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# “The Tourists Still Come, but They Don't Buy as Much as Before”: Vulnerability and Resilience in Two Bay Island Communities in the Wake of the Global Financial Crisis

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## “The Tourists Still Come, but They Don't Buy as Much as Before”: Vulnerability and Resilience in Two Bay Island Communities in the Wake of the Global Financial Crisis

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this article is to elucidate the differential recovery of household livelihood after the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) in the communities of West End and Punta Gorda on the island of Roatán, Islas de La Bahia (Bay Islands), Honduras; the emphasis is on livelihoods in tourism due to its economic importance on the island. The theoretical approach is a political ecology of tourism with an emphasis on differential benefits and challenges of tourism development at the household level. The study employs a mixed methods ethnographic approach incorporating participant observation, informal interviews, and semi-structured interviews for the qualitative component. While the tourism sector on Roatán has recovered since undergoing a severe contraction in the latter part of 2009 and continuing in 2010, this recovery has been uneven, with larger tourism businesses and their employees faring better than small scale entrepreneurs.

### **Keywords**

Tourism, Global Financial Crisis, Household Livelihoods, Vulnerability, Resiliency, Ethnographic Mixed Methods

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## **“The Tourists Still Come, but They Don't Buy as Much as Before”: Vulnerability and Resilience in Two Bay Island Communities in the Wake of the Global Financial Crisis**

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While much has been made of the impact of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC) on the global economy and on western countries, less has been written of its effect on countries with client relationships to these powerful western nation-states. For example, what is the impact on U.S. client states in Latin America, such as Honduras? Specifically, there is a dearth of literature on how the Global Financial Crisis has affected the tourism in Honduras. A substantial body of literature treats the effects of tourism on local Latin American economies, including the Bay Islands of Honduras (Daltabuit, Vazquez, Cisneros, & Ruiz, 2006; Himmelgreen, Romero Daza, Vega, Brenes Cambronero, & Amador, 2006; Leatherman & Goodman, 2005; Ruiz, Himmelgreen, Romero Daza, & Peña, 2014; Stonich, 2000). Several sources also elucidate the global macroeconomic effects of the financial crisis (Crotty, 2009; Krugman, 2009; Shah, 2013; Shiller, 2012). However, there are relatively few sources (Chan, 2011; Li, Blake, & Cooper, 2010; Zarger, 2009) about how the financial crisis affected economies heavily dependent on tourists from North America or the EU zone.

The purpose of this article is to elucidate the differential recovery of household livelihood after the GFC in the communities of West End and Punta Gorda on the island of Roatán, Islas de La Bahia (Bay Islands), Honduras; the emphasis is on livelihoods in tourism due to its economic importance on the island. The research aim pertinent to this article is as follows: assess how the Global Financial Crisis affected household livelihoods in different modalities of tourism work. The research question for this article is: How has the financial crisis affected household ability to make a living, particularly in the tourism sector? The article is based on the part of my dissertation (Brown, 2013a) that explores resiliency and vulnerability of household livelihoods in the wake of the GFC. The dissertation was part of the completion of a doctorate of philosophy (PhD) in applied anthropology at the University of South Florida (USF) in Tampa, Florida. After a brief contextualization of the problem and an explication of the research question and methodology, I describe levels of vulnerability and resiliency of

livelihood for different occupational categories, namely tourism workers and small-scale entrepreneurs. Figure 1 is a map of Roatán and adjacent islands with West End and Punta Gorda named.

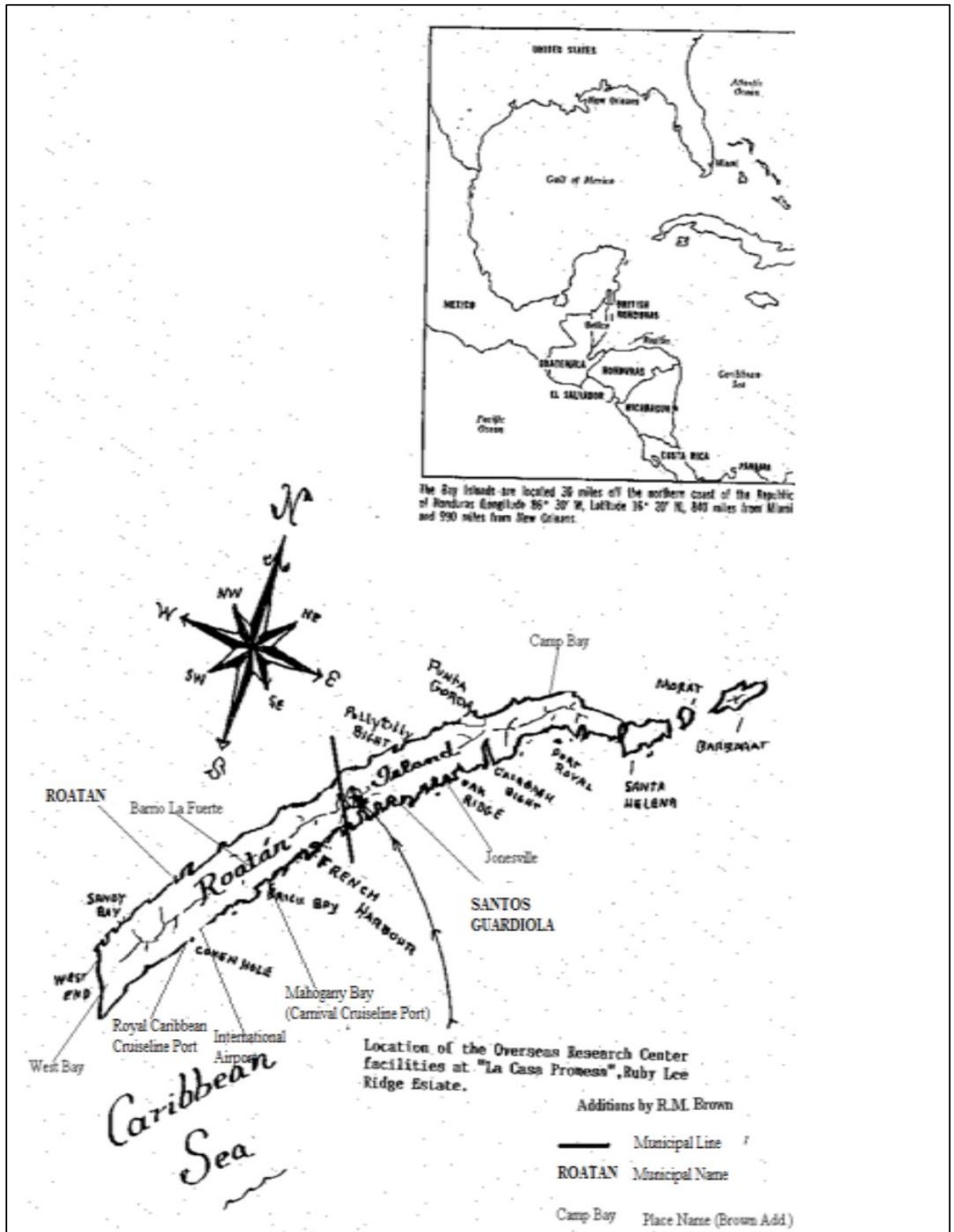


Figure 1: Map of Roatán and adjacent islands (Courtesy of David K. Evans, 1986)

## **Background and Theoretical Approach**

### **Background**

Tourism as an economic development with attendant disparities and dislocations of other modes of livelihood is well documented. Tourism literature details broad themes of displacement of other modes of livelihood and communities in the wake of resort development (Belisle, 1983; Daltauit, 2000; Daltauit & Leatherman, 1998; Himmelgreen et al., 2006; Juarez, 2002; Leatherman & Goodman, 2005; MacLeod, 2004; Marín-Yaseli & Martinez, 2003; Ruiz et al., 2014; Torres, 2003). For Roatán, Evans (1966, 1986) and Stonich (1998, 2000, 2005) document substantial ecological, cultural, and dietary change to the island from the period of the 1960s to the early 2000s. Daltauit et al. (2006) treat the early years after the introduction of cruise ship port visits to the island. This admittedly sparse body of literature about the Bay Islands tourism sector details both terrestrial and marine habitat destruction, substantial population growth, immigration from mainland Honduras and many Western countries, and a notable decrease in subsistence cultivation and fishing. Given substantial cultural and economic change that often occurs in the wake of tourism development, it is important to explore the ramifications of a potentially major disruption to this sector, to wit the GFC.

