In Pursuit of Authenticity: Globalization and Nation Building in the Cayman Islands[1]

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Abstract: Over the last decade, a number of publicly funded institutions have emerged in the Cayman Islands charged with the discovery, exploration and promotion of a Caymanian national identity and historical consciousness. They have emerged in the midst of a period of dramatic and very rapid economic transformation in which Cayman moved from a labour-exporting, small-scale maritime economy to become a major offshore financial as well as tourist centre, with increasing dependence on the inflow of foreign capital and imported skilled and professional contract labour. That dependence has produced both affluence and anxiety among many Caymanians about their ability to maintain a primary share of the opportunities arising in these new economic industries. The work of the cultural sector, while limited in popular appeal, has responded to these widespread anxieties by seeking to establish and reaffirm the status of one category of residents as rightful inheritors of Cayman and as such legitimately accorded special residential, electoral and employment entitlements. But it too has been dependent on the expertise, ideas and support of expatriate personnel and enthusiasts. In an important sense, Cayman has contracted out its nation building.

Résumé: Dans les îles Caymans, depuis les dix dernières années, un certain nombre d'institutions subventionnées publiquement ont vu le jour. Elles sont chargées de la découverte, de l'exploration et de la promotion de l'identité nationale ainsi que de la conscience historique caymanienne. Elles ont vu le jour au coeur d'une période de transformation économique rapide et dramatique dans laquelle les îles Caymans passent d'une économie maritime à petite échelle exportatrice de main-d'oeuvre à un important céntre financier et touristique hors-lieu, dépendant de plus en plus de l'influx de capitaux étranger ainsi que d'une main-d'oeuvre importée, qualifiée, professionnelle et contractuelle. Cette dépendance a apporté une certaine richesse mais aussi de l'anxiété aux Caymaniens en ce qui concerne leur capacité d'avoir un rôle important à jouer dans les occasions provenant des nouvelles industries. Le secteur culturel, bien que limité au niveau de l'intérêt populaire a essayé d'adresser le problème des anxiétés en cherchant à établir et à redonner le statut d'héritiers de Caymans à une catégorie de résidents; en cela, ils leur ont accordé de façon légitime des droits spéciaux en matière de résidence, de vote et d'emploi. Mais, il aussi a dépendu de l'expertise, des idées et de l'appui du personnel expatrié et des fervents. Dans un sens important, les îles Caymans ont sous-traité leur bâtiment de nation.

This article is dedicated to the memory of Michelle Fitzgerald, whose keen intellect, insight, wit and friendship is sorely missed by many who knew her both in the Cayman Islands and in Canada.

Introduction

In the three tiny Cayman Islands, there is no local manufacturing to speak of. A small and, until recently, declining agricultural sector provides only a fraction of required foodstuffs. Most of Cayman's consumption needs are therefore met through foreign imports. The economy relies almost entirely on the inflow of foreign capital generated by the tourist and offshore financial sectors. Nearly 40 percent of the 32 000 residents are contract foreign workers and their dependents. It would therefore be quite easy to conclude that over the last 25 years, the Cayman Islands have been wholly assimilated within the global economy. This article however concerns itself with the converse trend of nation building. In less than a decade a number of institutions have been established to preserve, promote and interpret Caymanian "heritage" and "identity." I will argue that, far from being an independent development, the growth of this cultural industry has been a direct outcome of Cayman's incorporation into the world economy. The Caymanian case provides an important illustration of the way in which the opportunities afforded by international flows of capital and investment become associated with access to particular places. How these places and its citizenry are characterized can therefore take on critical political and economic implications.

A Little Background

The Cayman Islands are situated in the Northwest Caribbean. They are one of six territories in this region which still retain their jurisdictional status as British colonies.[2] Between 1863 and 1959, the Cayman Islands

operated as a dependency of Jamaica (Yearbook 95, 1995: 433-434). However, when Jamaica moved to sever its ties with Britain first as a member of the West Indian Federation and then as an independent state, Cayman opted instead to remain a British colony. Colonial status then, and even more so now, has been viewed by many Caymanians as an important international icon of stability in a region which has experienced its fair share of political turbulence. The symbolic utility of colonial affiliation is commonly cited as a key element in foreign investor confidence and hence of Cayman's successful transformation over the last 25 years from a maritime economy to a financial and tourist centre.

