about a U.S. grassroots sustainable development NGO that works in Guatemala to provide education, employment, and environmental stewardship to a rural indigenous community. This is a most likely case study which hypothesizes that the operations of the NGO studied do in fact reflect the broader theoretical shift. The theory of social constructivism serves as a framework to examine how key concepts such as 'development' and 'sustainability' are defined across cultures and socially constructed. An analysis of responses from community members and NGO staff shows that the NGO does deviate from the development approaches of the past, yet does not confirm the hypothesis because it does not wholly reflect the theoretical shift toward a sustainable and participatory paradigm. These results can help inform international development policy and other foreign NGOs endeavoring to balance aid and international influence with local community involvement and sustainability.

Introduction

Since the 1980s, the idea of sustainable development has been percolating in the minds of the international development community. Globalization and large-scale challenges such as climate change have illuminated how finite the world and its resources are. It has become clear that business as usual and, similarly, development as usual will not be the path to a viable future. At the same time, there is also growing recognition that much of previous development work has served to perpetuate global inequalities through imperialistic approaches. In order to alter this course, meet emerging challenges with new strategies, and pave the way for a more equitable and environmentally endurable world, changes must be made. But what are those changes?

Several recent theoretical shifts in international development towards sustainable and participatory approaches hope to address global problems by focusing on innovative and holistic local solutions. Many believe that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are poised to play an important role in the implementation of bottom-up sustainable development projects. However, research is needed to see how these theoretical approaches have been implemented by organizations and if these new strategies are really the alternatives to the past that they promise to be. What does the implementation of 'sustainable development' look like in different contexts? What are some of the successes and what new challenges arise?

This study employs a qualitative approach to take an in-depth look a case study of a sustainable grassroots development NGO operating in rural Guatemala to evaluate this connection between theory and practice. With the goal of informing both future research and other sustainable development organizations globally, this research examines whether NGO operations represent an alternative to the flawed development strategies of the past or if they just dress up the same approaches with new buzzwords like 'sustainability'.

Literature Review

 1. Historical Overview of International Development

The concept of development became prominent in the aftermath of World War II as the world looked toward rebuilding war-shattered countries (Rapley, 2007). The 1944 Bretton Woods conference gave birth to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which went on to become the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the organization that would later become the World Bank. In the 1960s, the western model of Modernization Theory heavily influenced these institutions with its proposal that industrialization was the path to development for nations, economic growth, and the improvement of citizen's lives (Rapley, 2007).[1] However, the modernization theorists' idea that the first world and international institutions are "guiding third-world development through aid, investment, and example" is contrasted in the 1950s by dependency theorists who assert that the first world hindered the third world's ability to emerge from poverty (Rapley, 2007, p. 26). Dependency theory employs a critical, Marxist perspective to argue that 'core' first world nations have stunted the growth of 'peripheral' third-world countries through colonization and exploitation of their resources (Frank, 1966).[2]

Interestingly, international development theory began on the "left" with viewing the state as more effective and less suspicious than the market (Rapley, 2007). Keynesian economics seemed heroic at the time of the Great Depression, but by the end of the postwar boom in the 1970's the shortcomings of state-led development efforts, such as import substitution

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[1] For more reading on Modernization Theory, see W.W. Rostow (1960) *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*; for neoclassical economics see *Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour* (1952) by Arthur Lewis.

[2] For more on Dependency Theory, see *The Political Economy of Growth* (1957) by Paul Baran; *The Development of Underdevelopment* (1966) by André Gunder Frank.

industrialization, seemed clear (Rapley, 2007). Then, in the 1980's international development theory swung back towards the "right" in response to the apparent failures of a 'welfare' approach (Benería, Berik, & Floro, 2016). This made way for a wave of neoliberalism, characterized by faith in free markets and lack of government regulation and intervention.

Although this represented a serious theoretical shift, neoliberal strategies still rested on the same underlying view of development as being composed of linear, industrial stages. With the Cold War as a backdrop, the United States and other Western nations had an interest in discouraging communism through economic incentives. In an effort to promote capitalism, Western institutions such as the IMF and World Bank often coerced 'third world' countries to implement neoclassical policies as conditions to receiving funding (Benería, Berik, & Floro, 2016). Dependency theory would critique these IMF conditionalities (often included as part of Structural Adjustment Programs) as the perpetuation of imperialism and colonization of the 'third world' (Benería, Berik, & Floro, 2016).

Over time there has also been an increasing focus on people as the center of international development (Rapley, 2007). As this focus has sharpened in the past four or five decades it has also revealed the biases ingrained in the field which had been largely dominated by white, western men and did not include or thoroughly consider women, minorities, indigenous populations, and non-western perspectives. Even in the 1940's it was assumed that people in the third-world were "backward, uneducated, and bound by cultural traditions that frowned on selfishness and individualism" (Rapley, 2007, p. 67). Before Ester Boserup's 1970 book titled *Woman's Role in Economic Development* "the notion that economic development might have a different impact by gender- or even that development had anything to do with women- was unthinkable" (Benería, Berik, & Floro, 2016). Boserup and other Post-Colonial Feminist

theorists borrow from Marxism to question whether industrialization is good for everyone, finding that capitalism has not just used the third world but has also partnered with patriarchy to exploit women as a free or cheap labor source (Boserup, 1970).[3] Although still coming from a white, global north perspective, this kind of discourse led to the 1990s rethinking of development. Postdevelopment theory critiqued the concept of development and argued that it had really always been about controlling citizens rather than improving their lives (Rapley, 2007). The way to correct this was through a complete overhaul of development.

While the impact on most policy was minimal, new goals like the empowerment of disenfranchised groups and more bottom-up approaches gained traction. A prominent example of the push to focus locally is the boom in microcredit institutions which were originally created and popularized by Mohammad Yunis' Grameen Bank in the mid-1980s (Ray, 1998). The goal of microcredit is to use local information and monitoring to give small loans directly to the poorest people instead of channeling aid through governments (Ray, 1998). With loan repayment rates of over 97%, microcredit has been highly praised and inspired a push to pursue more direct and bottom-up approaches to development (Ray, 1998).

During the new millennium and 2010s international development theory has experienced another paradigm shift towards sustainable development. As Rapley (2007) notes, "two decades ago, environmental issues were still fairly marginal in development thought. Now they are front and center" (p. 9). As environmental concerns built momentum, a debate emerged in the 1980s around whether economic growth inherently comes at the cost of environmental degradation (Conca & Dabelko, 2010). Thus, a major appeal of sustainable development is that it reconciles these seemingly opposing concepts of economic growth and environmental protection by

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[3] For further reading, see *Women: The Last Colony* (1988) by Maria Mies, Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, and Claudia Von Werlhof.

focusing on changing the quality of growth (Conca & Dabelko, 2010). Despite these advances in theory, it is uncertain how theoretical concepts like sustainable development are implemented in practice around the globe.

2. Sustainable Development

The first formal introduction of the term "sustainable development" was in 1980 when the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) presented the World Conservation Strategy with the overall aim of achieving sustainable development through the conservation of living resources (IUCN, 1980). A more comprehensive definition of sustainable development was put forth in the 1987 report called "Our Common Future" from the UN's World Commission on Environment and Development, also known as the Brundtland Commission. This famous take on sustainable development, often referred to as the Brundtland definition, defined the term as that "which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987). The United Nations, especially the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), has been one of the main proponents of this concept and has contributed greatly to its popularization (Conca & Dabelko, 2010).

In 2010, twenty-three years after Our Common Future, a UN Development Programme report described "sustainable development" as being the intersection of three common principles rather than a strict definition (UNDP, 2010). These principles include equity and fairness, a long-term perspective emphasizing the precautionary principle, and the interconnectedness of society, the economy, and the environment (UNDP, 2010). This holistic definition emphasizes a balance between the interests of society, the economy, and the environment. Here lies the theoretical resolution to the economic development versus environmental conservation debate: a balance

can be found through using a sustainable development approach. The UN continues to push

sustainable development to the forefront of the international development arena, especially with

the advent of the global Sustainable Development Goals set for 2015-2030.[4]

Nonetheless, there are many critiques of the concept of sustainable development. General

skepticism of actual change is captured in Larry Lohmann's denouncement of sustainable

development as a "justification for business as usual" that "puts a green face on current practices

while perpetuating unequal relationships of power and wealth both within individual countries

and between the overdeveloped North and underdeveloped South" (Conca & Dabelko, 2010, p.

202; Lohmann, 1990). Lélé (1991) also questions whether new sustainable development policies

will indeed lead to an equitable and environmentally conscious form of development, especially

due to what he views as an absence of a theoretical and analytical framework. However, Lélé's

(1991) main contention with sustainable development is the lack of an unequivocal and widely-

accepted definition. He argues that the term is often used in contradicting ways, making

sustainable development "in real danger of becoming a cliché… a fashionable phrase that

everyone pays homage to but nobody cares to define" (Lélé, 1991, p. 607).

Though while some may criticize the shift to sustainable development as being merely

symbolic or limited to discourse, Conca and Dabelko (2010) remind us that such paradigms

"influence how actors understand their interests, how policies are formulated, how resources are

allocated, and which actors and institutions are empowered to make the critical decisions" (p.

201). The lack of an unequivocal definition of sustainability and lingering doubts about whether

or not sustainable development is truly an alternative to the imperialistic approaches of the past

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[4] The Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030) are the next iteration of the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015). The SDGs are a set of 17 goals such as eliminating poverty, gender equality, climate action, and clean water and sanitation. For the full list of SDGs visit: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html.

motivates the need for further research and case studies. This study will contribute to this gap and consider not only implementation of sustainable development approaches but also stakeholder definitions and conceptualizations of sustainability.

3. Community-Driven Participatory Development

The focus of international development is shifting from large-scale central planning to smaller-scale local planning where communities are involved in project design and implementation (Beard & Desgupta, 2006; Labonne & Chase, 2011; Tremblay & Gutberlet, 2012). In the effort to create more equitable development, there is an increased aspiration to be inclusive and encourage broad participation so that more voices are heard and involved in the process. Even in the 1980s, making development more participatory was included in the critical objectives of sustainable development as outlined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987).

Community-driven development (CDD) describes an approach that is bottom-up, focusing on empowering local communities to make decisions about their own development including designing and managing their own programs (Fritzen, 2007; Mason & Beard, 2008). CDD considers local community members not just as 'targets' of policies and programs, but rather as engaged actors in the process. People-centered approaches like CDD argue "that the poor not only want to contribute to the effort to alleviate poverty, but also have both the capacities and resources to do so" (Mason & Beard, 2008, pg. 245-246). Another element of these approaches is recognizing and relying on the experience and knowledge of local communities (Tremblay & Gutberlet, 2012). This includes the valuing of traditional and indigenous knowledge and respect for local institutions. There is also a growing awareness that

pouring money into a development project does not determine its success- one must also consider the community and context, social norms, collective action, and level of unity (Mason & Beard, 2008).

An important impact on the policy process in this bottom-up approach is the increased need for support from community members before and during implementation. However, the importance of outside expertise cannot be ignored either. In communities that are isolated and where average education levels are low, there can be benefits to having educated foreigners bringing new ideas (Vivian, 1994). As Vivian (1994) found in rural Zimbabwe, some communities express that they are unable to provide innovative solutions. This study grapples with these tradeoffs in valuing local knowledge and breaking the cycle of imperialism with the benefits of foreign donations and expertise.

The success of CDD projects compared with conventional external management approaches is mixed. Many studies have found that development projects involving community participation have contributed to poverty alleviation and improved social capital (Beard & Desgupta, 2006; Bebbington, 1999; Labonne & Chase, 2011; Nkonya et al., 2012). However, other studies have found that some community development and empowerment projects on poverty alleviation have been unsuccessful (Tanga & Mundau, 2014). A key barrier to CDD approaches is the phenomenon of elite capture, where community decisions are often made by a handful of local elites even when the intent is to be inclusive (Labonne & Chase, 2008). Another potential barrier to a successful long-term CDD project is a high dependence on outside funding (Tanga & Mundau, 2014). In a case study in Zimbabwe, two local NGOs did a poor job of actually involving the community in their projects and were too dependent on outside funding (Tanga & Mundau, 2014).

Cornwall (2003) also importantly points out that often community-driven development can be biased and driven by gendered interests, leaving some community members without a voice. Power dynamics often result in women not having much of a say in CDD projects even when they are specifically included (Cornwall, 2003). For example, Mohanty (2002) shows that although an Indian forestry management committee encourages a certain percentage of women participating, much of the decision-making depends on the head of the committee and the forest bureaucrat- both of whom are men. Cornwall (2003) cautions against this type of artificial involvement calling it the "add women and stir approach" which needs to be replaced with "strategies and tactics that take account of the power effects of difference, combining advocacy to lever open spaces for voice with processes that enable people to recognize and use their agency" (p. 1338). Lack of meaningful inclusion of women is one of the major pitfalls that have been noted in the literature on attempts to employ a community-driven development model.

