

Ortega Household. Alto Bonito (Mike's Colonia)

1. Criterios de la selección del caso de estudio y qué es lo interesante

Shared housing, use of title as collateral, trailer & contractor built.

Husband and Wife (Santiago and Concepcion Ortega [pseudonyms])—son may be currently living in the trailer with children. Supposedly son and wife are divorced, but ex-wife sometimes lives in the trailer from time to time.

Bought vacant lots (2) in 1990 (from Elias Lopez), moved to lot in 1992. Received help from CRG for title (didn't remember). Contracted the cement and columns, the rest was self-built.

Has \$40,000 mortgage (2000) and used house as collateral—unclear what money was used for (no home improvements in last 10 years). Wouldn't not use house as collateral again—very risky and difficult to pay off.

Needs to repair roof.

2. Metadata

- a. Alto Bonito. Mike's subdivisión. Owners: Concepcion and Santiago Ortega.
- b. Cuadro resumen del número de visitas, fecha, tiempo que se llevó, con quién se hizo la entrevista, quién hizo la entrevista, señalar si se utilizó otra técnica para obtener la información, además de la entrevista semi-estructurada.

Survey conducted on _____ (Check database). Semi-structured case study conducted on 7/30/2011 from 9:30 to 11:30 am. Noah conducted the interview (with assistance from Peter and Lissette). Abby drew family tree and trajectory. Noah and Abby took measurements and created house diagram. Interview was conducted with Santiago and Concepcion. Son (Eddy) and wife showed up toward the end of the interview. Were asked questions regarding perceptions of the colonia as well.

- c. Calidad de la entrevista. Qué tan dispuesta estuvo la gente, etc. Anotar, observaciones metodológicas (qué dio resultado para obtener información, qué obstaculizó, recomendaciones para próximos trabajos). Indicar dificultades o problemas con la entrevista o con el levantamiento.

Homeowners were welcoming. Were willing to show us the tax receipts (didn't have access to title—held by title company due to mortgage). Family was very willing to show us around the house, except for one bedroom which was supposed locked and they couldn't find the key. Husband seemed to enjoy showing improvements to the property and his toolshed.

3. Reconstrucción de los dueños fundadores y las personas que vivieron en la casa de acuerdo con el árbol genealógico (formato)

- a. **Situación actual detallada:** Tamaño del hogar y número, estructura, etc.
Currently, there are two people in the house: the original owners and spouses, Santiago and Concepción. His son, Santiago Jr, came back to live on the trailer in their yard. One month ago, during the survey, Santiago Jr had a problem with his

wife and left the lot for a while. His now ex-wife took the children to live with her. She still has access to the trailer. She has the only key.

b. Situación cuando llegaron al lote

Santiago, the father, paid to build the basic structure of the house, including the roof. The divisions were there but they lack the walls to separate them. The whole family, parents and three children (See árbol) moved in. They did not have water for a year, but got to build the division walls over the next two years.

c. Cambios en la estructura familiar a lo largo del tiempo (Síntesis)

Mostrar la expansión de la familia y cambios en la estructura familiar (nuclear a extendida, casamientos segunda generación), Crisis familiares (muertes, separaciones, divorcios).

The original family experienced some changes with the marriage of the oldest son, Sergio in 1995. He moved in with his wife and had his first child there. In 1998, he left and moved to Chicago. He is the only son who has studied in college and works currently as a principal at a school. He also bought a lot in the colonia but never lived there. The same year, Santiago, the second oldest, got married and moved in with his wife. After the birth of his first child, Santiago stayed but then rented in another house, after a year or so, his brother Sergio let him live in his lot. In 2003, Eddy, who got married, and moved in with his wife for a year. They end up 'buying' Sergio's lot and started to build there. Santiago and his family moved back again when his second child was born, in 2006. They stayed at the house until 2010, when he bought a trailer house and moved in the backyard. Santiago's family lived together in the trailer for six months. His wife separated and took the kids with her. As he works as a trailer driver –same occupation as his father and brother Eddy-he is rarely home. His children visit him and his grandparents during vacations. (See Trayectoria.ppt and Datos Familiares.xls).