Dependence on external economic markets, beyond colonial links, is however by no means new. In contrast to many other Caribbean islands, the history of Cayman was dominated not by a plantation system but by a nautical tradition. Throughout much of the islands' history, a major focus of maritime activity consisted of the exploitation and export of giant turtles. By the end of the 18th century, local turtle resources were exhausted and Caymanian ships began to venture further and further afield in pursuit of new stocks, first off the south coast of Cuba and then the Central American coast (Doran, 1953). During the 20th century, the economy of the islands became increasingly dependent on remittances from Caymanian men serving in foreign merchant marines. In 1943, of the 654 persons involved in maritime work, approximately 500 were employed on foreign-owned ships (ibid.: 335). However, the prior experience of Caymanian seamen, who continued to apprentice in local turtling fleets, appears to have served them well, contributing to their international reputation as superior seamen and the high proportion—10 percent in 1943—who achieved officer status (ibid.).

The foreign maritime experience of Caymanian men contrasted with the continued isolation and obscurity of the islands themselves. In the 1940s and 1950s, there were still few scheduled transportation links in and out of Cayman. The road system of the islands was poorly developed and there were few automobiles, making internal communication and movement very difficult and contributing to the isolation of outlying districts. Mike, who now works in the fire department, recalled spending 10 months in a Jamaican hospital when he was only nine years old and being the "brunt of jokes" from nurses when his nationality was discovered. It was an experience, he said, that stayed with him all his life. According to Mike:

> There was a time when Cayman was isolated and some people didn't even want to identify themselves as Caymanian. People would say "oh, that's the poor turtling island." Being Caymanian today is a hell of a lot different than being Caymanian 30 years ago.

Mike didn't even visit the North Side district of Grand Cayman until he was 15 years old,[3] but only two years later he went off to sea and over the course of the next three years he visited such countries as Brazil, Kuwait and South Africa.

In the 1960s, the introduction of new banking legislation and the alleviation of the mosquito problem catalyzed the development of the financial and tourist sectors. Today, nearly a million tourists visit every year and the Cayman Islands are ranked as the world's fifth-largest financial centre. Some of the Caymanians who had earlier emigrated to seek better economic opportunities elsewhere in the Caribbean and in the United States have returned. But the growth of Cayman's contemporary economy has also necessitated an increasing dependence on foreign workers. Thus, whereas once capital came to Cayman through the export of workers, today Cayman imports workers to service the inflow of foreign capital. By 1995, Mike's concerns about Cayman's relationship with the outside world had substantially shifted. He had become anxious about the degree to which Cayman was being transformed by external influences: the Americanization of the islands through television and quick access to Florida and the effects of the large tourist and expatriate influx.

The Expatriate Labour Force

The foreign labour force in Cayman is substantial. Expatriates not only fill jobs in virtually every sector of the Caymanian economy; in 1994 they comprised an estimated 40.4 percent of the total labour force.[4] The majority of these workers originates in Jamaica, Honduras, North America, Britain and Ireland. In spite of its conspicuous magnitude—the most comparable cases would be found in the Gulf States—the expatriate labour force in Cayman reflects two important general trends in contemporary international migration. The first is the marked post-World War II preference in receiving countries for temporary migrants as opposed to the settler migration which characterized the 19th and early 20th centuries (Papademetriou and Martin, 1991:x). Foreign workers are allowed into Cayman on temporary contracts usually from one to three years in duration. As emigration to Cayman has increased, interpretations of Cay-

man's immigration regulations have become increasingly restrictive. Work permits are often renewed, but sooner or later foreign workers are expected to leave the country, an expectation which is usually enforced by the Immigration Board. There is little provision made for or encouragement of permanent immigration, and even people with significant ties to Cayman have experienced substantial difficulties in attempts to regularize their residential status.