4. Role of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)

Both weak state institutions, as well as market failures, have been cited as reasons for the burgeoning of NGOs in Latin America and all over the world in the 1980s and 1990s (Banks et al., 2015; Fifka et al., 2016). As such, over the last several decades NGOs have become important policy and political actors in the developing world (Clarke, 1997; Dupuy et al., 2016). Some authors even see the new transition towards sustainable development and ever-diminishing state-led development as another opportunity for NGOs to step up (Fifka et al., 2016; Hassan & Forhad, 2013; Vivian, 1994). In particular, Fifka et al. (2016) assert that since "in many Latin American countries governmental institutions are still weak, NGOs can make a significant contribution in creating socio-economic and environmental progress" (p. 1115). NGOs have also

been celebrated for their local, contextual knowledge and understanding (Banks et al., 2015). Success stories of NGOs implementing sustainable, participatory, and innovative solutions to local challenges has resulted in many "researchers and policymakers increasingly linking the goal of sustainable development with the promotion of NGO initiatives" (Vivian, 1994, p.170).

NGOs are often described as filling a role that promotes democratization and strengthens civil society, but such traits should not be taken as axiomatic (Mercer, 2002). There is a potential danger that in their efforts towards democratization, NGOs do not have the capacity and legitimacy to be the most effective representatives of 'the poor' (Mitlin et al., 2007). Sometimes NGOs end up reinforcing existing structural inequalities and in this way are not an alternative to current development, but instead "actually heralded a new wave of imperialism" (Mitlin et al., 2007, p.1700). This is especially a concern for organizations that are connected to an international NGO or institutions from the Global North in general.

While a purported strength of NGOs is that they are not constrained in the same way government is, Banks et al. (2015) argue that NGOs are still restricted by their reliance on donors. Rather than truly inciting change and opposing hegemonic systems, Banks et al. (2015) fear that often NGOs are pressured to merely perpetuate dominant regimes and fall short on transformative social justice issues. There is evidence that many governments of developing countries indeed feel threatened by international aid coming through NGOs and may impose policies to limit this foreign influence (Clarke, 1998; Dupuy et al., 2016). In fact, over the last twenty years, "39 of the world's 153 low- and middle-income countries have adopted laws restricting the inflow of foreign aid to domestically operating NGOs" (Dupuy et al., 2016, p. 299). While there might be a variety of reasons for implementing these restrictive policies, these actions indicate that there is some level of concern about the influence foreign NGOs may have.

Are these concerns substantiated? The answer is contextually dependent, but a large study on Latin American NGOs suggests that worry about organizations being too influenced by donors or governments is perhaps unfounded. A survey of 306 NGOs operating in 18 different Latin American countries found that overwhelmingly NGOs regard society, rather than government or business, as their main stakeholder (Fifka et al., 2016). In fact, companies and governments were actually their least preferred cooperation partners (Fifka et al., 2016).

However, NGOs do often partner with many institutions at any one time. For this reason, NGOs have also been described not as a separate third sector, but instead as a part of an interconnected ecosystem with other organizations and government institutions (Banks et al., 2015; Bebbington, 1997). By many this is considered an advantage and indicates that NGOs are well-suited to fill a coordinating role between different actors and sectors (Banks et al., 2015; Bebbington, 1997). Thus, several complications arise here about the role of NGOs. NGOs fill the gap left by weak state institutions and are not constrained by bureaucracy, yet they also often partner with governments. NGOs have a devotion to serving civil society, yet they also partner with companies whose goals are frequently more centered on profit. This lack of clarity has motivated this study to also consider the roles of NGOs, especially in terms of the position they can play in the implementation of sustainable development projects and how they differ from government institutions.

5. Social Constructivism

Using a post-positivistic approach, this study employs the sociological theory of social constructivism as the guiding conceptual framework.[5] Smith and Larimer (2013) point out that

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[5]Scheider and Ingram's (1993) influential social construction policy framework is useful in understanding how target populations of policies are socially constructed. However, this study chooses to focus more

since the academic field of public policy lacks a unifying conceptual framework policy scholars use a wide variety of frameworks and often borrow from other social science disciplines. Though this array of perspectives is a continuum, the policy field is broadly divided either the rationalist or the post-positivist camp (Smith & Larimer, 2013). A post-positivist approach "rejects the linear, putatively objective, problem-solving [rationalist] approach in favor of discourse and interpretive analysis… to understand the various perspectives, why they lead to conflict, and how they might accommodate each other in the form of purposive government action or inaction." (Smith & Larimer, 2013, pg. 116).

Post-positivist approaches are based on the assumption that the world is socially constructed and that "perception in the social and political world *is* reality; no independent, universal world separate from our own social and mental constructions exists" (Fischer, 2003; Smith & Larimer, 2013, pg. 11). Berger and Luckmann (1966), who first introduced of social constructivism, propose that these perceptions of reality influence how humans behave, create knowledge, and communicate with others. Berger and Luckmann (1966) also discuss the importance of language as a means of socially constructing reality and transmitting these meanings to future generations. In general, social constructivism offers that the analysis of "the role of knowledge in the dialectic of individual and society, of personal identity and social structure, provides a crucial complementary perspective for all areas of sociology" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, pg. 208).

The ideas of social constructivism motivate this study to explore cross-cultural conceptualizations of development, sustainability, and the role of NGOs and government

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broadly on conceptualizations of terms (like 'development' and 'sustainability') and the roles of NGOs rather than how groups of actors (target populations) are socially constructed and impacted by particular policies.

institutions. Although normative theories like social constructivism make no effort to reveal universal truths, "they get us close to understanding the different perspectives that underlie conflict in public policy arenas" (Smith & Larimer, 2013, pg. 18). This study will analyze the implementation of the theoretical concept of sustainable participatory development with a focus on considering various viewpoints and identifying any conflicts or disagreements that arise from differing social constructions of these ideas.

6. Research Contributions

The qualitative research presented in this case study of a sustainable development NGO in rural indigenous Guatemala contributes to the growing literature on sustainable and community-driven development efforts as well as the roles of NGOs within the larger context of contemporary Latin America. Although researchers such as Salmen (1987) have advocated for qualitative methods in international development research, there are currently very few qualitative studies and most center on program evaluation rather than examining the connection between theory and practice. Smith and Larimer (2013) also note that policy research is largely dominated by rationalist approaches and suggest more studies use a post-positivist lens. The lack of agreement on a definition of 'sustainability' within international development literature indicates that there is potential for disagreements and differing social constructions in diverse, cross-cultural community development programs. This research meets the need to examine how theoretical paradigm shifts are reflected in on-the-ground NGO implementation of sustainable and participatory development projects. As far as this study is aware, there are no similar explorations of grassroots sustainable development NGO operations in the context of rural, indigenous Guatemala.
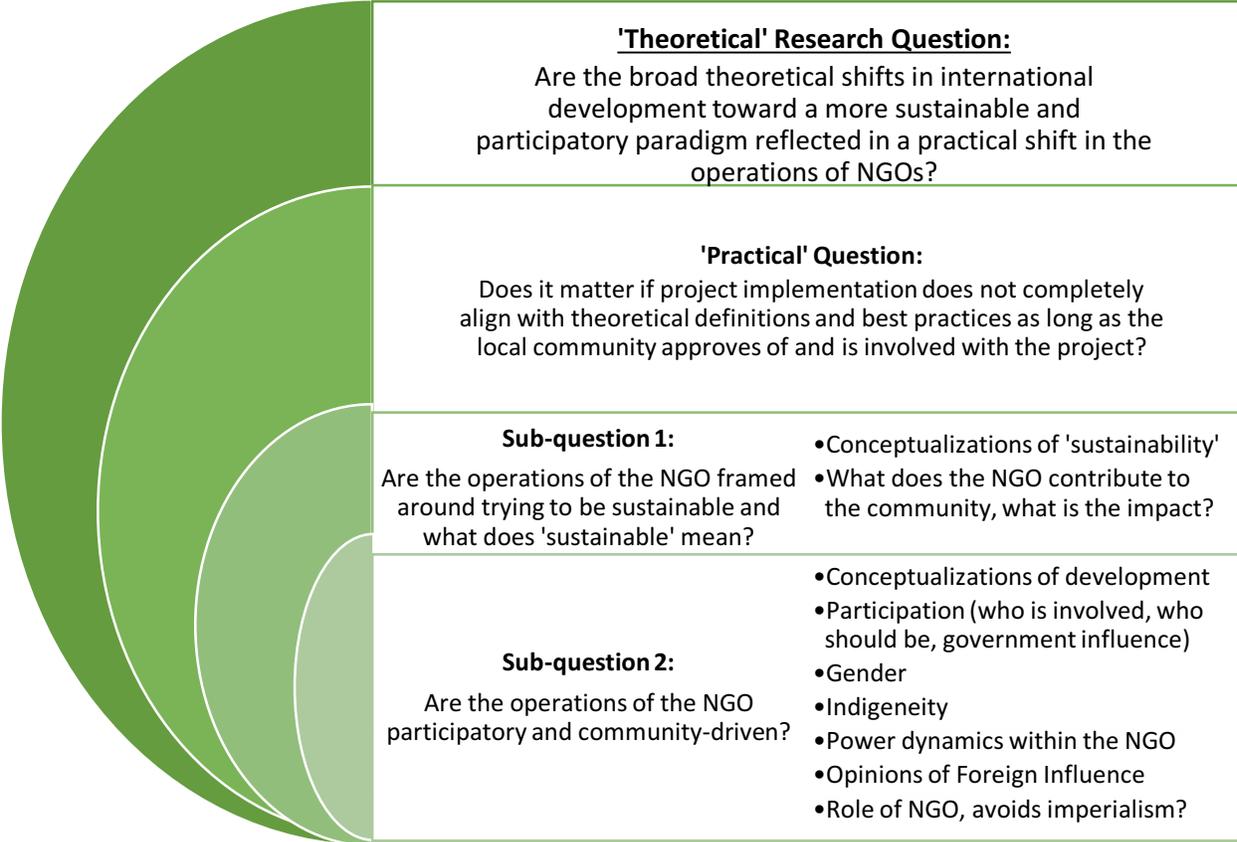
Methods

1. Overview of Methodology

In the field of international development there is an ever-growing awareness that context matters and there has been a call for research that goes deeper than national statistics (Cornwall, 2003; Mason & Beard, 2008; Rhoades, 2006; Salmen, 1987). Though quantitative data is certainly useful in providing meaningful statistical analysis, qualitative methods are often able to better reflect the multidimensionality of international development topics (Salem, 1987; Tiwari, 2009). Thus, this study employs a qualitative approach to conduct a most-likely crucial case study.

This research is motivated by a larger, overarching question: Are the broad theoretical shifts in international development toward a more sustainable and participatory paradigm reflected in a practical shift in the operations of NGOs? This essay will look specifically at a grassroots sustainable development NGO in rural Guatemala to determine whether their operations reflect these broad theoretical shifts or if it implements traditional neoclassical approaches. Taking this a step further, this study will also ask from a policy perspective if it matters whether or not the academic theoretical shift is fully reflected in practice. It should be noted that in this study, 'practice' will focus mainly on the process of how the NGO has implemented objectives. Though 'practice' could also refer to day-to-day tasks of the organization and its employees, this research takes a broader lens towards outcomes.

Figure 1 below shows how the research questions and sub-questions of this study are nested within the larger inquiry. Sub-question 1 addresses the sustainability aspect while sub-question 2 gets at the elements of participatory development approaches. Sub-question 2 is

nestled within the first since participatory and community-driven approaches are seen in the

literature as being a fundamental piece of the paradigm of sustainable development and what
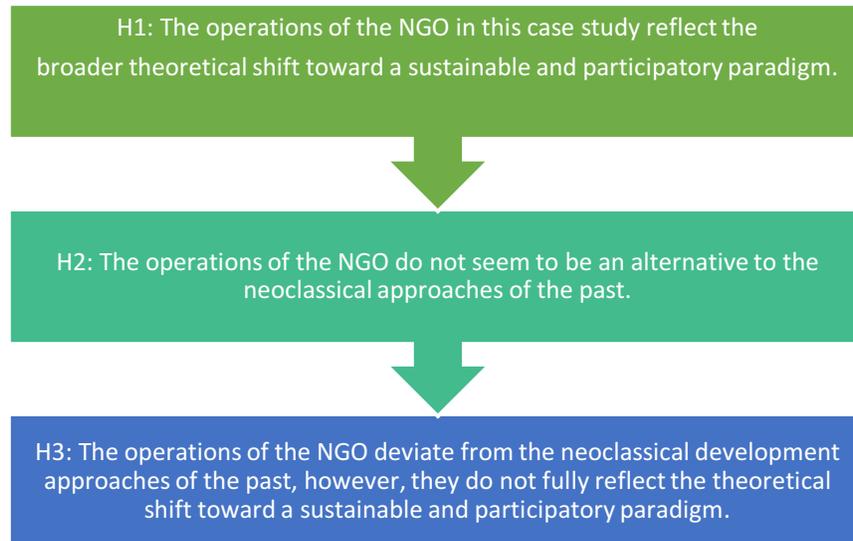
makes development successful.

Figure 1: Research questions and sub-questions from broad to narrow.

'Theoretical' Research Question:
Are the broad theoretical shifts in international development toward a more sustainable and participatory paradigm reflected in a practical shift in the operations of NGOs?