4. Compra/Ocupación de la vivienda: Donde vivían antes (que tipo de vivienda, si eran dueños). Como supieron de que se vendían solares, por que decidieron comprar, como pagaron, a quien, cuanto, en pagos/por cuanto tiempo.

Original owners are from Camargo, Tamaulipas. They moved to the US and lived in La Grulla for three months as renters, they also rent in la Colonia La Palma and then moved to Mike's subdivision.

5. Levantamiento de la vivienda, su relación con la trayectoria familiar, financiamiento de construcción o modificaciones y problemas constructivos

1. *Plano arquitectónico de 3 etapas de construcción de la vivienda* (o solo dos si se trata de un traspaso reciente -- al llegar y ahora). Presentar los dibujos arquitectónicos de acuerdo con el formato: plantas, fachada, un corte, un esquema tridimensional, volumétrico. Fotografías de los tres, si fuera posible.

a. Situación Actual: incluir el jardín/patio/propiedad y la vivienda

- House looks average/good on outside, but excellent interior (see photos).
- Three spacious bedrooms (one locked?); bathroom; large open lounge and diner and well-constructed kitchen with cabinets etc.

- Garden yard is extensive used: tráiler of son with its own rooms (**two bedrooms, one living-room, one bathroom, one kitchen**) (see photo) – old tráiler but has a false roof for air circulation and shade. Also benefits from shady trees.
- Fosa séptica área has exterior wc and workshop
- Utility area at the rear
- .

b. Situación Inicial: incluir ubicación de fosa séptica o viviendas anteriores

Shell of house was built by 1990

1990-moved in

1991-1992 division and bathroom (it included doors)

1993-1994 insulation

c. Situación intermedia: incluir ubicación de fosa séptica o viviendas anteriores. Ten en cuenta la trayectoria/el proceso de construir en cuanto al año en que recibieron el título de la propiedad (AÑO ~2000)

1995-1997 floor

1996-kitchen cabinets and AC

2. *Vincular la vivienda con la reconstrucción de la trayectoria familiar* (al menos en los 3 horizontes). A lo largo del tiempo, quién ha utilizado cada cuarto. Registrar los cambios y la razón por la que se dieron. Por ejemplo cambio en el número de hogares (casamientos), salida y entradas, es decir, cambios en la estructura familiar. Incluir de forma gráfica en el momento actual, quién usa cada espacio y para qué.

The divisions were set from the start with three bedrooms, one bathroom and spacious kitchen and living room. They built the walls on the interiors within a couple of years of moving in. The original couple always stayed in the southwest room. The northeast and southeast rooms have been interchanged constantly between brothers and their respective families. Originally, Santiago, who used to be more mischievous, occupied the northeast room by himself. When Sergio got married, Santiago moved in with Eddy in the southeast room. The Northeast room was always used for the married couples. When Sergio moved out, Santiago also moved back in there with his family. Eddy also did the same, and during that time, the southeast bedroom was empty. Currently, the southeast and northeast bedrooms are empty. No major alterations have taking place within the household. All the basic improvements, including the floor, kitchen cabinets, AC, and insulation were made in the first seven years, before the couple requested the mortgage. (See trayectoria)

3. *Fuentes de financiamiento*, para construir o remodelar diferentes partes de la vivienda, para la construcción, el mantenimiento y las mejoras. Estrategias que usa la familia. Who contributes money (and in particular, connection with expectations of inheritance). Prestamos oficiales, hipoteca y riesgo? Importancia del “earned income tax credit” o la seguridad social? Si hay más de un hogar, cómo se divide el costo de mantener/construir las viviendas?

See below.