In contrast to the Chinese (Chan, 2011; Li et al., 2010) and UN (UNWTO, 2011) examples of very near term distress, Roatán shows a longer and more complicated post-crisis trajectory. According to national data, the Bay Islands did not initially suffer a negative impact from the financial crisis and posted strong growth in visitor numbers and revenue through the middle of 2009 (Honduras Institute of Tourism, 2010). Zelaya's removal caused a great deal of political turmoil in Honduras generally and resulted in disruptive economic penalties from the United States as well as widespread protests and violence by protesters and police in major cities such as Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula (Miller-Llana & Faulk, 2009; Rozenzweig, 2010). Even Roatán was placed under a curfew (Mabel Sobagel personal communication, Fall 2010). While most of the business owners interviewed for this study reported an anemic recovery in 2010 and a more robust one in 2011, it is important to ascertain how the crisis affected households in different sectors and social positions of Roatán's economy. The results and discussion sections of this article elucidate this comparison.

Both located on the norther shore of Roatán, West End and Punta Gorda are two distinct communities with differing modalities and levels of involvement in the tourism sector. West End is a town near the island's westernmost point with a fairly even mix of Islanders (people whose families have been located in the Bay Islands for several generations (Evans, 1966, 1986; Stonich, 2000; Waddell, 1959), mainland Hondurans (or island born people whose families immigrated to the Bay Islands from the mainland within the last few decades), or expatriates mostly from locations in North America, Western Europe, or Australia. Since at least the 1980s, tourism focused around scuba diving has played an increasingly important part in the local economy (Daltauit et al., 2006; Stonich, 2000, 2005). Punta Gorda is a mostly Garifuna town with a small contingent of mainland Hondurans. While Punta Gorda had an economy mainly based on subsistence cultivation, artisanal fishing, and wage work in the houses of wealthier families in other towns up to the latter part of the Twentieth Century, it has become increasingly enmeshed in the seafood and commercial shipping sectors with peripheral involvement in tourism also increasing over the last few decades (Harold MacLeod, personal communication, October 2011). The advent of cruise ships making ports of call in the 2000s has diversified and intensified tourism involvement in both places. Focusing on these two communities provides a useful comparison of effects of the financial crisis based on differing

prior degrees of tourism involvement, types of tourism work, and stability of employment in the sector.

### **A Political Ecological Approach to Livelihoods in Tourism**

The overarching theoretical approach of this study is political ecology, defined as the interplay of political, economic, and environmental factors in terms of health and wellbeing, livelihoods, use of natural resources, and a host of other phenomena (Robbins, 2011). Escobar (1999), Hvalkof and Escobar (1998), Bryant (1992), and Guha (1997) explicitly treat how asymmetrical power and control of resources correspond to socio-cultural constructs of nature as a distinct realm apart from the human experience. Of particular import in this case is the political ecology of tourism, which deals with how tourism development changes socio-cultural dynamics, economies, and access to natural resources in communities. Examples include MacLeod (2004) in the Canary Islands, Juarez (2002), Torres (2003), and Richard (2008) in the Mexican state of Quintana Roo, and Rainer (2016) in northwestern Argentina. Stonich (1998, 2000, 2005) outlines the concurrence of efforts to stop iguana hunting, control fishing, and stem habitat loss due to the activities of the poor and large scale reef and forest destruction in the building of resorts on Roatán. Daltabuit et al. (2006) offer a broad treatise on the environmental and political economic impacts of tourism development in locations along the Meso-American Barrier Reef, including Roatán. These works are similar to Leatherman and Goodman's (2005) take on differential benefit and vulnerability in the context of tourism development in poor and marginalized communities, an idea that constitutes a conceptual pillar of my own work on Roatán (Brown, 2006, 2013a, 2013b).

However, one area the political ecology of tourism literature treats rather sparsely is what happens to the aforementioned tourism dynamics in the event of a significant disruptive occurrence, such as a worldwide economic collapse. The GFC represents an opportunity to explore how a major shock to financial security of sending communities affects tourism economies in receiving countries, particularly developing nations. This article initiates such an exploration by situating the Roatán tourism economy and concomitant social and environmental impacts outlined in Evans (1986), Stonich (1998, 2000, 2005) and Daltabuit et al. (2006) in the wake of the GFC and initial years of recovery. It is important to discern if the GFC or related events affected visitor-ship and tourism revenue and if so whether and how such shifts impacted the social dynamics and disparities noted in the scant Roatán literature.

### **Author Context**

The study upon which this article is based is a dissertation pursuant to a doctorate of philosophy in applied anthropology from the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida, completed in May of 2013. My interest in Roatán is partly intellectual and partly personal. The intellectual part is a curiosity about the problematic or mixed impacts of tourism development in poor but "beautiful" locations in such examples as MacLeod's (2004) treatise on the minimal monetary benefit local Canary Islanders derive from resort development compared to the disruption of fishing and agricultural livelihoods they displace as resort owners privatize the commons to increase mostly German tourists' enjoyment, and thus the owners' profitability. In a similar vein, Leatherman and Goodman (2005; see also Torres, 2003) outline cultural disruption in the context of large scale resort development and changing diets in the Mexican state of Quintana Roo and Stonich (2000) describes the disparity of environmental protection and impacts for poorer and more well-to-do residents of a western Roatán community. In terms of personal interest, my fascination with Roatán dates back to an ethnographic fieldschool I attended on the island in 1998 under the auspices of Wake Forest

University. In particular, Evan's (1966, 1986) scholarship and discourse (personal communication 1998 & 2005) about an island dealing with mounting pressures from environmental destruction and rapid cultural shifts has long been prominent in my mind. While I have always been forthright that the primary purpose of the project was to obtain a particular degree, I also approached it with the idea of potential benefits to the population. Therefore, in addition to rendering appropriate assistance to local residents or families where I could, I also developed concrete recommendations for expansion of economic opportunity for local people. At the conclusion of the degree program, I included them in a summary which I provided to local leaders on the island.

### **Methodology**

This study (Brown, 2013a) employs a dual sited ethnographic, mixed methodology which includes an initial period of data collection and a follow-up data collection period during the timespan from April 2011 to April 2012. This approach accounts for seasonality of the sector; the first round of data collection occurs during the low tourism season and the follow-up round occurs during high tourism season. Locating the sites in West End and Punta Gorda accounts for differences in the tourism sector based on their respective westerly and easterly locations on the island. While resorts and other tourism businesses occur all over the island, they have a much greater density in the western part and become much fewer and more dispersed as one goes east. Additionally, the preponderance of participant discourse and ethnographic observation indicates that most cruise ship tours take visitors to western rather than eastern attractions. The research aim pertinent to this article is as follows:

- Assess how the Global Financial Crisis affected household livelihoods in different modalities of tourism work.

The research question for this article is:

- To what if any degree has the financial crisis affected household ability to make a living, particularly in the tourism sector?

### **Regulatory and Ethical Considerations**

In accordance with the American Anthropological Association code of ethics (2012) and USF research policy, this study has been reviewed and approved by the USF Institutional Review Board (IRB). It received an expedited review and an exemption of the signature requirement for informed consent to participate in the study. I asked for this exemption based on periods of military dictatorship and repression in Honduran history and on the assumption that many respondents would not feel comfortable signing such a document. The mitigation plan for this exemption involved explaining the study in detail and then recording the consent of those potential respondents that agreed to participate. The explanation included a description of confidentiality and anonymity protection procedures, as well as an explanation that the protection was not absolute in the event of a computer theft, break-in at my apartment, or similar event.

Additionally, the USF IRB approved an amendment to allow modest gifts of food to participants based on local expectations of acknowledgement of time spent participating in the study.