'Practical' Question:
Does it matter if project implementation does not completely align with theoretical definitions and best practices as long as the local community approves of and is involved with the project?

Sub-question 1:
Are the operations of the NGO framed around trying to be sustainable and what does 'sustainable' mean?

- Conceptualizations of 'sustainability'
- What does the NGO contribute to the community, what is the impact?

Sub-question 2:
Are the operations of the NGO participatory and community-driven?

- Conceptualizations of development
- Participation (who is involved, who should be, government influence)
- Gender
- Indigeneity
- Power dynamics within the NGO
- Opinions of Foreign Influence
- Role of NGO, avoids imperialism?

This study uses crucial-case methodology and is designed as a most-likely case study. A

crucial case is one where a phenomenon indeed occurs when the probability of that event is high

(Eckstein, 1975). Some of the most valuable cases are when a theory or hypothesis fails to be

confirmed when it was most likely to be true or, conversely, when a least-likely case is

convincingly supported (George & Bennett, 2004). From the theoretical research question, this

study derives three hypotheses outlined below in Figure 2. If this most-likely case finds that the expected phenomenon occurs (NGO operations reflect theory) then H1 will be confirmed.

Figure 2. Hypothesis 1, 2, and 3.

H1: The operations of the NGO in this case study reflect the broader theoretical shift toward a sustainable and participatory paradigm.

H2: The operations of the NGO do not seem to be an alternative to the neoclassical approaches of the past.

H3: The operations of the NGO deviate from the neoclassical development approaches of the past, however, they do not fully reflect the theoretical shift toward a sustainable and participatory paradigm.

Many researchers who agree with Eckstein's idea of the crucial case argue that "the crucial case is the most methodologically defensible approach to single-case analysis" (Gerring, 2007, pg. 232). Other methodologists are skeptical that any single case could play a critical role or 'prove' a theory (Sekhon, 2004). However, a more moderate approach can be employed to place less emphasis on fully proving a theory or a hypothesis with one case and avoid making bold claims about causation (Levy, 2008). As long as not too much emphasis is put on the causal power of crucial cases, many qualitative researchers argue that well-chosen case studies can strengthen theory and hypothesis testing (Levy, 2008). Case selection is a considerable source of bias in qualitative research and the crucial case approach hones case selection to remove some of this selection bias.

2. Case and NGO Selection

Latin America – Guatemala

Broadly, Latin America is a pertinent context for examining the role of Western grassroots sustainable development NGOs because of notoriously weak state institutions and flawed democracies, a long history of negative foreign influence from the U.S. government and private U.S. companies, and the historical institutional discrimination against indigenous communities and women (Pick de Weiss & Sirkin, 2010; Lopez & Perry, 2008). Within Latin America, Guatemala is perhaps the epitome of these factors. Emerging from a thirty-six-year dictatorship and genocide of indigenous people, the Central American nation-state of Guatemala is still healing from both the war and its colonial past. As the national Guatemalan government intensifies its focus on foreign investment and away from providing social services, it is important to see who can fill this gap (Hawkins, McDonald, & Adams, 2013; Gwynne & Kay, 2004). This has spurred debate about the role of the government and NGOs in providing social services, especially for more rural or isolated communities with severe poverty issues. Another challenge to NGO initiatives has been the attempt to respectfully and meaningfully involve indigenous communities and knowledge.

The inclusion of indigenous communities is particularly crucial since Guatemala is the Latin American country with the highest proportion of indigenous people, with at least 40% of the total population identifying as indigenous Maya (HDI, 2014). The term "Maya" captures a shared heritage but refers to a diversity of distinct cultural groups and at least 21 different Mayan languages. Mayan communities have been disproportionally impacted by not only the war and genocide but also a long-reaching history of exclusion from formal and informal institutions alike (Foxen, 2010; Pick de Weiss & Sirkin, 2010; Smith, 2015). Indigenous communities are often located in rural areas that have been largely ignored by Latin American states, making

these regions an apt choice for studying NGOs and their potential role in providing social services.

The extensive entanglement of the United States in Guatemalan politics, especially during the Guatemalan Civil War, makes this case study of a U.S.-based NGO operating in Guatemala very relevant in addressing the broad question of this study. Research has recognized that the exploitative development policies of the past are not the way to proceed and that previously marginalized groups need to be included in development, but it is unclear if NGOs have been able to combat this legacy of imperialism. Organizations taking a sustainable and community-driven development approach should theoretically be able to combat structures of global inequality by using their connections to redistribute wealth from the Global North to low-income countries like Guatemala. As far as this study is aware, these elements have not been explored and thus all of these factors make Guatemala an ideal choice for this investigation.

NGO Selection and Community Context

The broader question this research hopes to address is whether or not theoretical shifts in international development toward a more sustainable and participatory paradigm are reflected in a practical shift in the operations of NGOs. This research selects a most-likely case that is most likely to confirm the hypothesis that NGO operations reflect the broader theoretical shift toward a sustainable and participatory paradigm. An NGO that refers to itself as being 'grassroots', 'community-driven', and that has 'sustainability' as a part of its mission statement is likely to have designed operations to reflect these ideas. As such, the official mission of the organization Long Way Home that is chosen for this case study is "to use sustainable design and materials to construct self-sufficient schools that promote education, employment and environmental

stewardship" (Our Mission, 2015). On the NGO's website, they describe their school

construction efforts as using "a grassroots community development strategy to bring local

residents together to learn about eco-friendly living, appropriate sustainable technologies, and

improved waste management solutions" (Our Story, 2015). The NGO Long Way Home was thus

selected for this most-likely case study since it describes itself as 'sustainable' and using a

'grassroots community development strategy'.

How 'most-likely' of a case is Long Way Home? In order to get an idea of

generalizability, this study looked at how common it is for NGOs in Guatemala to include

sustainability and participatory development in their mission statement or description online.

This study searched online for the first ten smaller NGOs registered in the U.S. and operating in

Guatemala (excluding larger organizations like the Habitat for Humanity, USAID projects, UN

organizations etc.). These majority of these organizations are also working on projects to build

schools or other infrastructure, educate Guatemalans, or provide small medical clinics and health

education. These ten are a convenience sample and may not be entirely representative but they

provide some comparison.

Of these ten, only two organizations (Long Way Home and another called Mayan

Families) mentioned both sustainability and participatory development in their mission

statement. Two organizations (Hug it Forward and Seeds of Hope) included participatory

development but not sustainability. Three NGOs mentioned sustainability but not a participatory

development approach (Common Hope, Primeros Pasos, and Safe Passage). The final three did

not refer to sustainability nor participatory development in their mission statement (Cooperative

for Education, Friends of San Lucas, and Inter-American Health Alliance). Although they may

have mentioned some amount of 'collaboration' with local community leaders, they did not

describe a bottom-up, grassroots, or participatory approach. Since out of these ten organizations only two (20%) include sustainability and participatory development as part of their mission statement, those cases (including the case of Long Way Home) are considered most-likely to implement sustainable and participatory development strategies.

During the summer of 2016, this research was conducted in the rural and primarily indigenous municipality of San Juan Comalapa, Chimaltenango, Guatemala. Known as a town of artists and painters, Comalapa is also home to both famous painter Andrés Curruchich and the longest mural in Guatemala depicting the town's history. The rolling landscape is worked by agricultural day laborers, the most common job in the area, growing corn. Named after the tortilla-making griddle or 'comal', Comalapa literally means land of tortilla makers. Despite Comalapa being a rural town, the main street is crowded and full of life on market days (Sunday, Tuesday, and Friday). Though disappearing over generations, it is still common for families to speak the local Mayan language, Kaqchikel. Most houses and buildings are made out of cement blocks and have laminated metal ceilings. Internet is a privilege mostly encountered at internet cafes rather than in homes. The average education level in Comalapa is seventh grade and the unemployment rate is 87% as of 2015 (INE, 2015).

The researcher spent three months in this community and interned with the NGO of focus, Long Way Home. Long Way Home is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization registered in the United States since its creation in 2004 and has operated exclusively in San Juan Comalapa. Long Way Home uses a participatory community development strategy that engages local residents to work on sustainable development projects that promote education, environmental stewardship, and employment (Our Mission, 2015). Long Way Home completed a community park project and since 2008 has been working on a sustainably built school that increases access

to education for community members, especially low-income families. There are currently about 130 students attending the school called Técnico Chixot. The curriculum has an additional focus on environmental education as well as vocational coursework in mechanics, electrical work, welding and more. Long Way Home is an excellent fit for this study since the organization is committed to sustainable, community-driven development and is also a U.S. institution operating in Latin America. While all the majority of administrative staff members are Westerners from either the United States, Canada, or Australia (9 total during this study), all of the teachers and construction workers are Guatemalans (approximately 45 total).[6]

Participant Selection

There are five different participant groups included in this study- Guatemalan NGO staff members, Foreign NGO staff members, Interns, Volunteers, and Community Members.[7] Of the 47 participants from Long Way Home, 21 are Community Members (44.6%), 9 are Guatemalan NGO Staff (19.1%), 8 are Volunteers (17%), 6 are Foreign NGO Staff (12.8%), and 3 are Interns (6.4%). The Guatemalan NGO staff members all work as construction workers building additions to the school that Long Way Home operates. The ethnicity of participants is described by three categories: Indigenous (30 participants, 63.8%); foreigners from the Global North (14 participants, 29.8%); and foreigners from the Global South (3 participants, 6.4%). The majority of the sample identifies as female (34, 72.3%) while remaining 13 identify as male (27.7%). Most of the interviews were conducted in Spanish (32, 68.0%) while the rest were in English (15, 31.9%).

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[6] The exact number of staff members (especially foreign staff) fluctuates over time.
[7] For further description of each of these groups and their relative involvement in the NGO, see Figure 3 in Appendix E.

This study used a purposive sampling method to effectively use limited time and resources to select individuals who are particularly experienced with or knowledgeable about the subject of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Patton, 2002). Participants were chosen based on who would have had experience with and knowledge of the NGO's operations and influence in the community from a variety of perspectives. For example, NGO staff have a deeper knowledge of the organization's operations than community members, but both groups are familiar with the NGO and may have very different opinions about the impact of the NGO. Interviewing both foreign and Guatemalan NGO staff is crucial in order to evaluate if the collaborative, grassroots management proposed in community-driven development literature is reflected in actual NGO operations. In evaluating whether the project is community-driven and if the NGO is having an imperialistic influence or not, the opinions of community members is clearly essential. For certain categories of participants with low total numbers, the purposive sampling was also a census. For example, during the researcher's time with the NGO there were only three interns and all three were interviewed.[8]

3. Data Collection & Analysis

This study collected data through semi-structured interviews. The NGO Long Way Home assisted with recruiting participants. Names have been omitted to de-identify the data and protect the confidentiality of participants. With consent from interview participants, interviews were audio-recorded. Participants had to be able to be interviewed in either Spanish or English. The researcher who conducted interviews is a native speaker of English and also extremely proficient in Spanish with a BA in Spanish Linguistics. While all interviewees were able to speak Spanish

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[8] See Table 7 in Appendix F which shows participant groups and total number of individuals by gender in each category compared to those interviewed.

or English, some community member's first language is the Mayan language Kaqchikel. In order to ensure effective communication with community members, for these interviews the researcher was accompanied by a female Guatemalan NGO employee who is bilingual in Spanish and Kaqchikel. Some of the international volunteer's first languages were Arabic or French, however, all spoke English very proficiently. Whenever possible, interviews were conducted in the native language of the interviewee.[9]

There are 4 different sets of interview questions- one for community members, one for Guatemalan NGO employees, one for Spanish-speaking volunteers, and one in English for Foreign NGO staff, interns, and English-speaking volunteers. Full sets of interview questions can be found in Appendices A-D. The interview questions are original to this study, though the two about conceptualizations of "development' and 'sustainability' were influenced by the previous work of Tiwari (2009) which asked about grassroots definitions of 'poverty' from community members. Questions were also shaped by the social constructivism framework, which was a useful lens for thinking about how conceptualizations of terms might be socially constructed differently in different groups, cultures, or languages.

A common feature of case study research is the use of multiple sources of data collection (Creswell, 2013; Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015). As Maxwell (2013) mentions, participant observation can be an important strategy for better understanding context as well as facilitate triangulation to improve validity. For these reasons, this study also collected data through participant observation. Since the researcher was fully immersed in the local community

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[9] As a cross-cultural, bilingual study, translation was an important part of study design. Translation verification was provided by a Guatemalan researcher with a BA in Anthropology who is bilingual in Spanish and English and had previously conducted surveys for Long Way Home. She reviewed both the versions of the interview guides to make sure the translations were accurate, appropriate for the specific context, and accessible for all education levels (as some interviewees have college education while others are illiterate).

including living with a Guatemalan host family, essentially the entire duration of her three-month stay was participant observation. Recognizing that everything is data, the researcher carried a journal and took notes whenever possible (Babbie, 2007; Jick, 1979; Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015). The researcher also engaged in self-reflection and self-reflexivity by journaling throughout the experience, which is particularly important in international research settings and given the positionality of the researcher (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2013; May, 2002).