Secondly, as the international division of labour shifts with the globalization of transnational corporations and the growth of producer service industries, the migration of highly skilled and professional workers, while still proportionately small, has increased in both volume and significance (Salt, 1992; Beaverstock, 1994). In line with that trend, the expatriate labour force in Cayman is, in the majority, skilled. Skilled workers and professionals accounted for 42 and 17.4 percent respectively of all foreign work permit holders in 1994 (Yearbook 95, 1995: 510-511) and their presence has been used by the Caymanian government as a selling point in literature advertising the financial services available in Grand Cayman.

If Caymanian labour relations reflect general international trends in migration and shifts in the global division of labour, they also acutely highlight some of the attendant dilemmas. As Roger Rouse has noted, the distinction between immigration and migration is far from being as self-evident as usage of the terms would imply (1995: 375). Migrant workers who were expected to go home after a short stay have maintained an enduring presence in many receiving countries (Papademetriou and Martin, 1991:ix). Guestworker policies have given way to recruitment bans and integration policies in northwestern European countries such as Germany (Gitmez, 1991). The Arab Gulf states have reoriented the sources of their recruitment strategies from the Middle East to South and East Asia with an increasing reliance on highly regimented collective contract migration (Seccombe, 1988).

Neither of these strategies offers much of a solution for Cayman. Given the size of the indigenous population, both the maintenance and future growth of the Caymanian economy, relying as it does on producer and tourist services, will continue to be dependent on the labour and skills of foreign workers. By the same token, collective contract migration may be effective for finite construction projects, but it is not equally suitable for long-term service positions. Anxieties about Cayman's reliance on an expatriate labour force have tended therefore to centre on the relative growth of the tourist versus the financial sector.

Development and Status

Tourist development, some Caymanians argue, places heavy demands on the islands' infrastructure, damages the environment and is labour intensive. The personnel demands in this sector tend to favour semi-skilled and unskilled labour and offer job conditions that have not been especially attractive to Caymanians. In contrast, the financial sector entails fewer infrastructural and environmental stresses, is less labour intensive and offers more possibilities for training and professional advancement. According to this line of reasoning, a focus on the growth of the financial sector has a better chance of slowing down the expansion of the expatriate labour force and of producing a highly skilled and well educated Caymanian work force that can assume a greater proportion of managerial and professional positions.

There are, however, a number of problems with this prescription for future development. First, as even members of the islands' burgeoning environmental movement readily acknowledge, the nature of the Cayman Islands' taxation system ensures government dependence on a growing hospitality industry. There are no direct personal, business or sales taxes in Cayman, a crucial component in its role as a tax haven. Government revenues are therefore reliant on the only two forms of taxes that are levied: an import as well as a tourist tax on both visitor entries and hotel/condominium daily rentals. The ability of the government to continue to maintain a large civil service at the annual wage increases to which they have become accustomed, to mount capital works programs critical to infrastructural development, to further develop public services is therefore dependent on the continued growth of the tourist industry which provides most of its revenue. If the government changes the taxation base in order to reduce this dependence, it risks undermining the financial sector which has heavily relied on Cayman's tax free status for attracting foreign investment.

Secondly, residents with Caymanian status are still far short of being able to supply the full range of people and skills required for the financial industry at its present size. Additional expansion of this sector is likely to augment even further the number of expatriate professionals and managers in Cayman, a category that along with foreign entrepreneurs seems most likely to raise the spectre of Caymanians becoming economically "second class" in their own country. According to a local magazine article which was dramatically entitled "Caymanians: Cayman's Second-Class Citizens":

> In the course of a range of articles on "the development question" in Cayman for this issue of *Newstar*, a significant number of Caymanians have expressed the sentiment that one of the consequences of the rising foreign presence, needed for the economy, is that Caymanians are "second rate" in their own country. (*Newstar*, January 1995: 21)

But that very same sense of vulnerability and encroachment has ensured little support for a policy of expatriate integration because it threatens the one major asset which native Caymanians command in an economy driven by foreign capital and labour: their privileged access to residential and work entitlements.