### Sampling Strategy and Recruitment

With care toward capturing the lived experience of the different cultural groups with a significant presence on Roatán, this study employs a quota sampling approach, aiming at roughly equivalent representation of Anglophonic Islanders, Garifuna, mainland Hondurans, and western expatriates. Based on consensus definitions of long-term residents of two years or more and on previous sources (Evans, 1966, 1986; Jenkins, 1983; Kirtsoglou & Theodossopoulos, 2004; Stonich, 2000; Waddell, 1959) I encountered on the island, I define these groups as follows:

- Anglophonic Islander: descendants of British and Afro-Antillean settlers to the Bay Islands during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century; native English speakers with at least basic proficiency in Spanish or better (Evans, 1966; Waddell, 1959);
- Garifuna: an afro-diasporic and indigenous cultural amalgamation group spread around the Caribbean coast of Central America and the Bay Islands, Garifuna and Spanish speakers with varying degrees of proficiency in English (Jenkins, 1983; Kirtsoglou & Theodossopoulos, 2004; Waddell, 1959);
- Mainland Honduran: people who immigrated from mainland Honduras or were born to mainland immigrants who speak Spanish as a first language or with high fluency as a second language in the case of indigenous migrants;
- Western Expatriate: residents of the Bay Islands who migrated from an OECD country in North America, Western Europe, or the westernized Western Pacific (Australia or New Zealand), native or highly fluent English speakers.

In keeping with the quota sampling strategy, I strive to achieve a fairly equitable sampling of major cultural groups on the island, though this representation was impacted by the process of rapport building and obtaining the sample through introductions and referrals. Table 1 shows the number of households representing each group.

Table 1: Demographic Composition of Sample

Data Collection Round	Islander	Garifuna	Mainlander	Expatriate
R1: Low Season	15	40	17	9
R2: High Season	10	35	13	7

The communities selected, West End and Punta Gorda, provide a good representation of the cultural, economic, and ethnic variation that existed on Roatán prior to the GFC. The primary basis for the comparison between these two communities lies in the fact that, while West End is one of the key locations for the operation and control of resorts on Roatán, Punta Gorda has far fewer tourist attractions and more peripheral involvement for residents who work in occupations related to tourism.

Because the total methodological approach is a qualitative quantitative mixed methodology, the targeted sample size of 40 household respondents per community is determined by a statistical power analysis conducted using Lenth’s (2006) power analysis software. The total sample for the first round of data collection is 81 respondents, with 41 in Punta Gorda and 40 in West End. For the second round, attrition reduced the total sample to 66 respondents, 36 in Punta Gorda and 30 in West End. Reasons for attrition include failure to



contact the interviewee again due to general non-availability at home, interviewees stating their own unavailability for the second interview, and lack of understanding the necessity of the second interview despite a thorough explanation by the researcher. Overall, respondents have tended to be busier during the high tourism season which corresponded with the timeframe of the follow-up round of data collection, making follow-up interviews more difficult to arrange.

Recruitment for the study was done via introductions or referrals from people in the community to potential respondents to my household data battery. The bulk of household interviews I obtained through the direct aid of a research assistant in each community who made direct introductions to respondents and aided in rapport building. In some cases, I was able to obtain interviews by stating that a respected community member had referred me to the potential respondent without having that community member directly present. The target for recruitment was the head of household most responsible for food preparation whenever possible, though in some cases another adult in the household sufficed when the one most responsible for food preparation was not available. This criterion is based on other parts of the dissertation research question pertaining to dietary diversity and food security. This sampling frame may have some effect on perspectives on or responses about household livelihood, though I did not detect any during the conduct of data collection or analysis.

## Data Collection

As part of a larger qualitative and quantitative methodology, data collection for data on household livelihoods involves a mix of participant observation, informal interviews, and semi-structured interviews. Table 2 below outlines the total research plan, linking theory, methodology, needed data, and analytical approach.

Table 2: Research Plan Summary

Theoretical Approach	Research Question	Needed Data	Data Collection Methods	Analytical Methods
Political Ecology	Degree GFC Impact Livelihoods/Tourism	Income or Resource Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant Observation</li> <li>Informal Interviews</li> <li>Semi-structured Interviews</li> </ul>	Thematic Analytic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code &amp; Text Analysis</li> <li>Cogent Narratives &amp; Quotes</li> </ul>
		Occupation(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant Observation</li> <li>Informal Interviews</li> <li>Semi-structured Interviews</li> </ul>	
		Changes in Livelihood and Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informal Interviews</li> <li>Semi-structured Interviews</li> </ul>	
		Changes to Tourism Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informal Interviews</li> <li>Semi-structured Interviews</li> </ul>	

As per Bernard (2011; Malinowski, 1922/1984), participant observation in this case involves detailed observation and when possible participation by the researcher in events, activities, and other facets of everyday life, making reminder notes in a pocket notebook, and then making more comprehensive notes on a laptop at the soonest possible time after the encounter. In this study participant observation focuses on occupations, other income generation activities, and other subsistence activities, though other events such as festivals also fall under this method and provide broad context. Livelihood activities wherein much of the data come from participant observation include scuba diving work, souvenir sales, “cultural performances,” and artisanal fishing.

Informal interviews are similar to simple conversations, wherein the researcher has themes in mind, but not predetermined questions. This method is useful for collecting contextual data about livelihoods, as well as allowing for responses that are unexpected but may be important for understanding the local economy (Bernard, 2011; Evans, 1966; Juarez, 2002). Like participant observation, informal interviews facilitate the collection of qualitative ethnographic data about all variables pertinent to the study.

Prior to starting household data collection, I conducted nine interviews of tourism business owners with a semi-structured instrument that elicits type of business, visitor-ship, revenue, and seasonal variation in business. The business interview instrument also touches on changes to these themes from 2005 to 2011-12 and why the business owner thinks said changes may have occurred. These data contribute to an overall assessment of the post-GFC trajectory of the tourism sector.

For this study, the semi-structured interview household instrument captured data on livelihoods and changes to income and ways households make a living from 2005, the time when I conducted my MA fieldwork in Punta Gorda before the GFC, to the field period of the study of 2011-12. I devised the instrument during preparation for fieldwork based on themes of livelihood and food access present in the research question. I vetted the instrument with my dissertation committee and piloted it with one knowledgeable person in each community who was not part of the household data sample. As with informal interviews, I conducted this interview in English or Spanish, depending on the preference of the respondent.

Data elicited in the questions of this instrument include:

- Demographic information on household composition, education levels, etc.;
- Occupation and other livelihood activities of each adult in the household, and adolescent if applicable;
- Household expenses such as taxes, rent, utilities, and food;
- Changes in occupational status(es) since 2005 for initial data collection and since the previous interview for follow-up data collection;
- An asset inventory table to note the presence or absence of certain appliances, tools or vehicles, water source, food crops, and types of floors, walls, and roofs for the dwelling.

The interview instrument is imbedded in a larger household data collection battery that includes a food frequency questionnaire, the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) (Coates et al., 2006; Coates et al., 2007), and anthropometric measurements of nutritional status (Frisancho, 1990; Gibson, 2005). The approach of embedding the semi-structured interview in a larger data collection package with other instruments has advantages and disadvantages. A distinct advantage of this approach lies in the efficiency of collecting all the pertinent household data in one occasion for the initial and for the follow-up data collection rounds. Disadvantages include the added time burden on respondents of doing multiple instruments in one sitting and that the pressure of obtaining other forms of data at the same time may have

taken some focus on the themes addressed in the semi-structured interview instrument. Table 3 summarizes data collection for each of the methods described above.

Table 3: Data Collection Summary

Place and Round of Data Collection	Informal Interviews	Semi-Structured Business Interviews	Semi-Structured Household Interviews	Participant Observation
West End R1	20	6	40	Continuous
West End R2	10	3	30	Continuous
Punta Gorda R1	25	N/A	41	Continuous
Punta Gorda R2	10	N/A	36	Continuous

On the whole, having a thorough qualitative strategy as part of a mixed methods approach involved some compromise, balancing the needs of the qualitative and quantitative components. The strength of the qualitative portion of the data collection strategy lies in its complementarity. Discourse in the respondents' own words complements detailed observations, experience, and narratives of livelihood activities and differential vulnerability. Conversely, the need to a broad corpus of quantitative data as part of the household data package increased respondent burden, making the average data collection time per respondent between 30 and 60 minutes per round. Based on suggestions from my two assistants, I provided a modest gift of food to respondents for completing the instruments. I submitted an IRB amendment to have this change approved as a refinement of the data collection plan based on conditions found in the field.