Babbie (2007) identifies reactivity, or participants acting in certain ways due to the influence of the researcher, as a major threat to validity. This researcher was very concerned about this issue of validity and how her positionality as a white, educated, female researcher from the United States may impact interviews. To reduce this potential issue, the researcher built relationships with many of the NGO employees by being involved with the organization and spending the first few weeks doing manual labor and working alongside the Guatemalan construction workers (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015).

Maxwell (2013) also discusses how long-term involvement can help improve validity and researcher bias can be significantly reduced through systematic coding. The researcher spent a considerable amount of time out in the community getting to know people, places, local expressions, and customs. Observation notes from this immersive experience were used as an extra source to help triangulate topics community members and NGO employees discussed in interviews in order to verify findings and help improve validity (Jick, 1979; Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015).

The first step in data analysis was simply to compile and read through the interview transcriptions and observation notes (Maxwell, 2013). Next, a codebook was developed through an iterative, open coding process to systematically analyze the data (Berg & Lune, 2004; Denzin

& Lincoln, 1994; Maxwell, 2013; Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015).[10] An online qualitative

analysis tool called Dedoose was used to keep coded transcriptions more organized and facilitate

easier analysis. Though interviews are the primary method, participant observation notes were

used to provide context, fill in gaps, and were included as a part of the open coding process.

Relevant participant observation data not found in interviews will be discussed in data analysis,

but otherwise was predominately used for supplemental and triangulation purposes.

Data Analysis

1. Development

Table 1 below shows the most commonly coded themes that arose when asking

participants what 'development' means to them. Overwhelmingly participants defined

"development" as the idea of progress in terms of improving, growing 'better', and moving

forward (38.3% of 47 participants). This is consistent with the idea that development is about

interventions to create change and also corresponds with the conceptualization of development as

stages. As one female Guatemalan staff member said, "development is a change, not being the

same, so it's something changing day by day".[11] It seems that development is broadly

conceptualized by participants as improving quality of life, which is also consistent with the

literature. Many participants mentioned specific spheres of life that development can improve,

most commonly economic (25.5%) and educational opportunities (23.4%). One community

member discussed how educational factors and environmental stewardship are an integral part of

development for future progress. She says "community development for me means that

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[10] For full codebook with list of codes and descriptions, see Table 8 in Appendix G.

[11] Original quote: "Desarrollo es un cambio, no estar en lo mismo, entonces es cambiar día a día algo."

everyone, as well as children, has to study or learn to recycle, or to take care of the environment so that there is further development in our family and in our country".[12] Interestingly, only three participants (6.4%) brought up environmental stewardship in their definitions and all three are Guatemalans (two community members and one Guatemalan NGO staff member).

Table 1. Most frequently mentioned themes in definitions of development based on participant group.

Themes	NGO Staff-Foreign	NGO Staff-Guatemalan	Intern	Volunteer	Community Member	Total
Progress	2 (33.3%)	4 (44.4%)	3 (100%)	6 (75%)	3 (14.3%)	18
Bottom-up community involvement	4 (66.7%)	5 (55.5%)	1 (33.3%)	4 (50%)	3 (14.3%)	17
Economic factors	2 (33.3%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (33.3%)	2 (25%)	4 (19%)	12
Educational opportunities	3 (50%)	4 (44.4%)	-	-	4 (19%)	11
Collaboration	2 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (33.3%)	2 (25%)	2 (9.5%)	8
Specific project example	-	2 (22.2%)	-	-	6 (28.6%)	8
Don't know	-	-	-	-	5 (23.8)	5

Although foreign influence is a largely debated theme within development literature, only four people (8.5% of 47 participants) mentioned this topic when defining 'development'. Foreign influence is discussed later in response to questions about the roles of NGOs and NGO impacts, but it is interesting to note the infrequency of mentions in relation to development. There could be an issue here if Guatemalans have a very different conceptualization of development than foreigners. Drawing on the theory of social constructivism, this study anticipates variation in definitions of 'development' across different languages, cultures, and perhaps genders. Yet,

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[12] Original quote: "Desarrollo comunitario para mi significa que todos, pues así como los niños, tienen que estudiar o aprender a reciclar a cuidar al medio ambiente para que más adelante hay desarrollo en nuestra familia y en nuestro país."

contrastingly, little variation is found between different groups of participants. The major

difference found is that when defining development many community members referred to

specific development projects, such as sewage systems and fixing roads, rather than giving an

abstract definition as most foreigners did. For example, one community member said that

development "would be sewage, the roads, and electricity. They are the most important

community developments".[13]

The second-most mentioned theme is bottom-up community involvement. Half of the

volunteers (50%), one-third of interns (33.3%), over half (55.5%) of Guatemalan NGO staff, and

the two-thirds (66.7%) of foreign NGO staff discussed the importance of community

involvement in development. These responses are exemplified by one volunteer who says that

development "means improving the community by members of the community". Interestingly,

only 3 of the 21 community members themselves (14.3%) included bottom-up community

involvement as a part of their definition of development. This does not necessarily mean that

community members do not think that bottom-up approaches in development are important,

however this stands out. A similar trend is found and discussed later in Table 3 regarding the

results about who participants thought should be involved in development work.

Often the themes of progress and bottom-up community involvement were mentioned

together, as exemplified by a volunteer who says "I think to me it means like how things are

progressing and if they're going in a positive direction, whether they are trying to make a better

community for themselves". Others also mentioned the collaborative nature of community

involvement in development and progress. Another volunteer describes how, to her, development

"is like growing a community together, bringing a community together so that they can work as a

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[13] Original quote: "Sería el drenaje, los caminos, y electricidad. Son las más importantes desarrollos comunitarios."

team to accomplish certain things. And I guess for the betterment of the whole community and everybody in it". The themes of bottom-up community involvement and collaboration also came up frequently when participants were asked who should be involved in development, which will be addressed in the community-driven participatory development section of data analysis.

2. Sustainability

One of the major criticisms of 'sustainability' in the literature is the lack of a widely accepted and unequivocal definition. Through the lens of social constructivism, it is expected that different cultural, societal, and linguistic groups could have different conceptualizations of sustainability. Despite this, results show that definitions of sustainability do not vary greatly across participants. Table 2 summarizes the eight major themes that came up most frequently when participants defined sustainability.

Table 2. Most frequently mentioned themes in definitions of sustainability based on participant group.

Themes	NGO Staff-Foreign	NGO Staff-Guatemalan	Intern	Volunteer	Community Member	Total
Self-sufficient	5 (83.3%)	6 (66.7%)	2 (66.7%)	3 (37.5%)	3 (14.3%)	19
Don't know	-	-	-	-	14 (66.7%)	14
Long-term approach	3 (50%)	1 (11.1%)	3 (100%)	5 (62.5%)	-	12
Economic factors	3 (50%)	4 (44.4%)	-	-	3 (14.3%)	11
Maintaining a family	1 (16.7%)	2 (22.2%)	-	-	4 (19%)	7
Environmental stewardship	2 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)	-	3 (37.5%)	-	6
Organizational Dynamics	3 (50%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (33.3%)	-	-	6
Holistic	2 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)	2 (66.7%)	1 (12.5%)	-	5

Chiefly, sustainability is defined as something that is self-sufficient. Here 'self-sufficient' can refer to being able to support oneself without relying on others, the ability to take care of oneself, a structure or system that replenishes itself, not needing too many outside resources, or something that can continue on its own for a long time. "It's something that can be maintained by itself. One thing that turns around, I think that is sustainable. In itself it can continue" is how one Guatemalan staff member describes sustainability.[14] More specifically, seven participants talk about self-sufficiency and sustainability in the context of supporting or maintaining a family. As one community member succinctly states, "it's like sustaining the family".[15]

Another common theme mentioned in interpretations of sustainability is the idea of long-term approaches or solutions. Twelve participants (including half of foreign NGO staff, over half of volunteers, and all three interns) discussed the importance of a long-term approach to sustainability. In fact, for many, this seemed to be a key feature that made sustainability an alternative to previous approaches. A female volunteer describes sustainability as "actually fixing the root of the problem or creating some sort of structure that replenishes itself… like not just like a quick development solution but like grow naturally". An intern discusses how she sees the difference between traditional development work and sustainability:

> "I believe the development work that goes on in the world, a lot of people don't think about their projects 10 or 15 years down the line, which is the sustainable part of this… the long-term process… and I think that it's something that people don't think about, like 'oh yeah I'll go to Africa and build a school', but how's it going to be there or be self-sustained in five years? Or is it just going to be an empty room when you come back?" (Female intern).

Although in the literature sustainability has gone from being centered on the environment to a broader, more holistic concept, only five participants discussed sustainability as being holistic in

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[14] Original quote: "Es algo que se puede mantener por sí mismo. Una cosa que da la vuelta, pienso que es sostenible. En sí mismo para poder seguir."
[15] Original quote: "Es como sostener a la familia."

their definitions (9.4% of 47 participants). However, a foreign staff member who included this idea expressed going through a similar shift on her own:

> "I've spent a lot of time trying to define this in my life. I guess my first thought about sustainability is more environmental sustainability. So using all the resources and not having anything go really "waste". And just having things go in cycles. But I mean I guess sustainability is really so much broader. Like sustainability can also be about economic sustainability, people can support themselves without relying on others. It could also be mental sustainability, the emotional, mental health to be able to do the work that you do and be successful as a human… so sustainability can be environmental sustainability, social, economic, educational" (Female foreign staff member).

Interestingly, no one discussed the need for a tradeoff between economic development and environmental stewardship or a holistic approach being the resolution to this conflict as the literature outlines.

Six participants mentioned sustainability in terms of organizational dynamics such as securing reliable funding sources. This also relates to the idea of self-sufficiency and many talked about organizational funding as an example of this theme. One Guatemalan staff member interprets sustainability as "having a leader by whom one is supported… but it's always the leader who has the last word. The support always comes from him".[16] This participant thought that an organization could not be sustainable without the guidance of a strong leader, which is a unique response. It also brings up the topic of hierarchy, which will come into play more in the community-driven participatory development section of data analysis.

A concern that surfaced in the literature review is if sustainability is simply a buzzword with no real foundation and not substantially different from business (or development) as usual. An analysis of interview responses yields that, at least at a conceptual level in this context, 'sustainability' is viewed differently than 'development'. Whether or not sustainability is

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[16] Original quote: "Sostenible es como tener un líder por quien apoyarse como tener algo… pero siempre es la palabra mayor que tiene el líder. Siempre de el viene el apoyo."

implemented in a way that deviates from traditional development approaches is another question entirely; however, these results offer that sustainability (and by extension sustainable development) is socially constructed in a way that is distinct from just development. Additionally, several participants explicitly discussed the difference between traditional development and sustainability as an approach. These responses emphasized the long-term lens necessary to create a sustainable development project that can be self-sufficient over time and address the root of the issue rather than simply provide a band-aid solution.

Before making any conclusions, it is crucial to note that two-thirds of the community members (14, 66.7%) did not know what 'sustainability' meant or had not heard the word before. Definitions given by the seven community members who did respond are very similar to responses from the other participants. Although this is an unexpected overlap, this study is cautious about making any larger claims since the nonresponse rate is so high. One fear the literature expressed about sustainability is that the concept may be used to continue imperialism in a new way. Even if the concept of 'sustainability' can be found in many cultures, western institutions have certainly popularized the term in international development. Is the introduction of 'sustainability' more imperialistic foreign influence or simply sharing knowledge? Subsequently, does sharing the idea of 'sustainability' place a higher value on western knowledge and perpetual unequal relationships between the global north and south, as critics feared? These questions will be considered further in the discussion of this paper.

3. Community-Driven Participatory Development

Who should be involved?

Several interview questions pertained to community-driven development in order to capture the many dimensions of this concept. The first of these asked about who the participant thinks should be involved in development work. As Table 3 shows, about half of all participants (23, 48.9%) mentioned that the community where the development project is located should be involved. A little over a quarter of participants (13, 27.6%) think that "everyone" should be involved in development. Many of these participants, such as one foreign staff member, simply answered "everyone" as their response to the question. Others expanded further, such as a female Guatemalan worker who thinks that "Everyone can be involved. Everyone should help, contribute their point of view. Everyone can do their part".[17] Overall, responses are overwhelmingly community-focused.

Table 3. Most frequently mentioned themes about involvement in development by participant group.*

Themes	NGO Staff-Foreign	NGO Staff-Guatemalan	Intern	Volunteer	Community Member	Total
Bottom-up community involvement	4 (66.7%)	5 (55.6%)	1 (33.3%)	6 (75%)	7 (33.3%)	23
Everyone	2 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (33.3%)	6 (75%)	3 (14.3%)	13
Government institutions	1 (16.7%)	4 (44.4%)	-	-	3 (14.3%)	8
People from the Global North	1 (16.7%)	-	2 (66.7%)	2 (25%)	-	5

* Based on coded responses to the question: who do you think should be involved in development or development projects? ¿Quién debería estar involucrado con desarrollo o proyectos de desarrollo?