4. *Problemas* Los problemas constructivos, de funcionamiento, y de otro tipo (que no les guste algo) que presente la vivienda. Quienes en la casa reportan qué problema. Propuestas de solución. Tomar fotografías que ilustren los problemas.
 - Didn't see much here. Walls are not insulated, and I can't see under eaves (photos) to check venting.
 - Represa adjacent flooded once – some minor flooding of their house: next door suffered badly.
 - Questionnaire said roof needs attention – not see damage, however, nor did we ask (Correct? **No, we neglected to ask.**) Access to the roof was not in good Nick (see photo)
5. *Elementos simbólicos* o simplemente, cuestiones que no les gustaría cambiar para nada y por qué. (Por ejemplo, el árbol que plantaron en el terreno cuando llegaron, el piso que construyeron con tanta dificultad de material reciclado de demoliciones en la ciudad).

6. Movilidad de los dueños fundadores y sus dependientes

Reconstruir la trayectoria de vida de (el/la) los dueños fundadores, de acuerdo con el formato. Anotando los años clave, con datos de dónde provienen, Cuando se casaron, (si es pareja), a dónde se fueron a vivir, entradas y salidas de la casa, de los dueños fundadores y sus dependientes. Indicar las razones para quedarse, para irse y para regresar. Miembros de la familia extendida, quiénes llegaron (relación de parentesco, cuánto duraron, razones para irse y quedarse, eran parejas con hijos).

7. Subdivisión/traspaso del solar (si hay): proceso y trayectoria. Formal/informal. Dueño oficial (al nombre de quien está el título). Heredado, regalado, o comprado (a qué precio y de qué manera). Process of acquisition.

- Son has his trailer on the lot – informal subdivision.
- “Mystery of the locked room”. Who – daughter in law or son's belongings? Something fishy here.

8. Título de propiedad/ proceso / Cambios en el tiempo. Estado actual del título, problemas con el título. Impacto de subdivisions. Impacto (si hay) de tener el título de la propiedad (usarlo como aval, seguridad). Property Taxes.

- Title confused. They argued that got receipts and received title but couldn't explain how/when exactly. CRG? No they said. But must have had title to get mortgage. **Family DID receive assistance from the CRG for title.**
- ISD taxes \$169 paid. Property taxes paid through mortgage and now start to be paid directly

9. Cuestiones del testamento, herencia, sucesión. Conflictos, cómo surgieron, cuándo, quienes son los interesados, problemas, arreglos. Expectativas de los miembros de la familia.

- No wills – want children to share equally (including two kids from his second family – but just on his half. 5 and 3 Santiago: Concepcion . Seem cool about the whole thing.

10. Actividad económica, estrategias en la vivienda para generar ingresos (actividades económicas o renta de alguna parte de la casa), etc. Cambios en el tiempo. Impacto de la crisis de 2008.

- Trailer truck parked on street
- Sr has his tools and taller at the rear

11. Estructura de la vivienda y fuentes de financiamiento: para la construcción, el mantenimiento y las mejoras. Prestamos oficiales, hipoteca y riesgo? Importancia del “earned income tax credit” o la seguridad social? Si hay más de un hogar, ¿cómo se divide el costo de mantener/construir las viviendas.

Primarily used income to pay for home improvements/repairs. Unsure whether adult children helped pay for improvements, but Santiago does not currently pay rent or contribute to property taxes to park his trailer on the property. Mortgage (\$40,000) used to buy tractor trailers (with house as collateral), with plan to use profits from trucking to pay improvements in house. Economy (2008) made this difficult. 10-year terms, \$583 per month. Husband estimated they paid, with interest, \$60,000 total for mortgage. Husband sold trailers, unclear how much he got for them, but my impression is he lost money on the mortgage/trucking-business endeavor, and one of the sons took out a loan to pay off the rest of the parents’ mortgage (\$10,000).

Santiago, son, bought his own trailer in 2010. Paid for it outright.

11. Condiciones actuales de la vivienda: Problemas que quieren resolver (en cuanto a la salud/discapacidad, la edad, la movilidad. También el diseño de la vivienda y la estructura/necesidades de la familia). Alguna parte sin terminar/que necesita reparación.