### **Data Management**

As per USF IRB guidelines and general ethical best practices, I employ a data management plan that ensures respondent privacy and data quality.

In order to preserve respondent anonymity and confidentiality, I assigned each respondent a unique ID number and keep the name with the numbers on one document stored securely in a locked space. For all fieldnotes and interview transcripts, only the respondents' numbers appear associated with discourse or other data. In the dissertation (Brown, 2013a) and any subsequent product, such as this article and a previous one (Brown, 2013b) cited respondents are assigned a pseudonym or described in brief but not named. All data are currently maintained in paper form in a secure room and in electronic form on a password protected laptop.

In terms of data quality, I conducted all of the interviews and made a rough transcript within twenty-four hours of each interview based on fieldnotes. I also audio-recorded all but one interview with the consent of the respondents and transcribed interviews in more detail at a later time based on the recordings. One respondent consented to the interview, but declined to be recorded.

In addition to maintaining fieldnotes and transcripts for thematic analysis and illustrative quotations, I also created the categorical variable of occupational category described in this article based on responses to occupational questions in the semi-structured interview guide and from fieldnotes of observed events and activities as applicable. For this article, I define tourism work as permanent or highly regular employment in established tourism businesses such as dive shops, tour operations, boutiques, restaurants, and similar businesses. I derive these categories from coding of qualitative data and best grouping of like livelihood strategies to facilitate a robust sample for analysis. The category of small scale

enterprise includes artisanal fishing, souvenir sales, small scale food sales, and freelance cultural performances.

## **Analysis**

I analyzed the qualitative data gleaned via these methods using a thematic analytical approach in a mode that was deductive and at times inductive. For this study, I developed initial codes at the beginning of fieldwork based on themes covered in the research question such as themes related to household livelihoods or tourism. I tagged each fieldnote entry with codes I knew to be pertinent based on recollections of the event or interaction. Upon return from the field, I input all fieldnotes and interview transcripts into Atlas.ti (2012) and developed the final set of codes by combining the initial codes with codes that emerged from frequent occurrences of themes that I did not anticipate prior to embarking on fieldwork. An example of the latter category of code is the ouster of Zelaya, which tourism business owners frequently cite as having a negative impact on their businesses. Analyzing qualitative data in this way enabled me to do three things important to the study. Firstly, it allowed me to hone in on and refine important thematic focal areas. Secondly, it allowed me to select illustrative quotations and detailed narratives of events and activities based on these themes. Finally, it contributed to statistical analysis of other parts of the study by facilitating the creation of occupational categories. This tie-in furthers the comparison of qualitative and quantitative findings and makes the discussion of themes more comprehensive (Brown, 2013a).

### **Findings:**

#### **Household Vulnerability and Resilience in West End and Punta Gorda**

##### **General Findings from both Communities**

Broadly speaking, several themes emerge from qualitative analysis in this study, including: political turmoil and tourism sector disruption; a strong but uneven recovery starting in 2011; diversified household livelihood strategies; and disparity of economic opportunity in the tourism sector. The remainder of this sub-section presents these themes in greater detail.

##### *Political turmoil and tourism sector disruption*

Generally, tourism business owners reported a virtual cessation of tourism and business for a period of approximately six months following the ouster of former Honduran president Manuel “Mel” Zelaya in June of 2009. The business owner consensus also points to a general trend of low revenue for most of 2010 with a noticeable uptick starting around the beginning of 2011. One West End bar owner states, “... This year [2011] so far has been pretty good. About two years ago, when they had the “pseudo coup” and all of those political problems was a bad year... when a lot of businesses were going under.” Another West End business owner with a restaurant described hardship making utility payments and keeping staff payments up to date in the latter half of 2009 into 2010, stating,

...There was nobody during the high season last year, nothing, literally, only local people, and they didn't have money... mostly because of the political problems. Of course the economy was bad all over the world, but we were still a new destination. So people were still coming before the political problems... the US was hurting, but Europe didn't get that badly hurt initially...

These quotations indicate little concern on the part of tourism business owners during the early part of the GFC, but a much more serious curtailment of visitors and revenue in the wake of the political turmoil on the mainland of Honduras and in the Western Hemisphere generally occasioned by Zelaya's removal from office. However, the differential recovery of the sector described below indicates that the GFC may have had a lagging effect on household livelihoods.

#### *Strong but uneven tourism sector recovery*

Overall, the tourism sector recovery on Roatán has been strong and several tourism business owners reported annual revenue projections close to pre-crisis levels if not slightly better. A West End restaurant owner says, "So far, 2011 has been a solid year. We are starting to see customers like we had before..." Another business owner states, "...we had strong growth every year from the early 2000s until the 'coup'....last year was a bad year, but this year we are seeing numbers like before." The overall consensus of West End business owners was that the latter part of 2009 and all of 2010 were difficult years to operate in the tourism sector, but that those businesses that managed to weather this period were having a robust recovery in 2011.

However, the benefits of this recovery are unevenly distributed, with business owners and employees in tourism work reporting fairly stable employment and higher income and small scale entrepreneurs reporting highly variable income and generally lower income than in 2005, prior to the GFC. One souvenir seller laments, "...the tourists still come, but they don't buy as much as before, they don't spend as much money." Because West End has several tourism businesses and a greater percentage of Punta Gorda households that make a living in tourism do so through small scale enterprise, the recovery picture is better for the former town than the latter. Two important caveats to this assertion are that West End does have some households engaged primarily in small scale enterprise and that in Punta Gorda some households mitigate their vulnerability to the vicissitudes of small scale enterprise through other modes of livelihood such as work in the commercial seafood or shipping industries. Another important disparity in the tourism economy between the two towns is that of overall visitor-ship, particularly in the areas of dive tourism and cruise-ship tours. A Punta Gorda cultural center worker says of cruise tour companies,

...they direct all the tourists at the docks to West End and West Bay. We only get a trickle by comparison...we get bus loads from Coxen Hole, but not from Mahogany Bay even though Mahogany Bay is nearer...Most of the tourists who debark at Mahogany Bay stay at Mahogany Bay for their excursion, giving money to the owners, and not to other smaller businesses...

Overall, there exists a notable disparity in the benefits from tourism and the degree of household involvement or investment in the sector.

#### *Diversified household livelihood strategies*

Somewhat related to the disparate recovery of the tourism sector is the diversity of livelihood strategies practiced at the household level. For instance, the family with whom I had the most contact in Punta Gorda practiced artisanal fishing and occasional commercial fishing, had a member involved in construction work, and a woman running an eatery with the help of other family members. At least a few household interview respondents had one member involved in manual wage labor or a transportation-based small-scale enterprise and another

who sold food or souvenirs on the street or at a tourist attraction. A woman in a poor West End neighborhood says, "...My husband does masonry work. My father-in-law is a taxi driver. Santos is a security guard at Sunset Villas. Alfredo does carpentry... My brothers used to cut brush [with a weed eater] and take tourists out for charters in a [small narrow boat] ..." This broad approach provides some mitigation to the seasonality and other vicissitudes of any particular sector on Roatán.

#### *Disparity of opportunity in the tourism sector*

Another phenomenon related to the uneven recovery of household livelihoods in tourism and diversification of household livelihoods is the disparity of opportunity in certain types of tourism work. With employment as a scuba diving instructor as one of the most stable and well paid forms of tourism work on Roatán, it is noteworthy that western expatriates are very heavily represented in this field. One West End dive shop owner states somewhat apologetically, "I'd like to hire more Islanders and Hondurans, but they can't pass the instructors' exam...the educational system down here doesn't give people the math skills they need to do this kind of work." A bar owner prefers to hire expatriates versus Honduran nationals because he feels the former group possesses a customer service ethos more commensurate with the expectations of tourists from sending OCED countries. At cultural attractions in or near Punta Gorda, the vendors and performers are predominantly Garifuna, but generally an Anglophonic Islander tour guide is the one providing explanation of the encounter to the tourists; the less than fluent English skills of most of the Island's Garifuna population may put them at a disadvantage in securing employment as tour guides, scuba instructors, or other types of work that require fairly complex discourse.