Although, notably, most of the respondents focusing on bottom-up community involvement are not themselves community members. While most volunteers (75%), Guatemalan NGO staff (55.6%), and foreign NGO staff (66.7%) all mentioned community

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[17] Original quote: "Todas las personas puedan estar involucradas. Todos deben ayudar, contribuir su punto de visto. Todo el mundo puede poner su parte"

involvement only 7 out of 21 community members did (33.3%). This is similar to results shown in Table 1 where community members were the participant group with the lowest rates of including bottom-up community involvement in their definitions of development. It is noteworthy that, once again, community members are talking the least about the importance of involving local communities in development.

Eight participants said that government institutions should be involved in development work, and even that the government has an obligation to provide development for its citizens. However, all but one of these same eight participants also expressed that the government is ineffective at development work and corrupt. As one male Guatemalan worker puts simply, "the government has the obligation but it's corrupt and doesn't do anything, it doesn't fulfill its promises".[18] There is an acknowledgment that supposedly the government should play a leading role in development work, although it often seems uninvolved or ineffective.

Five participants, four of whom are from the global north, believe that people from the global north should participate in development work in the global south (10.6% of 47). Due both to higher access to resources and higher education levels and specialized training, they see people from the global north as more capable of doing development work. A volunteer from the global north thinks that "people who are living in developed countries should also help those who aren't living in developed countries". A foreign staff member said that Long Way Home and other development projects "need more people with certifications". Many, if not all, of these participants chose to volunteer or work with Long Way Home because they hold the belief that people from the global north should be a part of development efforts. However, one volunteer

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[18] Original quote: "El gobierno tiene la obligación pero es corrupto y no hace nada, no cumple sus promesas."

expressed that she is not sure that people from the global north should be involved at all in development work.

What do community members think about foreign involvement? As a part of a survey that a Guatemalan researcher conducted for Long Way Home, 49 community members (also parents of students) were asked what they thought about the foreign community being involved in the project.[19] Strikingly, all 49 participants (100%) expressed a positive opinion of the foreign involvement in the community. The three themes community members discussed foreigners bringing to the community are financial support from abroad, new ideas about green construction and waste management, and the opportunity to build relationships with different people.[20] Similarly, the 21 community members interviewed by this researcher were asked the same question and also all responded positively towards foreign involvement (100%). The same three main themes emerged as well, and this overlap with previous research suggests that interview responses were not biased by the positionality of this researcher. In total, all 70 community members expressed approval of foreign involvement. Although this demonstrates a shockingly high acceptance of foreigners, it is not a representative sample of San Juan Comalapa and other data from interviews Guatemalan NGO staff members disagree somewhat with this finding (to be discussed further in the role of NGOs section under the subheading 'benefits and challenges').

Inclusion of Indigenous People

The inclusion of indigenous people was discussed much less overall in interviews than the topic of including women. When asking community members and Guatemalan staff members about what it means to them to be indigenous and how it influences their lives, many simply said

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[19] Original question: "¿Qué piensa de la comunidad extranjera involucrada en el proyecto?"
[20] The final research report and related data belongs to Long Way Home and is only available internally.

"yes, I'm indigenous" ("sí, soy indígena"). When asking Guatemalan staff, foreign staff, interns, and volunteers about power dynamics within the organization, gender and machismo culture came up, but indigeneity did not. Fortunately, data gleaned from participant observation can supplement the lack of interview data.

 Long Way Home definitely has put forth the effort to include indigenous people in their organization and it also helps that it is contextually convenient to do so. In this region where the community is 98% indigenous, almost anyone hired is someone who identifies as indigenous. Out of the 45 Guatemalan NGO employees, only one of them identifies as ladino or not indigenous. Additionally, none of the nine Guatemalan NGO employees who were interviewed report feeling discriminated against within the organization for being indigenous.

 Kaqchikel is spoken openly and often around the construction site as well as being formally taught and used in the classroom. The designs and art that have been incorporated into buildings at the school include many symbols and stories from Mayan culture such as Mayan Gods, nahuales, Mayan pyramids, and significant animals like jaguars.[21] All artistic representations were created by Guatemalan NGO staff and indigenous community artists. Indigenous knowledge is valued and used frequently on site. For example, when the researcher was sick with a stomach bug one of the Guatemalan construction workers took time to show her a natural remedy. The Guatemalan NGO staff all play soccer together once a week but also sometimes travel to the Mayan ruins of Ixichme to play fútbol maya (known in English as Mesoamerican ballgame).

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[21] A nahual is a human being believed to have the power to also transform into an animal form. A person's nahual is based on their birth date in the Mayan calendar. There are 20 nahuals, each with an animal form and accompanying characteristics.

Of the 10 participants who discussed indigeneity at more length (21.3%), discrimination was only mentioned as existing outside of the immediate community such as in Guatemala City. One Guatemalan staff member in particular spoke more about the challenges she and others continue to face as indigenous people. She mentioned the lack of representation of indigenous people in the higher ranks of government. She also talked about how colonization and its lasting effects not only haunt Guatemalan society but continue to shape daily life in powerful ways:

> "It's good to remember history, like when Guatemala was conquered by Spain. The long history. In reality, history is not changing. We continue to always live that history since what was the conquest and our ancestors suffered enough. They treated women really badly and they took away the lands/property that our grandparents had and the rich people turned them into fincas [farms] and forced them to work. So it's sad when one reads the history and I would say that we continue living in this history. Not much has changed. Not much has changed." (Female Guatemalan staff member).[22]

This same Guatemalan staff member also faced intense racism and sexism from universities while trying to obtain her bachelor's degree (something very few indigenous Guatemalan women achieve). "There continues to be very little opportunity for a woman and it's worse if one is indigenous" she explains sadly.[23] Unfortunately, she withdrew and is currently taking some time off from school to figure out possible next steps.

It seems most blatant discrimination based on ethnicity is encountered outside of the community, but structural inequalities throughout formal and informal institutions are pervasive. Still, in terms of Long Way Home, none of the indigenous people interviewed expressed feeling discriminated against or that their voice was not heard because of their ethnicity. However, the

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[22] Original quote: "Es bueno recordar la historia, como cuando Guatemala fue conquistada por España. La historia larga. En realidad, la historia no va cambiando. Seguimos viviendo siempre esa historia desde que fue la conquista y nuestros ancestros sufrieron bastante. A las mujeres los trataron muy mal y los terrenos que tenían nuestros abuelos los quitaron y los ricos los volvieron en fincas y luego los impulsaron a trabajar, entonces es triste cuando uno lee la historia y yo digo seguimos viviendo en esa historia. No ha cambiado mucho. No ha cambiado mucho."
[23] Original quote: "Sigue siendo muy poca oportunidad por una mujer y es mas si uno es indígena."

hierarchical structure of the organization inherently has an ethnicity-related power dynamic since the leader of the organization is a white westerner and indigenous employees are situated lower in the hierarchy.

Power Dynamics within the NGO

Although none of the participants expressed encountering discrimination based on ethnicity in the organization, there are a variety of other power dynamics at play. The hierarchical structure of the organization was the most commonly mentioned theme when asking participants (all groups except for community members, n=26) about power dynamics and relationships within the organization. Eleven participants discussed hierarchy, some in a negative way and other more neutrally (42.3% of 26). A few, such as the following male intern, did not notice too much of a hierarchy besides gender dynamics: "Power dynamics? I haven't seen too much at play. All the workers seem to be on an equal playing field. I haven't noticed too much of a hierarchy. All the workers know each other and they are all friendly to each other. The only thing it can be harder for the women to communicate" (Male intern from the global north).

A different male intern does think that there is a hierarchy, but that it is no different than how a workplace would be set up elsewhere: "I'd say overall it's similar to working dynamics in the U.S. in regards to you sort of have the hierarchies established in the community of workers, and you have some amount of animosity whenever your boss has to chew you out but at the same time you still have a good working relationship with your boss." (Male intern from global north). This description talks about hierarchy merely as an organizational structure, but others equated hierarchy to inequality within the organization. For example, a female intern discusses what she views as a strict hierarchy and power concentrated heavily with one person at the top:

"There's no equal balance of power anywhere. He wants to run the organization like a democracy but it's very authoritarian. Like they took a trip to Venezuela and they took some workers and they were supposed to do some earth building thing for example. But the workers can't really say no to wanting to go. Because if they did, he can always find someone else. So it's kind of like that situation where, if you don't like how something is being run you can tell him but that means he can also say "well if you don't like it then you can leave". … while he is a very good leader and noble leader, he's very insecure and he doesn't trust anyone completely" (Female intern from the global north).

One of the male Guatemalan staff members mentioned that they also thought that sometimes leadership was too strict or harsh. For example, sometimes a group of construction workers will have to work late without pay to redo or finish work that was not deemed adequate (from participant observation notes). However, one male Guatemalan staff member and one female volunteer (from the global north) mentioned that they valued strong leadership and that the leader should always have the final say. Some participants expect or even desire a certain amount of hierarchy while others see the organizational structure as unbalanced and restrictive.

Other power dynamics, such as giving more respect to elders and those with seniority (mentioned by six of 26 respondents, 23%), were discussed in very neutral terms. Five Guatemalan staff members expressed that sometimes there were cultural and linguistic barriers with foreign volunteers on site. One worker described the relationships between foreigners and Guatemalans as "mostly excellent. Well, it depends because if they don't speak Spanish and sometimes we don't speak English, we don't make friends with those people. It is a little bit difficult to communicate. But mostly all the volunteers have been friends, they treat us well, and we continue being friends".[24]

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[24] Original quote: "Mayormente, excelente. Bueno, depende porque si no hablan español a veces como nosotros no hablan ingles, no los hacemos amigos con estas personas. Es un poco difícil comunicar. Pero mayormente, todos los voluntarios han sido amigos, los han tratado bien, y sigue siendo amigos."

Guatemalan and foreign staff members alike described these types of friendships forming between foreigners and Guatemalans. In fact, most report that relations between foreign staff and Guatemalan staff are very positive and friendly. Interestingly, there is more of a divide between Guatemalan teachers and Guatemalan construction workers. As one male Guatemalan worker describes: "Between different groups, I think there is a little discrimination. Yeah, like here between construction workers and teachers we are a little discriminating. As much as workers we discriminate against teachers, similarly teachers discriminate against the workers. Both sides. And between foreigners and Guatemalans, I think things are more friendly".[25]

When asked about why there is this discrimination, he replied "eh, because of occupation. It's a minimum wage or it's a job… it's a simple job, right?".[26] He is referring to the class differences between construction workers and teachers. Construction workers are working for minimum wage and their job is criticized for not requiring education. Becoming a teacher requires more education which, especially in San Juan Comalapa, also requires coming from a family with a higher socioeconomic status.

On the other hand, the construction workers criticize teachers because their work is not physically demanding. Another male Guatemalan staff member comments on how the two groups are very separate: "we hardly share with them because they are in their area teaching… we have to work harder… but yeah it's okay, we say hi and that's all".[27] A couple of other

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[25] Original quote: "Entre grupos diferentes, pienso que un poco de discriminación. Si, como aquí entra trabajadores y maestros somos un poco discriminados. Tanto como trabajadores discriminamos a los maestros y tanto los maestros discriminaron a los trabajadores. Dos lados. Y entre extranjeros y guatemaltecos, pienso son más amable."
[26] Original quote: "Eh, por la ocupación. Es un sueldo mínimo o es un trabajo… es un trabajo simple, no?"
[27] Original quote: "Casi no compartimos porque ellos están en su área, ellos están enseñando… tenemos que trabajar mas duro… pero sí está bien, nada más saludamos y sí."

Guatemalan staff members said that there was a problem because sometimes they greet the teachers but they don't say hi back, which is seen as rude and disrespectful.

Another power dynamic that was brought up by seven of the 26 respondents (26.9%) is that of machismo culture.[28] A female volunteer shares her observations: "Oh, definitely a machismo culture. Definitely. I mean, there's some exceptions like I've met women that definitely defy that and don't really like that part of the culture. But definitely I feel like men are in charge. Women are in the household, men work, women work in the house. Very 1960s USA style." (Female volunteer, global north). A Guatemalan staff member responded saying "the non-acceptance of the female sex here is what I did not like. Not all my colleagues are like that and all the foreigners are very friendly".[29] This also highlights how she sees the problem as being with other Guatemalan staff members and not with foreigners. Similar to the class dynamic, female Guatemalan staff members mention encountering sexism almost exclusively with other Guatemalans. However, female foreign staff members, interns, and volunteers express facing sexism from other foreigners and Guatemalans alike. These results segue into the next section, which reviews findings related to the inclusion of women based on relevant interview questions.

