ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Evaluating the Potential for Culture Change After a Disaster: An Anthropological Perspective
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ABSTRACT: Disaster and the long term affects that societies experience are imperative to the understanding of how cultures operate and change. Disaster research can be analyzed using historical and contemporary examples. By adopting the work of Susanna M. Hoffman and using her five factor set of criteria, researchers on the ground and in academia can analyze how cultures will change due to (1) the magnitude of the disaster, (2) the amount of the population affected, (3) the amount of the infrastructure affected, (4) the impact on the deep structure of the society, and (5) how long these areas have been studied, to understand how culture has changed over time. By applying these five factors to historical examples, such as the Black Plague of medieval Europe, and the Potato Famine of Ireland, along with the more recent example of the 2004 tsunami in Sri Lanka, we can evaluate post-disaster culture change. Through my research I have found that the magnitude of the disaster is directly correlated to the amount of social change that will occur in a society that is affected by disaster. By applying these five factors to the recent disaster in Haiti, researchers can use Hoffman's five factors to better understand the situation there, which will in turn help with the distribution of aid and enable rebuilding.