#### *Synopsis of general findings*

The remainder of this findings section contextualizes these general trends by giving a general description of livelihoods in West End followed by two illustrative ethnographic examples, and then a similar general synopsis supported by specific examples for Punta Gorda.

### **West End: Dive and Cruise Ship Tourism**

West End is a village of several hundred to a few thousand permanent residents that experiences large influxes of tourists in two modes; tourists generally come for scuba diving trips of a few days to several weeks or on day trips as part of a cruise ship tour group. A large number of West End residents are Islanders. Rounding out the demographic profile are mainland Hondurans and expatriates mostly from North America, Western Europe, or Australia. Most households are at least somewhat dependent on income from tourism. The most obvious category of tourism related livelihood is the category of tourism work. In this case, tourism work includes ownership of or steady employment of established businesses such as dive shops, restaurants, gift shops, and the like. Small scale entrepreneurs in West End include souvenir sellers, water taxi operators, and artisanal fisherman. While water taxi service and small scale fishing do not seem to be as directly related to tourism and souvenir sales, tourism impacts both occupations. Tourists make up some, though not all of water taxi customers. Although artisanal fishermen rarely sell directly to tourists, they are an important source of seafood for West End restaurants.

According to interview responses, the GFC did not make much of a dent in the tourism sector in 2008 or early 2009, even as the economy of many sending countries plunged into severe crisis. However, the consensus among business interview respondents is that the oyster

of president Zelaya in June of 2009 and the resultant political uncertainty, violence on the mainland, and US travel advisory ground everything to a halt. A local bar owner describes the impact of the coup on the otherwise steady trajectory of his bar's revenue over the last several years.

Yeah. This year so far has been pretty good. About two years ago, when they had the "pseudo coup" and all of those political problems was a bad year.... It was definitely a year when a lot of businesses were going under. I'm very lucky [with this bar], because my family owns the property [that the bar sits on]. In West End a lot of businesses closed down because they couldn't make the rent. That would have been 2009, which was the worst year for [the bar] since it opened. Every year other than that, there's been a steady increase in business as we've become more popular in the World, through the internet and through maintaining a high level of service...

In West End, established businesses that managed to survive the resulting tumult generally reported a strong recovery starting in 2011. Most owners and workers in the tourism work category reported a relatively high income by local standards and little if any problems finding work. Other households live a bit more precariously. The quotation in the previous section about different household occupations from the woman living in the mostly Ladino section known as La Berinche illustrates the sporadic nature of tourism work and other wage labor between 2005 and 2011.

The next two sub-sections describe specific examples of tourism work at a dive shop and with a small local tour company, respectively.

### *Bay Island divers*

As an illustration of the typical profile of dive shop tourism in West End, Bay Island Divers is a solid archetype. The shop sits on a stretch of Bay Street that is densely packed with other dive shops, restaurants, bars, boutique retail shops and a rental shop or two. Most of the staff are expatriates from developed countries, including the owners, with one instructor who is from an Islander family. Though income does vary according to the high or low season, instructors work most days of the year; it is a rare day when absolutely no-one is taking a group out diving. The two boat captains work at least as many days a year as any individual instructor, if not more. They are of mainland Honduran extraction and live in the Colonia portion of the neighboring town of Sandy Bay. Manager Angela Towns states that the average tenure of an instructor is a few months, but that some have been around for a few years. Best estimates put average monthly pay for instructors at several hundred to a couple thousand dollars a month and somewhat less for the boat captains. Another consideration is the fact that when dive instructors receive tips, the customer may specify whether or not the boat captain gets a share of the tip.

On an April day, Bruce Grace is wrapping up a three-day open water course for novice divers. At mid-morning and again in the early afternoon, he takes the group in one of the shop's dive boats for a diving expedition which combines skill demonstrations in the beginning with a dive tour of some spot on the reef for the latter part of the dive. Terrain covered in the dives includes sandy patches, turtle grass, and the reef wall. As with previous dives, Bruce points out interesting wildlife such as a large aquatic crab spotted under a coral block, a spotted trunk fish, a black grouper, many parrotfish, a small shell-less yellow mollusk called a flamingo tongue, a trumpet fish, and a hawksbill turtle. Both students pass the final day easily and Bruce shakes their hands at the end of the second dive. Upon arrival at the dock, the dive staff starts

hauling tanks and the divers begin moving other gear to the cleaning barrels, cleaning according to SOP. Bruce tells the students that this is the last time that they will have to clean the gear as open water divers, as the staff usually cleans the gear for fun divers. When one student states that he will still clean his gear, fellow instructor Ellen Scott expresses approbation for this statement, at which point Bruce says, "...well, I would clean your gear, Ellen would say 'screw you' and make you clean your own gear..." They complete the certification paperwork back in the shop and Bruce shakes the students' hands again and congratulates them on the successful completion of the course.

Concurrently with the last day of Bruce's open water course, other staff members are leading fun dives for customers who are already certified open water or higher. Aboard big boat *Delfin* Ellen and Ted Lincoln are making a final check of the gear just prior to giving the saddle up order to their fun dive groups. Upon arrival at the dive site, Ellen ties the boat off at the anchor buoy and then she and Ted give a safety brief and have their customers don gear and do buddy checks. The dive groups link up at designated places in the water and then do their tour along the reef. Once the divers get through the safety stop and surface, Ellen asks them if they enjoyed the dive with a smile on her face. They respond with phrases like "Man, that was great!," "Did anyone else see the moray eel?," and "Visibility was perfect." The divers board the boat via the stern platform one at a time, handing their fins up to boat captain Julio, and then climbing aboard in the rest of their gear. Julio assists divers who need it by putting a hand on the diver's regulator valve and pulling upward as the diver uses his or her legs to climb. Ted's group is already aboard, and once Ellen ascertains that all of her charges are safely aboard, she tells Julio that he can take them back to the shop when ready. As soon as they get the gear from this dive cleaned and stowed, Ellen, Ted, and other staff members start preparing sets of dive gear for the 11:30 dive trip.

Even during periods when most or all of the instructors and the boat captains are out on the water, the shop itself still maintains at least a steady hum of activity. Maintenance man Jerry Davis goes about ensuring the readiness of all the equipment. Likewise, Angela is fairly busy throughout the day. She frequently updates the daily and weekly schedules based on new information. She also does the shop's accounting, constantly updating the books on number of divers, weekly revenue, and weekly expenditures. Sometimes, Angela has to gently prod long term customers to pay up at the end of a diving trip. "So, \_\_\_\_\_ that'll be \$250 in U.S whenever you get a chance..." She has plenty of accounting to do, collecting \$325 for open water courses and \$30 per dive for fun dives, \$20 for people living on Roatán. Though monthly revenue varies according to high or low season, the shop brings in about \$60,000 per year and pays out about \$18,000 a year to its employees. Co-owner Gregory Hodges responds to email inquiries and takes care of other dive shop matters periodically throughout the day when he's not doing caretaking, plumbing, or construction work elsewhere around western Roatán.

After the last dive of the day, the dive staff preps the boats, dock, and shop for closing time. Dive instructors take all the wetsuits that have been hanging out to dry and put them either in an on the dock closet or in the equipment room. Jerry locks up the tank storage area and the wetsuit closet with padlocks. The two boat captains ensure that the boats are secure, and then disappear for the night. Today, as most days, the dive instructors and Jerry have a beer to celebrate another successful business day. Then, while Angela and Jerry lock up the shop, the other dive staff say good night or "see ya in a bit" and head off their separate ways.