Inclusion of Women

In contrast to the inclusion of indigenous community members, the dynamics of including women in the project and on the construction site were talked about at length. The literature on this topic tells a cautionary story, as many projects that specifically include women can still end up leaving women feeling like their voices are not heard. To say that is what plays

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[28] Machismo culture refers to a patriarchal culture with rigid gender roles and hyper-masculinity. The term is often used to describe gender dynamics found in Latin America.
[29] Original quote: "La no aceptación del sexo femenino aquí. Es lo que no me gusto. No todos los compañeros son así y todos los gringos son muy amables."

out in the case of Long Way Home would be an oversimplification. While it would be a stretch to say that the organization was founded on the principle of including women, the organization has demonstrated a concerted effort to include more women, especially in the past few years. Women have been included on foreign staff almost since the creation of the project and women were hired as teachers at the school. More recently, they also decided to hire women onto their construction team. There are currently three female construction workers and this piece, working directly in contradiction of rigid gender roles, seems to have created the most tension within the organization. The most prominent themes that emerged are: rigid gender roles, setting an example in the community, physical limitations of women, and communication issues.

Community members were asked about what it meant to them to be a man as well as to be a woman (since they are not employees and could not be asked about gender dynamics within the organization). Their responses were very in line with rigid gender roles, describing men as providers and heads of household while women stay at home and have children. In fact, eight of the 21 community members (38%) specifically mentioned the connection between womanhood and motherhood. Perhaps the best example of rigid gender roles comes from an interview with a male community member. When asked what it means to be a man or to be a woman, he looked at the researcher like she was absolutely crazy. His response was simple and left no room for variation: "Man is man. Woman is woman".[30]

While gender roles may be traditionally rigid, the women at Long Way Home are breaking these roles, paving their own futures, and setting an example of what women can do. During an interview with a community member, we were talking about how the two female interviewers (the researcher and the female Guatemalan staff member who assisted) and how we

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[30] Original quote: "Hombre es hombre. Mujer es mujer."

both work on the construction site. Then the next question was about what it means to be a man versus a woman. The community member started answering the question saying that women cannot do the same jobs that men do but then she paused, started laughing, and said "well, I guess some women can!"[31] This is an excellent example of how the female construction workers at Long Way Home are showing that women can work outside the home, even doing physical labor.

Opinions from male Guatemalan staff members about women working on the construction crew are mixed. Two of the six male Guatemalan workers made comments about how women can do the same work as men- although they need more time to do it. Three (of the six male Guatemalan workers, 50%) expressed that women have the same capacity as men. One male Guatemalan worker says "I think it's a really good idea [to include women] because we all have the same capacity. In my view, it's much better when women and men are like equals. We are not machistas or something like that".[32] One talked about how first the construction workers got used to having foreign women (volunteers) working with them. The overall sentiment expressed was that none of the male Guatemalan staff members personally have any problems with women working on the construction site, but that other employees might.

Communication also came up as another challenge for women, especially among foreign women. Generally, in Comalapa men do not listen to women and do not value their voices. One female intern expresses that she expected some amount of difference but was still surprised: "I knew it was a conservative, catholic, Mayan community, but what I found most shocking immediately was people just generally don't talk to me… So working here has been a little

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[31] Original quote: "Bueno, ¡supongo que algunas mujeres pueden!"
[32] Original quote: "Pienso es muy buena idea porque todos tenemos una misma capacidad. Sobre mi punto de vista, es mucho mejor donde las mujeres y hombres son como iguales. No somos como machistas o algo así."

isolating" (Female intern from the global north). All three of the female Guatemalan staff

members mentioned challenges of communicating with their male coworkers. Three of the five

female foreign staff members (who are all in leadership positions) discussed having difficulty

gaining the respect of male Guatemalan staff members.

Overall these findings show that the incorporation of women at Long Way Home has

been a difficult and complicated process. The organization has made considerable effort to

include both foreign and Guatemalan women but these efforts have been constrained by the

larger machismo culture and societal change being such a slow process. Though the quality of

inclusion can still be improved, the organization's objectives align with what theory says a

participatory development approach should entail.

Handoff to Community

The final piece that the literature identified as a threat to community-driven development

projects, which also naturally emerged from interviews, is the issue of dependence on outside

funding. As the goal of many community-driven development projects is to eventually turn the

operations over entirely to the local community, this hand-off process is an important

consideration in examining participatory development strategies. Results from this case study are

consistent with the concerns presented in the literature- dependence on outside funding is a major

challenge and complicates the 'exit strategy'. The operation of the school is currently dependent

on foreign funding. Although there are some potential options to change this, such as through the

private green construction company the founder of Long Way Home created, these are only

possibilities at this point. One female foreign staff member discusses the exit strategy and

foreign funding challenge:

"From the beginning, it was always said that we were going hand it off, and look you know it's not going to be immediate, it's probably going to be a couple years of at least one or two staff members being here to oversee that it's being done correctly…So I think that our biggest barriers for really passing off this entire project to the community would be sort of on the operational side. If we're still relying on fundraising for the operation of the school until forever - at this point, it would still rely on a lot of foreign contacts… The way it looks that we'll still have to have a fundraising person and someone here…But I still believe that the community is capable of taking over the school… Because that's our mission, is to create self-sufficient schools. I think that we are getting there and we're really testing it out and experimenting" (Female staff member from the global north).

In contrast, a male foreign staff member expressed that an exit strategy is not necessary. He also feels that the community does not have the capacity to continue the project on its own both due to funding constraints and knowledge constraints:

"You don't really have to have an exit strategy. You can have people that are ex-pats effectively that stay here and make sure it works. In the past, it's the exit strategy that fucks the project. You're like "hey, peace out, you guys got this" and it's like how is that going to work? None of them [the Guatemalans] know how to do this. Anytime we have given them a project like this it has turned out to be crap. Because they just also haven't had access to technology for ten years to learn how to do all of it. So it [an exit strategy] is not really required. You can have a long-term project and keep building. I guess unless you find a source of private funding. But if it's all based on donations then they'll never survive if the gringos leave. The school will be here. Somebody will probably use it. That will be the end of it" (Male foreign staff member).

But outside funding is not the only constraint the organization faces at it develops an exit strategy. Cultural barriers, social issues, different institutional norms and a political history of corruption create complications as well. For example, in Guatemala it is culturally acceptable to skim money off the top of an organization or project. A different female foreign staff member saw this as being one of the key barriers to developing local leadership. Still, in 2017 the Volunteer Coordinator position will be handed over to a Guatemalan staff member. This will be the first administrative or operations-focused position filled by a Guatemalan and will no doubt

be a test of local capacity. However, even just this attempt shows Long Way Home's dedication to at least mostly turning the project over to the local community at some point in the future.

4. Role of NGOs

Guatemalan staff members, foreign staff members, interns, and volunteers (n=26) were asked about what they considered the overall role of NGOs to be in general. Community members were not asked this question since they would likely not have familiarity with abstract roles of NGOs. As Table 4 highlights, almost half of respondents (11, 47.8%) said that the role of NGOs is to step in where the government has failed either due to inefficiencies, corruption, or lack of effort.

Table 4. Most frequently mentioned themes by participant group about the role of NGOs

Themes	NGO Staff-Foreign	NGO Staff-Guatemalan	Intern	Volunteer	Community Member*	Total
Stepping in where government fails	4 (66.7%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (33.3%)	4 (50%)	-	11
Efficiency, effectiveness	3 (50%)	-	-	3 (37.5%)	-	6
Institutional & administrative barriers	3 (50%)	-	1 (33.3%)	1 (12.5%)	-	5

*Community members were not asked this question so n=26 respondents.

Along this same vein, six participants talked about NGOs as being more efficient or effective than government (23.1% of 26 participants). One female foreign staff member "believe[s] that smaller projects in smaller communities tend to be more effective than government aid just like coming in". A female volunteer thinks that NGOs:

"can play like almost a bigger role when it's small towns because the government isn't paying much attention to these towns. So with organizations like this that can actually go out into the towns and see it for themselves and fix it themselves- it's almost like it's more time consuming, but it's more efficient. Because you don't have like those big people backing you up and promoting you, but you know you're doing it the right way."

Similarly, five respondents (19.2% of 26 participants) said that NGOs can avoid some of the institutional and administrative barriers that are problematic with government bureaucracies. One female foreign staff member thinks "you're able to start right away and do more without the red tape that comes with bureaucracy, a lot of federal governments like our own [the U.S.] and others- there's so many forms… that it becomes an impediment to the work… and historically, the non-profit sector has just done a better job."

Further supporting these ideas, when participants were asked about federal and/or local government involvement in development they were overall unimpressed. All 47 participants were asked this question and major themes are captured in Table 5 below. One community member summarizes many participant's sentiments about the ineffectiveness of Guatemalan government: "Well, the government says that it supports needy families but they haven't helped us. They have never helped us. Maybe in other places they do, but here we have never received support from the government".[33]

Table 5. Most frequently mentioned themes about what the government is doing in terms of development by participant group.

Themes	NGO Staff-Foreign	NGO Staff-Guatemalan	Intern	Volunteer	Community Member	Total
Heard very little	1 (16.7%)	3 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	3 (37.5%)	10 (47.6%)	18
Government ineffective	3 (50%)	4 (44.4%)	-	2 (25%)	6 (28.6%)	15
Government is corrupt	2 (33.3%)	3 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	2 (25%)	2 (9.5%)	10
New government is better	-	2 (22.2%)	-	1 (12.5%)	2 (9.5%)	5

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[33] Original quote: "Pues, el gobierno dice que apoya a las familias necesidades pero a nosotros no han ayudado. Nunca nos han ayudado. Tal vez en otros lados si, pero aquí nosotros nunca hemos recibido apoyo del gobierno."

Others simply said that they had heard and seen very little or even nothing from the government in terms of development. A male Guatemalan staff member thinks that the government "is failing a lot. It doesn't do its job. Every time everything gets worse because each president comes to steal and… every time its worse".[34]

Five participants (10.6% of 47 total) were a little bit more optimistic, seeing that the new 6-month old government is better than previous governments. "Well the [government] that we have now is pretty good because it's collaborating, it's supporting, it's supporting" says one community member.[35] However, only time will tell if the new mayor or new president will take a more active role in meeting community development needs and fulfilling campaign promises. These results strongly support one of the main roles that the literature identifies for NGOs- stepping in to provide services where government institutions are insufficient.

Benefits and Challenges

In interviews, participants (again, excluding community members so n=26) were asked about perceived benefits as well as challenges of being a foreign NGO operating in Guatemala. One of the biggest benefits mentioned was the connections to donors and resources in the United States. For example, a female volunteer says that the benefits are "definitely the connections. Especially [with] this organization, you need donations and you can ask for donations from the U.S. which are a lot more helpful… And I guess just the fact that people in the U.S. have more resources". A male foreign staff member thinks that the sheer quantity of funding that has been

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[34] Original quote: "Está fallando mucho. No hace su trabajo. Cada vez está peor todo porque cada president entra para robar y… cada vez peor."
[35] Original quote: "Pues el [gobierno] que tenemos ahora es bastante bueno porque está colaborando, está apoyando, está apoyando."

raised for the school (one million dollars over ten years) would have never been possible without a U.S. connection. Two other participants mentioned the benefit of being able to raise money in dollars but spend in quetzals because of the favorable exchange rate.

Another huge benefit was the introduction of new ideas, knowledge, and skills that the foreigners brought and taught to Guatemalans. The new type of green construction was especially mentioned as the main example of new ideas that Guatemalans did not know about before. However, this also was seen by some as a challenge. Although the introduction of new ideas can be a positive thing, not everyone wants new knowledge. The majority of Guatemalan staff members (6 out of 9, 66.7%) mentioned that in the community there are many people who do not want to do things differently, learn new things, or associate themselves with foreigners or any strangers. While Guatemalan staff understood that this hesitation is the result of years of negative foreign influence including a recent situation, they expressed that if these people just came to the school to see it for themselves they would realize there is nothing bad and the school is only beneficial for the community.[36]

This finding is in contradiction with the earlier result that all 21 interviewed community members (and 49 from a previous study) felt positive about foreign influence. Perhaps these 70 total are not representative of the entire community, and/or responses given in an interview setting with someone associated with the NGO were more positive than they would have been in casual conversation. Additionally, the issue could also be related to the larger societal issue of very low social trust in Guatemala (Foxen, 2010). Community members who were interviewed

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[36] There was a foreign couple that came to live in Comalapa but wanted to privatize land and supposedly (there are a variety of rumors) hit a young Guatemalan girl. The community rose up and expelled these foreigners. There was some confusion as many Guatemalans thought this couple was related to Long Way Home. However, in a series of community trials, many employees and friends of Long Way Home spoke on their behalf. The community decided that Long Way Home could stay and continue to work in the community.

do at least have some connection with and knowledge about Long Way Home since their children attend the school. Maybe even this low level of familiarity is enough to dissolve initial distrust and suspicion. This explanation is also evidenced by the fact that Guatemalan employees are sure that a visit to the school is enough to convince people the school is benign.

The extensive negative political history between the United States and Guatemala was also cited as a huge challenge. Understandably, many Guatemalans are suspicious of foreign influence and thus it takes a lot of time to build relationships and trust. Taking the time to cultivate these relationships and earn trust were noted as crucial to operating in this context. A male foreign staff member discussed the exploitative relationship between the United States and Guatemala with the lens that small NGOs are suited to development work because they require community buy-in:

> "Now if you want to talk about the U.S. government it's way too long for this, but there's a long history of intentionally creating a slave labor force here [in Guatemala] paying minimum wage so their [the U.S. government's] intention is, at least in Central America and South America, "Fuck them. We want bananas and coffee and everything super cheap." So that's what they do. So in that regard, their vested interests are corrupted. The nice thing about NGOs, at least one can argue, is that they don't have a lot of power and they do require community support, they do have to behave in a certain manner that is ethically and morally responsible. So I guess that would probably be the reason to have NGOs."