Excellent condition – interior especially

12. Sostenibilidad: Si ha escuchado/usado algunas mejoras sostenibles. Oportunidades donde se podría usar una mejora sostenible/cómo?

13. Percepciones sobre su colonia. Construcción de identidad a través de las 3 generaciones (o las que haya en la/s viviendas (si es el caso, diferenciar entre la identidad de los migrantes y nativos).

14. Necesidades especiales (trato a los viejos, abuelas cuidando nietos, discapacitados, etc.)

15. Citas, citables para los diferentes temas que no se hayan incluido en los temas tratados en esta ficha.

16. Resumen de hallazgos, referentes principalmente a las razones por las cuales se seleccionó el caso.

De Soto Rules - but not quite...

Lisette struck that this a perfect case of what De Soto would argue in favor of – using the house as collateral on a loan (although in this case a mortgage) and as a means to unlock the mystery of capital. In this case, however, shows exactly the sort of problems that can transpire. A mortgage gave a longer time span – 10 years and the 40K loan was used to invest in another

lorry/trailor by the Sr. Santiago. But when crash came and work petered he was forced to sell. Couple bemoaned the strategy – risky and caused some anxiety because paying \$600 plus a month – also fell behind. Their home was at risk. Eventually their son paid off the loan to get them off the hook. Taxes were being paid to Mortgage Company and now can't find the title – with a title company one assumes (or son?). Anyway, the interest loan plus principal was around \$60K. They would certainly not do it again.

Example of Successful Home Consolidation

This house is very well consolidated, especially inside. Probably one of the most impressive that we have seen. The basic house was contractor built – slab; block walls; roof; but everything else has been done by Sr Ortega himself. Noah hypothesizes two insights that help explain such success: 1) financial resources to invest; and 2) self-help to a) make those resources go further; and b) to ensure a satisfactory job. Sr. Santiago has had no training, but as a self-taught mechanic felt that he could learn along the way. Pretty impressive if we take his statement at face value. See photos. All of this despite the money worries and miscalculation of the mortgage loan that they contracted.

This may have policy implications – the desirability of training schemes, or training tied to weatherization and self-help loans that may help reduce the size of loan by including a self-help component (See Carlos' audit model here... Ties in very well.)

Children are born prior to moving to colonia

Often young married rent or live with in-laws (they rented). There may be a threshold when family expansion creates a tipping point to move to a colonia, or to move onto a lot that they have already purchased or are purchasing. Then, as kids leave, so there is a re-accommodation of space in the house – as in the Ortega case. In this case, three males, and in two of the cases the sons wives came to live in the Ortega household, or were accommodated nearby.

Male sons (solteros or separated – as here) may use the lot as a base (here in the trailer brought to the site); and, as here, may cede his own lot to his married brother.

In this case children appears to be less needy – all three sons work (two are truck drivers like their Dad, the other is a school principal in Chicago). Two local sons are doing well (one with marital problems). Maybe this reflects the fact that women – especially solteras – that return to the home are more likely to be dependents.

Lot layout – good use of space

Good sized lot sufficiently large to build house, and for son to bring a trailer a couple of years ago. (See photos.). In the rear: i) trees planted for shade – on west side; ii) lean to utility area; iii) secure play area for kids; iv) septic tank forms floor of taller where he keeps his tools; also a small outside wc. No rainwater harvesting. But two large water tanks (photos) which he keeps to ensure that they have water if water cut off. Large propane tank – recently acquired – but not using – again in case electricity cuts (although not sure how). Gas cooker; all else is electric.

House is reasonably energy efficient: insulation in the roof but not on the walls. Have central AC – 1 compressor and last month's bill \$300.

Inheritance

No wills and no need – goes to the kids equally. Here though transpired that Sr. Santiago has two children from another relationship and he wants them to inherit also – not just the three kids with Concepción. Both reassured to know that his 50% share will go 5 fives; the Sra's three ways.