### *Jim Black's West End tour*

In order to capitalize on the growing cruise ship tour segment, Jim Black recently added a kayaking and snorkel tour of West End to his tourism business operation, which also includes the Carib Diner and the Trade Wind Inn. With a few expatriates in the mix, his tour staff or



“paddle team” is mostly comprised of Islander men who get paid a minimum stipend of \$250 plus tips. Tours given and income made vary by high or low tourism season and according to the weather. As July sits squarely in the slow season, this tour is the only one for Jim Black’s outfit this week. The normal frequency of cruise tours ranges from one to two a week during this slow period to almost every week day during the high cruise season from October to April, for an average of nine tours during the high season. Tour guide JR Kincaid does caution that tours don’t come every day during the high season on account of frequent torrential downpours, but “...it doesn’t rain every day and you get some good days in between...”

While Jim and a hired driver ferry tourists in buses from one of the cruise ship ports to the Carib Diner, the paddle team members prep the kayaks and then have a snack of quesadillas provided by the restaurant staff. Jim pulls up in a school bus type bus with a colorful mural painted in an aqua-blue background, in a sand and sea motif. Shortly thereafter, a mini-bus marked “Ruta-2” pulls in with the remaining tourists.

Once groups are made, JR briefs Group 1 about the day’s events while another guide briefs group 2. The brief consists of descriptions of planned activities, safety rules, and a pitch to consider the Carib Diner “your home base for the day...we’re going to have a great kayak tour, a fun snorkel tour, and food for you here...” These initial briefings last about twenty minutes and then Group 1 heads for the kayaks staged on the beach on the other side of the more southerly point that bounds Half Moon Bay. Group 2 goes on a snorkel tour of Half Moon Bay

JR and fellow guide Michael Macho have the group link up in the water and then lead them on a paddling tour “down island” toward West Bay. They have the group beach at a now-defunct resort compound and take most of the tourists on a walking tour up a steep hill showing off local flora and fauna, with a minority opting to relax by the water. On this tour JR shows medicinal plants, herbs, and various fruit trees, with Michael sometimes picking fruit for the tourists to share. JR and Michael also have a running banter for the entire ‘plantation’ tour. In pointing out a plant that acts as a natural sleep aid, JR quips “When Michael was fifteen, he used to give his mama [the sleep aid] every night so he could go out drinking without her molesting him...” Michael often comments on JR’s ‘advanced age’ of thirty-seven and JR in turn shows mock outrage at Michael’s carousing lifestyle. On the kayak trip back to the Carib Diner, both guides instigate splashing matches with the customers and each other.

After a break for lunch, the groups switch to their afternoon activity and draw the appropriate gear. Group 1 links up behind the Baptist Church on Half Moon Bay for a snorkel tour of the bay. JR and Michael stay with this group with the addition of two other men in kayaks to monitor and ensure the tourists’ safety. JR reminds his customers not to touch the coral or take anything from the reef. The group skirts around the reefed edge of the small bay, stopping at the channel at its mouth for a boat to pass before proceeding around to the other side. JR points out wildlife such as a Caribbean Lobster and several types of fish, including a profusion of them under a dive resort dock on the north side of the bay.

Upon completion, JR and Michael take the group back to the restaurant, where they are given 30-40 minutes to relax at the Diner, get a beer, or go shopping at the nearby stores. Jim puts out a wicker tip basket on one of the tables and gently exhorts the customers to put something in it if they feel inclined; the upstairs group is also presented with a tip basket.

When I ask Jim and his Paddle Team about the cruise tour business, he and JR state that Jim’s operation and other tour companies have to purchase a certain type of trip insurance and contract with a “salesman” who works for the cruise-lines to get these tour and that many independent operators compete to fill their tour buses from the cruise ships. Jim says that he works with all the cruise-lines that stop on the island, both at Coxen Hole and Mahogany Bay, and gets about \$50 per tourist in total. Jim’s main criterion for hiring people for his Paddle and Snorkel Team is having a positive, can do attitude and knowing “how to talk to the tourists.”

At 3:48, the school bus type bus pulls up to the front of the Carib Diner with Jim at the wheel. The remaining tourists board and Jim pulls away, then reverses to his original position a moment later; a man and a woman descend the front staircase looking rather sheepish as Jim intones to the busload “everybody remember to boo when they come on board...” in a jocular manner. Grabbing whatever they had forgotten, they climb back aboard; Jim closes the door, and departs in earnest at 3:51. Once this last bus departs, the tour staff hangs around to converse for a few minutes then drifts away one by one.

### **Punta Gorda: Catching, Making, Selling, Dancing**

Founded in the late 1700’s, Punta Gorda is the oldest continuous settlement on Roatán and is mostly comprised of people who identify as Garifuna. Garifuna residents and scholarship (Jenkins, 1983; Kirtsoglou & Theodossopoulos, 2004) make prominent mention of the fact that these refugees from slave ships never served as slaves and managed for many years to resist first the French, then British colonial power by learning from indigenous inhabitants and by guerrilla fighting. After the founding of Punta Gorda in 1797 when the Garifuna were defeated and deported to Roatán by the British, the town had an economy mainly based on subsistence cultivation and artisanal fishing for the next 150 years or so, with commercial sales of seafood and coconut products becoming more important by the mid-Twentieth Century (Evans, 1966, 1986; Harold MacLeod personal communication, October 2011). In recent decades, traditional culture in Punta Gorda has in some sense become a commodity, with troupes performing simplified versions traditional dances such as the *Punta* and *John Canoe* at resorts and later at both cruise ship ports and at venues in Punta Gorda (Brown, 2013a; Kirtsoglou & Theodossopoulos, 2004).

In contrast to West End and other long-term centers of tourism, only a few Punta Gorda residents have steady employment in the tourism sector. The most prominent sectors in terms of household livelihood are seafood production and processing, shipping, and small scale enterprise. Small scale entrepreneurs in Punta Gorda are mostly involved in dance performances, souvenir sales, and artisanal fishing. The performances and souvenir sales are directly tied into tourism and artisanal fishing has an indirect tie-in as some of the fish caught in this manner are sold or otherwise provided to restaurants or other venues that cater to tourists. A common theme from interviews is that income from small scale enterprise is more sporadic than that from seafood, shipping, or tourism work.

Indeed, a major difference in the tourism profile between regular tourism workers and small scale entrepreneurs seeking a living from tourism is the recovery of revenue in years after the financial crisis and the coup. Where tourism workers and business owners in diving, restaurants, gift shops, and the like reported a strong recovery in 2011 and early 2012, small scale entrepreneurs still had not recovered to 2005 levels during the field period. Despite high numbers of visitors to venues where the people of Punta Gorda sell things or dance, one woman selling souvenirs said, “...they come, but they don’t spend as much money.” I discuss possible reasons for this disparity in the discussion section. Below, is an exposition Garifuna life in Punta Gorda through accounts of one avocational intellectual and of a family striving to make it day to day but hopeful of improving their lot over time.

#### *Jeffry Constable*

A tall, thin man with grey hair and an easy manner, Jeffry Constable is an avid public historian and Garifuna cultural revivalist. He splits his time between presenting Garifuna history at the Yubu Garifuna Culture Center, tutoring children and adults in English, tending his garden, and in 2011 working on a Garifuna dictionary. During my interactions with Jeffry,

he frequently stresses the need for perseveration of Garifuna culture and language and for greater household self-sufficiency in the face of income uncertainty in the tourism sector.

On days when it is open, Jeffry directs traffic inside the Yubu and gives brief history presentations at a handmade diorama depicting Garifuna history and geography. Meant to evoke a traditional Garifuna house or other wattle and daub structure, the Yubu has a large thatched roof with a conical center and sloping arms coming off to the southwest and the southeast. When the first bus of tourists arrives around 10:00AM on a November morning, Jeffry directs them to the benches around the stage, with verbal reinforcement from the Islander woman leading the tour in a booming voice when the tourists start milling around instead. While this first group starts with the dance performances, he regales some of the subsequent groups with a brief history of the Garifuna at the diorama. Jeffry later tells me he does this to start sometimes so that a group does not crowd a previous group enjoying the performance. Sometimes he does a presentation at the end of the circuit for groups that did not hear it at the beginning, and sometimes he just stands by to answer questions a tourist may have. As the last bus pulls away, the vendors and drummers are putting their wares and instruments back in the ticket office and the dancers are doffing and packing up their costumes. Jeffry pulls out a Tupperware container with fish and rice that a friend has made him and sits down to lunch. He says,

During the high season, we work most days except weekends. Several buses come each day, but not nearly as many as before 2008...this is still better than 2005 because then, no buses came during the low season. Now, at least we get a few during the week [during the low season from May to October] ...this is why I encourage people to plant some food as a backup because sometimes the tourism is very slow.