Overall, both foreign and Guatemalan participants expressed that despite the challenging aspects of foreign influence, they did not see this project as a continuation of imperialism. Four foreigners and one Guatemalan staff member said that since Long Way Home is not trying to impose any views, especially religious views, on the community members that it is not imperialistic. One female volunteer from the global south talked about how many projects can be problematic if: "you are going to teach them religion… I don't like this because in a certain way

it's like colonization… but here in Guatemala, as long as they do not want to change their culture, it's okay".[37]

Some of the other main challenges of being a foreign NGO operating in Guatemala come down to cultural and linguistic barriers. Foreigners also do not have the same institutional knowledge as a community member who has spent their whole life in the same community. At the end of the day, foreign NGOs are guests in the countries they operate and "the reality is that we are foreigners and if they wanted to kick us out, they could… So far Guatemala has actually been pretty receptive, considering what has happened in the past" (Male foreign staff member). None of the participants expressed that they viewed Long Way Home's project as a continuation of imperialism.

Impact

One of the final interview questions asked participants to reflect on what they think the impact of Long Way Home has been. Interestingly, as Table 6 shows, the top three most frequently mentioned themes are the three E's of sustainability- economic factors, educational opportunities (equity and society) and environmental stewardship. One female Guatemalan worker captured this succinctly saying "it's contributing in terms of the environment, also with education, and even with the economy because of employment".[38] Stable employment was also mentioned very frequently, which is understandably significant in a community with an unemployment rate of 87%.

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[37] Original quote: "Tu vas a ensenarles religión… no me gusta porque en cierta manera es como la colonización… pero aquí en Guatemala, mientras no quieren cambiar su cultura, está bien."
[38] Original quote: "Y esta contribuyendo con el medio ambiente, tanto con educación, y hasta con la economía porque el empleo."

Table 6. Most frequently mentioned themes about the impact of the NGO by participant group.*

Themes	NGO Staff-Foreign	NGO Staff-Guatemalan	Intern	Volunteer	Community Member	Total
Economic factors	5 (83.3%)	5 (55.5%)	3 (100%)	4 (50%)	7 (33.3%)	24
Educational opportunities	3 (50%)	5 (55.5%)	3 (100%)	4 (50%)	8 (38.1%)	23
Environmental stewardship	3 (50%)	6 (66.7%)	2 (66.7%)	2 (25%)	5 (23.8%)	18
Stable Employment	5 (83.3%)	3 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)	4 (50%)	-	14
New ideas and knowledge	2 (33.3%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (33.3%)	2 (25%)	4 (19%)	11

The last impact that was frequently discussed is the theme of new ideas and knowledge. Eleven participants (23.4%) brought up this subject and essentially all of them said that without the influence of Long Way Home and the foreigners they would never have learned about green building and waste management. One community member talks about how it was challenging at first to stuff bottles with trash but once she got used to it, she could see the value in having similar projects all over the world:

> "In the community it has been a really good project, really healthy. It's really healthy because, as we just talked about, it has helped us to recycle a lot. At the beginning, it was really annoying to do it, uncomfortable! Oh, really, you have to pack it and sometimes it's returned to you- uncomfortable! But you get used to it, you adjust. Now I don't feel that it's difficult. So it's good in terms of the recycling that they work with, it's special. It shows, I think not just in Comalapa, or even just in Guatemala, but rather in the whole world, it can demonstrate that yes you can make things with waste. Yes you can" (Female community member).[39]

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[39] Original quote: "En la comunidad ha sido un proyecto muy bueno, muy sano. Es muy sano porque, como de hablamos en un rato, nos ayudan a reciclar mucho. Al inicio es bien molesto hacerlo, incomodo! Ay, de veras, hay que envaso y a veces uno devuelve a uno- incomodo! Pero uno se va acostumbrando, acostumbre. Ya no siento que es difícil. Entonces es bueno en cuanto al reciclaje que ellos, con que ellos trabajan, es especial. Se demuestra, yo creo no sólo en Comalapa, ni tampoco sólo en Guatemala, sino en el mundo entero se puede demonstrar de que sí puedan hacer las cosas con los desechos. Sí se puede."

Impact is the final aspect of community-driven development analyzed in this case study. Interestingly, the top themes mentioned are also the three spheres included in most current definitions of sustainability. Perhaps this is further evidence of how participatory and sustainable development approaches can complement each other in implementation.

Discussion

1. Main Research Question

Are the broad theoretical shifts in international development toward a more sustainable and participatory paradigm reflected in a practical shift in the operations of NGOs? Based on the data analysis, this study finds that the operations of the NGO do not align perfectly with theory, but neither are they perpetuating neoclassical approaches. Thus, this study confirms H3: The operations of the NGO deviate from the neoclassical development approaches of the past, however, they do not fully reflect the theoretical shift toward a sustainable and participatory paradigm. The next two sections will show the rationale for confirming H3 by considering how the data answer sub-questions 1 and 2.

2. Do NGO operations align with theoretical sustainable development?

An analysis of interview responses revealed that there was much concurrence among definitions of 'sustainability' from different actors. Participants generally conceptualize sustainability as being about cultivating self-sufficiency and taking a long-term approach to problem solving. Not only did respondents agree with each other, but they also echoed the literature. The only key element of sustainability that was not mentioned frequently by participants is seeing sustainability as a holistic or systems approach.

Although it was unanticipated that even across cultures and languages most participants have similar social constructions of sustainability, there is a catch. Almost a third of participants (29.8%, all 14 of which were community members) either had not heard the term 'sustainability' before or were otherwise unable to define it. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the term has been popularized chiefly by western institutions. Nonetheless, it raises some concerns about how 'bottom-up' a sustainable approach can be in contexts where foreigners first must 'teach' community members what sustainability is.

These definitions, or lack thereof, provide insight on how sustainability has been socially constructed by the various groups of participants. However, the answer to sub-question 1 is really derived from how these ideas manifest into NGO programming and impact. The most recent definitions of sustainability in international development describe 'sustainable development' as considering and balancing the interests of society, the economy, and the environment in order to preserve resources for future generations (UNDP, 2010). In this case, it appears that Long Way Home has succeeded at providing significant contributions in all three of these main areas as well as a long-term approach that considers future generations and self-sufficiency to continue the project.

Results showed that when participants were asked to discuss the impact of the organization the top three most frequently mentioned themes were economic factors, educational opportunities (equity and society), and environmental stewardship. The environment is positively impacted by green building initiatives and trash management, the economy is improved by providing stable employment and the added U.S. donations that are spent in the community ($1 million over 10 years), and equity within society is improved by providing educational opportunities for low-income families. Long Way Home has been working in the same

community for over a decade and is focused on the long-term goals and intergenerational outcomes of the project. NGO operations do align with theoretical sustainable development since they are definitely holistic, take a long-term lens, and are working to become self-sufficient. It seems the only factor that threatens self-sufficiency is the process of handing the project over to the community- which ties into sub-question 2.

3. Are NGO operations participatory and community-driven?

Interestingly, there was much more agreement around the idea of what 'sustainability' means than on what it means to be 'participatory'. Some of this may stem from differing political cultures and social constructions of 'democracy'. Many democracies in Latin America, including Guatemala, are relatively new and have been criticized for various reasons including issues of corruption. Lack of trust in government institutions and their effectiveness may also impact how community members see democracy and the value of participating in public development projects. These attitudes may have something to do with why community members were the group that spoke the least about bottom-up community involvement as being a part of development (as shown in Tables 1 and 3). In contrast, the majority of volunteers, Guatemalan NGO staff, and foreign NGO staff mentioned the importance of bottom-up community involvement. When evaluating how community-driven the project has been it is crucial to consider that, in this case, community members expressed the importance of community involvement much less than their counterparts who are more associated with the NGO.

The project was started because the local community asked the founder of Long Way Home to stay and build a school. But despite initial community buy-in and continued support, the project is still unquestionably owned by the foreigners. Power within the organization has

remained fairly concentrated with the founder and another foreigner. At this point all of the main administrators except the soon-to-be Volunteer Coordinator are foreigners. The structure of the organization is undoubtedly hierarchical, though only two interviewees actively criticized this while ten other participants expected this and viewed it as normal for a workplace. In this way hierarchy was often discussed simply as an organizational principal and not necessarily equated to inequality. Nonetheless, power is distributed unevenly and concentrated at the top which appears more like top-down approaches than bottom-up.

Exploring other power dynamics within the organization revealed interesting barriers to collaboration. Unexpectedly, tension was found between construction workers and teachers, but not between Guatemalans and foreigners. None of the indigenous people (community members or Guatemalan staff members) expressed facing any discrimination within the organization. However, there were many challenges associated with trying to include women in the project. The participatory piece seems to be weaker in this area, but evidence suggests this has more to do with the societal context and machismo culture than the NGO itself.

Due to these factors, the implementation does not align with what theory would lay out as being the model of a community-driven participatory development strategy. Even so, there is no doubt that this is a participatory project- the real question is exactly *how* participatory. Considering cultural barriers, this study finds Long Way Home has supported the meaningful inclusion of indigenous people and women.

4. Does it matter if practice does not completely align with theory?

As a follow up to the central research question, this study also asks: Does it matter if project implementation does not completely align with theoretical definitions and best practices

as long as the local community approves of and is involved with the project? Although the operations of the NGO do not fully reflect the theoretical shift when it comes to the participatory piece, this is not a reason to write off the organization's efforts. While theory is useful in guiding practice, implementation is always contextual. In the context of Guatemala and Latin America more broadly, there are a variety of cultural factors that have influenced how the NGO operates. The slow, challenging process of involving women in the NGO is reflective of the larger gradual shift in Guatemalan society away from rigid gender roles.

The question that seems to emerge from the data is: How participatory is participatory enough? It is natural to have differing levels of involvement in the project among community members. But what is the necessary level of participation or community buy-in needed to deem the NGO as being 'community-driven'? Does a project have to be invited by community members (such as Long Way Home was) or completely created by community members? The latter option might not be feasible in some places without foreign funding, but the former has to consider the impacts of foreign influence on the community. A balance must be struck between spreading wealth and ideas while still avoiding perpetuating imperialism. Long Way Home routes western donations to an underserved community and also makes a concerted effort to positively impact the community without forcing any changes or worldviews.

It is also useful to consider the counterfactual. What might have happened if the organization did not even attempt to use a community-driven development approach? If community members had not been involved at all, or even to a lesser extent, it is doubtful that Long Way Home would have been able to continue operating. During community trials about two years ago, a couple of other foreigners were kicked out of San Juan Comalapa. Long Way Home, as a foreign organization, was also put on trial at the same time but community members

testified on behalf of the organization and advocated for them to stay. Without this support, the NGO would almost certainly have also been asked to leave the community. That is to say that if Long Way Home had not used a participatory development approach, they would likely not still exist. This stark contrast highlights the importance that implementing a bottom-up approach had in this case, even if the exact process might be critiqued.

At the end of the day, people are working together across cultures creating employment, educational opportunities for the poorest in the community, and teaching about environmental stewardship and trash management. It seems that the question that must be asked here is: is this successful? What makes a sustainable grassroots NGO successful at implementing these theoretical ideas? Given the evidence, this study finds that although NGO operations do not perfectly align with theory, they do represent an alternative to traditional development approaches and provides many benefits to the community.

Policy Recommendations & Future Research

As development practitioners, researchers, and policy professionals endeavor to employ respectful and equitable projects this case study hopes to better inform such efforts. Though this case study is very contextual, there are general takeaways that are widely relevant. This case shows the importance of a long-term commitment and investment in a community and that participatory development might take time, or at least is societally dependent. As encountered in this study, involving women presents new opportunities but also new challenges. Consistent with the literature on community-driven development approaches, this study sees the value and necessity of more bottom-up projects that are culturally and socially respectful of the local community.

A striking result of this study was just how critical the role of NGOs is in providing services in rural communities ignored by the state. Overwhelmingly, participants felt that government is ineffective and that the role of NGOs is to fill this gap. This study would urge future research to consider the long-term impacts of this, especially on local political institutions. While NGOs may provide opportunities for community members to be more directly involved in the development of their communities, the scope of most NGOs is not significant enough to replace political institutions. This is to say that there may potentially be negative consequences of NGOs filling the role of government which are worth considering and exploring further.

Another area for future research to pursue is other case studies within Latin America and other regions for generalizability. As a part of exploring the translation of theory into practice, the results of this study encourage others to look at the process of handing off projects to local communities. This final step in community-driven development seems to be where often the entire project can fall through. More research could formulate some best practices or common strategies for coping with the issue of dependency on outside funding, as one example. Interestingly, this study found that creating a private company or partnering with an existing private company may be one way to secure a new funding source. Unfortunately, at the time of this research, this is only an idea and has not yet manifested as reality. Nonetheless, it is an option for future research and other organizations to contemplate.

Another recommendation is for NGOs to be not only aware of foreign power dynamics but also local ones (such as the class issues between construction workers and teachers) that might make working with the community or trying to help the community work together more difficult. Similarly, if gender issues are a known concern it may be prudent to provide some sort

of seminar for volunteers, interns, and new employees so that they can be better aware of and prepared to deal with any situations that arise.

Conclusion

This qualitative most-likely case study set out to explore the dynamics of practical NGO implementation of theoretical participatory and sustainable development practices in the context of rural Guatemala. Findings show that NGO operations align with theory about sustainable development, but there are some discrepancies with the fulfillment of the participatory element. Even though this was a most-likely case study, it was not able to confirm the most-likely hypothesis. Instead, an alternative hypothesis is accepted: The operations of the NGO deviate from the neoclassical development approaches of the past, however, they do not fully reflect the theoretical shift toward a sustainable and participatory paradigm.

This result is in no way condemning the NGO, rather, it highlights the contextual nature common to all theoretical implementation. The NGO describes itself as participatory and sustainable and makes a considerable effort to operate in this way- even if there are some challenges along the way in practice. This may reflect how other organizations using terms like 'sustainability' are not simply throwing around buzzwords, but rather taking mindful steps towards alternative and more equitable forms of development. The transition from traditional neoclassical development approaches to sustainable development, or whatever comes next, will undoubtedly be messy and full of further questions. However, that is not a reason to stop pursuing positive change. Neither the complicated history of the international development field nor the uncertainty of sustainable development should not limit the possibility of using holistic, long-term, and inclusive strategies. This study sees evidence of real potential for creative

solutions to produce meaningful, bottom-up progress towards the central goal and promise of development- improving the quality of life for people across the globe.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Guide for Foreign NGO Employee, Intern, Volunteer

(English)

1. How did you first get involved with development work?
2. What does "development" mean to you?
3. Who do you think should be involved in development?
4. What are you hearing from federal or local government about development?
5. What does "sustainability" mean to you?
6. What sort of role can NGOs play in international development work?
7. Can you speak to some of the benefits of being a foreign NGO in Guatemala?
   a. What are the challenges of being a foreign NGO in Guatemala?
8. How has being a woman/man impacted or shaped your experiences in development work?
9. Can you speak to any other power dynamics besides gender that you may have noticed in the organization?
10. Could you speak a little bit about what you've seen as the impact that Long Way Home has had on the community?
11. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Appendix B

Interview Guide for Guatemalan NGO Employee

(Spanish)

1. ¿Por qué elegiste trabajar aquí en este proyecto?
2. ¿Qué significa "desarrollo comunitario" para ti?
3. ¿Quién debería estar involucrado en proyectos de desarrollo?
4. ¿Qué escuchas del gobierno sobre este tema de desarrollo o de proyectos de desarrollo?
5. ¿Cuales son algunos desafíos/problemas que enfrenta el proyecto aquí en la comunidad?
6. ¿Qué significa la palabra "sostenibilidad"?
7. ¿Qué son los beneficios de ser una organización extranjera aquí en Guatemala?
    a. ¿Qué son los desafíos de ser una organización extranjera aquí en Guatemala?
8. ¿Como ser mujer/hombre impacto tus experiencias aquí como trabajador(a)?
9. ¿Como son las relaciones entre guatemaltecos y gringos?
    a. ¿Entre maestros y albañiles?
10. ¿Qué significa ser indígena?
    a. ¿Cómo influye tu vida?
11. En tu opinión, ¿qué ha sido el impacto de Long Way Home en la comunidad?
12. ¿Algo más que querías añadir?

Appendix C

Interview Guide for Volunteer

(Spanish)

1. ¿Por qué elegiste trabajar aquí en este proyecto?
2. ¿Qué significa "desarrollo comunitario" para ti?
3. ¿Quién debería estar involucrado en proyectos de desarrollo?
4. ¿Qué escuchas del gobierno sobre este tema de desarrollo (o proyectos para mejorar la comunidad)?
5. ¿Qué significa la palabra "sostenibilidad"?
6. ¿Qué son los beneficios de ser una organización extranjera aquí en Guatemala?
    a. ¿Qué son los desafíos de ser una organización extranjera aquí en Guatemala?
7. ¿Cómo ser mujer/hombre impacto tus experiencias aquí como voluntario/a?
8. ¿Cómo son las relaciones entre guatemaltecos y gringos?
    a. ¿Entre maestros y albañiles?
9. En tu opinión, ¿qué ha sido el impacto de Long Way Home en la comunidad?
10. ¿Algo más que querías añadir?

Appendix D

Interview Guide for Community Member

(Spanish)

1. ¿Qué significa "desarrollo comunitario" para usted?
2. ¿Quién debería estar involucrado en proyectos de desarrollo?
3. ¿Qué escucha del gobierno sobre este tema de desarrollo (o proyectos para mejorar la comunidad?
4. ¿Cuáles son algunos desafíos/problemas que enfrenta la comunidad?
5. ¿Qué significa la palabra "sostenibilidad"?
6. ¿Qué piensa de la comunidad extranjera involucrada en el proyecto?"
7. ¿Qué significa ser una mujer?
   a. ¿Qué significa ser un hombre?
8. ¿Qué significa ser indígena?
   a. ¿Cómo influye tu vida?
9. En su opinión, ¿qué ha sido el impacto de Long Way Home en la comunidad?
10. ¿Algo más que querías añadir?

Appendix E

Figure 3. Descriptions of Categories of Study Participants and Relative Involvement in the NGO.

Foreign NGO employee
- High involvement
- Western employee working mostly on high-level finanical, management, and administrative aspects of the NGO

Guatemalan NGO Employee
- High involvement
- Local community member who was hired by the NGO to work as a construction worker on the building of the school

NGO Intern
- Medium involvement
- Western student doing a structured internship over several months and working closely with permanent NGO employees (construction work and administrative tasks)

International Volunteer
- Generally low involvement
- Volunteers mainly work on the construction side of things rather than administrative. Most volunteers stay a couple of days or weeks, but a few stay for months

Community Member
- Low involvement
- Parent of a child who attends the school, member of the local community

Appendix F

Table 7. Number interviewees from each category of study participants based on gender and language of interview.

Type of Participant	Level of Involvement with NGO	Number of Female Interviewees	Estimated total in category (Females)*	Number of Male Interviewees	Estimated total in category (Males)*	Interviews Conducted in English	Interviews Conducted in Spanish
Foreign Staff Member	High	5	5	1	3	6	0
Guatemalan Staff Member	High	3	3	6	20	0	9
Intern	Medium	1	1	2	2	3	0
Volunteer	Generally Low	6	10	2	3	6	2
Community Member	Low	18	70	3	70	0	21
Totals	-	33	89	14	98	15	32

*These estimated totals are only for the time period when the researcher was in San Juan Comalapa. For example, annually Long Way Home has way more total volunteers.

Appendix G

Table 8. Codebook including main codes, sub codes, and their descriptions

Code	Sub codes	Description
Age/seniority		Discussed in terms of respecting the elderly and those who have more experience or seniority within an organization.
Bottom-up community involvement	-"Everyone"	Referring to local, grassroots level inclusion in projects, community autonomy, and/or the idea that "everyone" should be included and involved.
Class disparities		Class conflicts and issues, especially in the context of teachers & construction workers.
Communication	-With local community -Gendered communication	Often discussing the importance in development work of communicating effectively with the local community. Gendered communication issues include things such as women not being talked to by men.
Cooperation, collaboration		Discussing the importance of working together.
Cultural barriers		Cultural barriers between foreigners and Guatemalans, chiefly language barriers.

Don't know		Don't know what the term means, never heard it before, unfamiliar, heard it but don't know how to define it.
Economic factors	-Maintaining a family -Stable employment -Favorable exchange rate (from USD to Quetzales)	Economic development, economic opportunities, prosperity. Financially supporting a family, economic necessity of having reliable employment.
Educational opportunities		Educational opportunities such as being able to afford to attend school, having sufficient support to attend school and preform well in school (like through initiatives such as discounted uniforms and school supplies).
Efficiency, effectiveness		Discussing efficiency or effectiveness, often times of organizations versus government institutions.
Environmental stewardship		Trash management, environmental protection, recycling, environmental education and awareness.
Foreign influence	-Foreign money -Foreigners accepted - Foreigners not accepted - Respect for local culture - Setting an example - Political history of negative influence	Anytime participants talked about foreign influence in a positive or negative way. One of the most frequent subcodes is foreign money, which refers to money from the United States or other western nations coming into Guatemala. Two subcodes are about whether foreigners are accepted or not accepted in Guatemala. Respect for local culture refers to foreigners discussing ways that they show respect for Guatemalan culture (such as dressing conservatively). Setting an example refers to foreigners setting an example to Guatemalans, often in terms of breaking rigid gender roles. Political history of negative foreign influence refers to the often exploitative connection between the United States (both through government and private U.S. companies) and Guatemala.
Government institutions	-Gov. ignores rural areas -Gov. is corrupt -Gov. is ineffective -New gov. is better	Anytime government (U.S., Guatemalan, or otherwise) were brought up. Four subcodes capture both the negative (government ignores rural areas, is corrupt, is ineffective) and positive (the new Guatemalan government is better than past ones) ways people discussed government institutions.
Handoff to community		Discussing the process of eventually giving the project entirely to Guatemalans to run without foreign influence or assistance.
Health		Mental, emotional health.
Hierarchy	-There is one & it is bad -There is one & it is neutral -No hierarchy -Tension with boss	Hierarchy discussed in terms of within the organization. Some spoke negatively of the hierarchy (there is one and it is bad), some felt more neutral, others said that there is not a hierarchy within the NGO, and some described the hierarchy in terms of tension existing between employees (Guatemalan staff members) and the boss (a foreign staff member).
Holistic		Discussing cycles, systems, how many different pieces are all connected and influence each other.
Indigeneity		Anytime participants discussed indigenous ethnicity, either in terms of their own identity and life experience, or about others.
Institutional and administrative barriers		This code refers to bureaucratic barriers such as red tape, slow processes and paperwork.
Intersectionality		Multiple identities interacting- most commonly distinguishing how machismo culture impacts foreign women less than Guatemalan women
Long-term approaches		Talking about the importance of planning for the future and using long-term thinking when considering projects or organizations

Machismo culture		Machismo culture refers to a patriarchal culture with rigid gender roles and hyper-masculinity. The term is often used to describe gender dynamics found in Guatemala.
NGOs stepping in where government fails		Participants discussing the role of NGOs as stepping in where government has failed or not done enough.
New ideas, knowledge, skills		Participants referring to foreigners bringing new ideas, knowledge, or teaching/learning new skills. Most often brought up in the context of green construction techniques.
Organization dynamics & constraints	-Burnout -Funding problems -Passion	This refers to features and limitations of organizations (NGOs specifically). The subcode burnout refers to high staff turnover rates that are common in the nonprofit sector. Funding problems refer to the struggles of finding funding sources, getting donors, and not being too dependent on any one source. Passion refers to the drive and motivation that many NGO staffers have, which can balance out burnout issues.
Unwillingness to change		This refers to people not wanting to change their ways and not wanting to have to do things differently. Mostly brought up by Guatemalan staff members talking about how some community members do not want new ideas employed in the community.
Progress		Growing better, improving, moving forward.
Relationships	-Building local relationships, trust -Lack of trust -Friendships -Exploiting relationships -Hard to build relationships as a woman	Anytime someone referred to interpersonal relationships with others. Often foreigners mentioned the importance of building local relationships and trust in order to have successful project implementation. Others talked about a lack of trust between different groups of people (such as between teachers and construction workers). Others talked about positive relationships such as friendships (like those that form between volunteers and Guatemalan staff members). However, some foreigners and Guatemalans both discussed that sometimes Guatemalans exploit relationships in order to get things from people or advance. Finally, some mentioned the difficulties that foreign women have trying to build relationships with Guatemalans (and foreign men) due to rigid gender roles and machismo culture.
Rigid gender roles	-Breaking them	Inflexible ideas about what men and women each should do, with men as providers and heads of household and women as homemakers and mothers. The subcode refers to when participants discussed breaking such gender roles (i.e. women working outside of the home).
Safety concerns for women		Discussion of gender-specific safety concerns either on site (i.e. women need to be careful because a construction site is more dangerous for them) or in the community at large (i.e. women not being able to walk alone at night or go to certain places).
Self-sufficient		Can refer to the ability to take care of oneself, a structure or system that replenishes itself, not needing too many outside resources, or something that can continue on its own for a long time.
Social issues		Social problems such as gossip and jealousy ("envidia", which is a well-known issue in Guatemalan society).
Specific project as definition		Sometimes when asked to define "development" participants responded with a specific example of a development project (i.e. fixing a road, creating a sewage system).
Technical skills, technology		Discussing technology or technical skills mostly in terms of those brought by foreigners to Guatemala.

| Reputation | -Well-known, good reputation
-Not well-known | This refers to the reputation of the school and the NGO within the community. Some expressed that the organization is well-known and has a positive reputation, others said that the organization is not well-known among community members. |