He also expresses a common lament among the Garifuna performers and sellers about unfair contracts and under development of tourism in Punta Gorda versus some more westerly locales on Roatán.

...they direct all the tourists at the docks to West End and West Bay. We only get a trickle by comparison...we get bus loads from Coxen Hole, but not from Mahogany Bay even though Mahogany Bay is nearer...Most of the tourists who debark at Mahogany Bay stay at Mahogany Bay for their excursion, giving money to the owners, and not to other smaller businesses...

Because November is well into the rainy season, which happens to be the high tourism season, work at the Yubu is pretty regular right now. It will be much less so come May or June when the dry season and low tourism season start and cruise ship ports of call dwindle to a few times a week at most. Some weeks during the low season, the Yubu does not open at all, and so small scale entrepreneurs make little to no money. While some small-scale entrepreneurs in Punta Gorda live in a household where one or more of the other members has work in a steadier sector such as seafood or shipping, some experience a very high degree of precarity, especially if the vendor or dancer in question is the sole or main source of income.

During these times, Jeffery concentrates more on his garden and tutoring. He grows bananas, plantains, pineapple, papaya, and yucca to have as a backup against the slow season, saying "...first I grow for my own food, then if I have any extra, I think about selling some..."; he also says the Colonia known as Invacion is an attempt to revive traditional Garifuna cultivation and self-sufficiency. While we are working on May Day, Jeffry goes on at length about the themes of cultivation as cultural heritage and as a fallback during the low season for

tourism, saying, "...someday, the people here will want to go back to these old ways, but you've got to have the seed..." He spends more time weeding and tending the plants during this lull in tourism than he does during the busier wet season. That being said, he does some work in the garden or, *plantation* year-round, calibrating what he will plant based on the time of year. While he tends to plant hardier crops such as banana and yucca in the dry months, he plants more delicate ones such as melons and cucumber during the rainy season, when the sun won't desiccate or burn them as easily. He says, "...you've got to have sturdy plants like these for the dry weather. When the rainy season comes again, I can plant cucumbers and other more delicate things..."

Indeed, Jeffry's mode of living is almost a counterpoint to that of most other Garifuna people in Punta Gorda. While some other households have some food crops planted, no study participant households have anything approaching the amount of land under cultivation or the number of different crops planted as he does. Though some of the houses on the outskirts of the town have more extensive plantations than is typical in the rest of Punta Gorda, none have the variety he does. No other study participant placed the same degree of importance on subsistence cultivation Jeffry did, though several cited plantations as a venerable cultural tradition honored mostly in the breach.

### *The MacLeod Lorenzo family*

Of the people I encountered during fieldwork on Roatán, the family of Harold MacLeod and Faith Lorenzo provided the most vivid picture of the challenges and opportunities of life on the island in 2011 and 2012. Harold is an artisanal fisherman and sometime commercial fisherman and Faith makes souvenirs for sale and during the field period builds and runs a *champa*, or small seaside eatery. Because I stayed in the MacLeod Lorenzo family home during the periods I worked in Punta Gorda, I am able to describe their attempts to make a living in the aftermath of the Honduran coup and the financial crisis in the greatest ethnographic detail of any household or situation (Brown, 2013a). This family embodies both resilience and vulnerability in the face of frequent cash flow problems, increasing food prices, and run of the mill misfortunes. While Harold and his son Sydney MacLeod had had steady jobs on another island for a few years, in 2011 no-one in the house has a long term stable source of income. They were subject to the fits and spurts of seafood sales, cooked meal sales, and sporadic work for the grown children in construction, boat building, and the like. Added to the mix were the seasonality of tourism volume and increasing prices in staple food prices over the last couple of years.

A particularly striking example of the entrepreneurial spirit of this family is the Harold's fishing boat. The boat is a refurbished cruise ship life boat made of fiberglass, with a plywood roof and walls built on, supported by 2X4s, and coated in fiberglass and white paint. The lower hull is painted blue. Harold has also installed a four cylinder Hyundai car engine attached to a propeller. Upon my arrival back in Punta Gorda in August, Harold's son Sydney announces that I will be joining a fishing expedition early the following morning. The trip starts out well, with the first full day of fishing yielding a catch of approximately 200-300 pounds of fish and 30-40 lobsters. Toward late afternoon, everyone links up at the base camp. As I make my way to the center of the key to make fieldnotes, Sydney starts making supper aboard the boat while Harold, Ezequiel, and Jacob start cleaning the day's catch.

Then, the shouting starts; an argument breaks out between Harold and Sydney's friend Jacob that in retrospect seems to be a symbolic inflection point for the entire trip. Once it becomes evident that Jacob and Sydney have made a hasty and unannounced departure, Harold informs me that the argument was about how to clean fish. Where Jacob's style is similar to the one I learned as a child of simply scraping the scales off the fish and leaving the rest of the

skin intact, Harold's standard is the removal of the entire epidermis with a knife. Harold says Jacob's way is "ugly" and depresses the market value of the "product" and exclaims, "Jacob only knows how to do it the ugly way.... That boy ought to be ashamed of himself, growing up on Roatán and not knowing how to clean fish the right way." Harold is also angry because the two young men have only cooked enough supper for themselves and failed to clean their dirty dishes.

While the remaining crew has some success the next day, the mood is tense and subdued and the weather turns rainy as the day wears on. We have an early supper on Sandfly Key and try to sleep in makeshift shelters as the rain gets steadier and heavier throughout the night. The weather event in question turns out to be a tropical storm and puts everyone on their mettle. Sydney and Jacob paddle through it and somehow miraculously make it back to Punta Gorda early the next morning. The boat's anchor line breaks and the boat drifts rapidly toward the neighboring major island of Guanaja with Harold trying to sleep onboard, leaving crew member Ezequiel Rejas and I stranded on the key. When Harold relates what had happened during the night once we are safely back in Punta Gorda later in the day, he says,

My God Marcus, I struggled all night with that boat and the anchor. I woke up when the boat was rolling and then drifting fast toward Guanaja. The rope broke, and the boat went out to sea... I thought I was going to be swept out to Nicaragua, but then I ran into the reef. Then I thought I was going to sink right there...that this was it for me. I bailed all night until Ezequiel climbed aboard..."

He assents to my helping with much less reticence and deference than the previous few days. Ezequiel and I hastily load the equipment and remaining supplies in the boat while Harold uses plastic sheeting and scrap cloth to plug the leaks as much as possible; he slows the torrent of seawater rushing into the boat down to a trickle. As we travel back to Punta Gorda, Ezequiel drives the boat close to the shoreline to avoid the big waves and Harold and I continually switch off turns in bailing the water. We manage to limp back onto the beach at Punta Gorda without sinking. After several hours of effort and a couple of different problem solving attempts, the boat is beached for repairs that will take a few months to complete.

In terms of the catch, the results are mixed. The fish are in good shape with plenty to eat for the next several days for the MacLeod Lorenzo family. Harold also manages to sell several pounds locally. However, the deal with the French Key restaurant falls through because the lobster is commercially ruined on account of trace amounts of diesel fuel in the incoming seawater blackening the shells. While the fishing trip is a positive story on the whole and Harold (and presumably Ezequiel) manages to generate some income, it is not as lucrative as it could have been with a few luckier breaks. As many of the other stories from my time on the island will show, there is a certain degree of uncertainty in making a living on Roatán, even if this uncertainty affects some households more severely than others.

Aside from fishing, the other major endeavor of the MacLeod Lorenzo household is Faith Lorenzo's champa which takes shape and goes operational over the course of my year of fieldwork. As the month of May fades on toward June, Faith Lorenzo expresses a desire to build the champa and sell food several times around the house. Once the champa is ready for opening in July, Faith and her daughter in law Bertha Forest start making a menu that includes *baleadas*, which are flour tortillas folding in half over refried beans and either sour cream or a hard, crumbly cheese, fried chicken, *tajada* (fried banana or plantain chips), and various traditional soups. While Sundays draw several customers from neighboring towns such as Oak Ridge and Diamond Rock for a seafood and plantain soup known as *machuka*, the number of tourist customers is fairly low for the next few months.

Starting in October with the heavy rains, the tourism season picks up and a troupe of dancers gives regular performances at the *Communal*, or Garifuna community center which happens to be across the road from the champa. During the high season, several busloads of cruise ship tourists come to the communal each week, with occasional complements of tour groups from the mainland as well. This uptick presents an opportunity of more potential customers for Faith but making the sale is more challenging than one would think. Cruise tour groups debarking at Roatán's two cruise ship ports are generally on a fairly tight schedule on account of the ships' scheduled departure times. What this means at the *Communal* is that tourists have time to hear the brief explanation of the performance, experience the performance, and then interact with vendors inside the communal or just outside for up to 20 minutes. This leaves very little time to order and eat the made-to-order options at Faith Lorenzo's champa. Often times, her sales are disappointing despite large crowds across the road.

In addition to these structural challenges, the vicissitudes of life sometimes weigh the champa down. Some days, the propane runs out of the tank and Faith and Bertha cannot cook any food to sell until a gas truck comes by as taking the tank to a shop for refilling would further eat into revenue through bus or cab fare. In July, Harold accidentally breaks the freezer refrigerator unit when he tries to defrost it with a screwdriver. During the weeks it takes to get it repaired, Faith's inability to preserve meat and fish for periods longer than a few days seriously hamper her ability to offer most of her menu options. During the high season, road work in Punta Gorda and heavy rains also frequently tamp down sales.

Still, the champa also has runs of luck when it clears several hundred dollars' worth on the day. Events such as a July *ferria* (fair or festival), *Semana Santa* (Holy Week) and the April celebration of the founding of Punta Gorda pack the town with people and Faith is very busy and has a good cash flow during these times. During these successful periods, she does things to improve the champa like having a cousin construct a wood-fired oven by encasing an old gas oven in mud and having the champa structures redone to look nicer and be more water resistant in heavy rains.

On the whole, the MacLeod Lorenzo family shows resiliency and adaptability in the face of periodic bouts of adversity. It does seem hard to keep their endeavors going consistently and both Harold and Faith see things fall through on a regular basis in terms of expected income for their efforts. Like many household respondents, Faith reports less spending by tourists than prior to the coup, a possible lagging effect of the Global Financial Crisis. Throughout the year, however, they manage to keep food on the table and to pay the most necessary bills when they really need to do so.

## Discussion

Similar to Daltabuit and Leatherman's (1998; Leatherman & Goodman, 2005) description of disparity of benefits in the development of a tourism economy in Quintana Roo, the recovery of the tourism sector shows a differential positive impact on households in the Roatán communities of West End and Punta Gorda. Just as Leatherman and Goodman (2005) contrast improvement in household food security and income for households with one member engaged in permanent tourism work with a diminishment of these things for households involved in sporadic tourism work, I (Brown, 2013a) describe a similar contrast between households involved in steady tourism work and those involved primarily in small scale enterprise. The vignettes above illustrate that vulnerability for workers in businesses such as dive shops and cruise tours where tourists have to spend money to interact is generally less than for small scale entrepreneurs. While I did not reach a definitive conclusion about why this circumstance pertained, it is a reasonable possibility that tourists may have felt that they could splurge on a vacation packages such as a scuba diving trip or a cruise with excursions,

but felt more anxiety about or less compunction to buy souvenirs or tip generously for cultural performances. In other words, visitor-ship is a good proxy indicator for revenue for dive shops, tour companies, restaurants, and the like, but is less so for small scale entrepreneurs with whom tourists can more easily interact without spending money. In this manner, small scale entrepreneurs may be subject to a lagging indicator of the Global Financial Crisis despite the relatively small effect of the crisis on the tourism sector generally prior to the 2009 political turmoil in Honduras.

This example stands in contrast to the scant literature on post-financial crisis tourism. For example, in Macao (Chan, 2011) and China more generally (Li et al., 2010), the crisis is immediately and directly linked to a precipitous drop in revenue for tourism businesses. For Macao especially, this rapid decline is tied to a severe curtailing of gambling as discretionary spending on an individual or household level (Chan, 2011). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2011) states that the financial crisis had a negative impact on tourism workers in cases such as foreign workers in the Maldives, women and low skilled workers in Costa Rica, and workers with dependents in Tanzania. Rather than showing blanket negative effects, Roatán is a mixed outcome, with some doing as well or better than before the crisis and some doing worse.

Perhaps as important as shock and uneven recovery of the tourism sector to understanding household livelihood and vulnerability profile is the viability of alternative modes of making a living when such an important component of the economy suffers a great shock. In the case of seafood, the Oak Ridge seafood processing plant runs on a seasonal basis roughly corresponding to the lobster and shrimp seasons; it generates a decent steady income for several months of the year, but nothing for the other part of the year. Likewise, artisanal fishing is an option for some households with a potential for income generation and protein for the table. However, several respondents reported local fish and shellfish stocks as being ill managed and badly depleted compared to earlier times. Subsistence cultivation is also a problematic strategy for most households participating in the study on account of curtailment of land access. In a similar fashion to Zarger's (2009) treatment of Mayans in Belize who have a difficult time falling back on traditional slash and burn subsistence cultivation techniques due to land expropriation and other limitations of access in recent decades, respondents in both West End and Punta Gorda mostly find it difficult to make up for income diminution with increased subsistence or market production due to the fact that many have very little access to land. In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, this limitation in the possibility of growing food locally coincided with a drop in revenue from tourism for many households and with a concurrent rise in staple food prices. Leatherman and Goodman (2005), Himmelgreen et al. (2006), and Ruiz et al. (2014) document a similar phenomenon of tourism dependence in the context of diminished land access in Quintana Roo and the Monteverde Zone of Costa Rica, respectively.

## **Conclusion**

On the matter of significance of the study (Brown, 2013a), the key importance of it lies in its exploration, even if in an indirect way, of the impact of global financial and economic processes on particular cultural and economic trends and formations at the local level. Overall, the relationship between the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 and the health of the tourism sector on Roatán is not a readily discernable cause and effect one, but the results of the study outlined in this article (Brown, 2013a) strongly suggest a belated but marked effect on the livelihoods and economic security of poor households engaged in small scale enterprise on the island. The recovery of more stable tourism businesses that survived the near-term aftermath of the 2009 Honduran political troubles relative to the continued struggles of small scale entrepreneurs

indicates that the “meltdown” of U.S. housing prices and its global aftermath may have had little impact on revenue from vacation packages but much greater impact on livelihoods dependent on a spur of the moment decision to buy or not to buy a souvenir or tip a performer.

Like any complex study, this one has limitations, including data collection compromises inherent in a mixed methods approach and the lack of an unassailable link between the Global Financial Crisis and the economic and health-related phenomena outlined in the study (Brown, 2013a). While using a mixed methods approach that balanced quantitative statistical analysis with detailed narratives of life in West End and Punta Gorda enabled me to triangulate data from different sources and present a holistic picture of the situation, doing so also limited the efficacy of the specific components of the approach to some degree. Ethnographically, the study is affected by the fact that the significant amount of time spent seeking respondents for the household data collection package placed some limit on the amount of time I could devote to detailed participant observation. The push to meet a sample quota based on a preliminary power analysis (Brown, 2013a) also may have limited the quality of rapport building with some respondents. Additionally, I was unable to access archival data from appropriate Government Agencies in Honduras or tourism businesses such as cruise lines in order to create a detailed picture of change in revenue or employment in the tourism sector from 2005 to 2011-12. Further study and follow up may provide a more complete answer to the research question.

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