Over the last 25 years, a foreign economy has been artificially parachuted into Cayman. Apart from the appeal of its coral reefs and central beach, Cayman's integration into the global circulation of capital had little to do with its indigenous human and natural resources. What Cayman offered most was an accommodating regulatory environment and a reputation for political stability via colonization. The standard of living, levels of education and incomes of most Caymanians have risen dramatically with the growth of the tourist and offshore financial sectors. But the income thereby generated has not been used, as in the Gulf states, to diversify the economy. The foreign workers that were imported were not used to construct an infrastructure that could make Cayman more self sufficient in the future. Instead, for the most part, they have been used to sustain a service economy. In a sense therefore, Cayman and many Caymanians were and still remain extraneous to their own national economy.

What political and economic leverage Caymanians do exercise, largely accrues to them as holders of particular legal statuses. As in the British Virgin Islands (Maurer, 1996), there are a number of different statuses available to residents in Cayman which establish entitlements respectively to work, conduct business, to vote or stand for public office. The most crucial of these is Caymanian *Status*,[5] a standing created by local legislation which confers the largest and most sought-after package of entitlements, particularly for permanent residence and work. According to Caymanian immigration law, qualified holders of Caymanian status must be given preference in employment. Employers wishing to hire foreign workers must first show that they have made reasonable efforts to hire Status holders. They are required to advertise in the local papers. If they do hire foreign workers, they are expected to establish training programs for Caymanians.

Status is not, however, citizenship per se. Given colonial association, the latter is still conferred by Britain in the form of the general category of British Dependent Territories Citizenship as well as a specific category of citizenship for each territory in turn (ibid.: 158). Not all holders of Caymanian status are likewise British Dependent Territories Citizens, but, under the terms of a 1987 Constitutional Amendment, both criteria became prerequisites for eligibility to vote, along with long-term residence and/or descent.

The skills and numbers of foreign workers are crucial to the Caymanian economy, but as individuals they come and go. The expatriate work force may be on the whole more highly skilled and better educated than their Caymanian counterparts, but by law the latter take precedence in employment. Cayman is utterly dependent on foreign capital, but only residents with long-standing ties to Cayman are enfranchised to vote and run for office. Over the years and with successive constitutional amendments, the Cayman Islands have achieved considerable autonomy from Britain. Nonetheless, the British Governor and Parliament retain final authority over this territory, at the insistence of the local legislature. In short, Caymanians derive an important measure of power and advantage from carefully husbanded legal statuses but these are precariously positioned within a system of political and economic dependence on external interests. It is therefore not difficult to understand why attitudes towards foreign expatriates so often combine a sense of threat with necessity or why status holders are not eager to share their circumscribed privileges with relative newcomers. And it is this volatile mixture of vulnerability and legal privilege that provides the context for the development, over the last decade, of a set of national institutions mandated to interpret and promote Caymanian identity and history.

Trust to Archives

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, a handful of residents began to respond to what Margaret, an early activist, described as the "influx of new immigrants into the island. Caymanians were feeling a bit threatened, being overrun by outside influences from North America. We needed to hold on to or try to establish what is Caymanian." One of the earliest ventures was the effort to establish a new theatre group, undertaken by a quartet of local residents including Margaret, then a high school teacher, as well as a painter, playwright and a theatre director. Mark, another founder, had been studying in England and then the United States before returning to Grand Cayman in 1977. Shortly after his return, he met up with the others who were then trying to set up a

small, avant-garde, Brechtian theatre. "We decided," explained Mark, "that we had to do more down to earth theatre." The quartet of friends founded the Inn Theatre which later became the National Theatre Company.

> [Margaret] and I persuaded the manager [of the Royal Palms nightclub] to give us his nightclub for three nights a week to run this play.... It was a whole group of people who started a 'Renaissance.' There had been a drama group, but they weren't dedicated to bringing in Caymanians which was what we wanted to do.

These first relatively casual arrangements gave way in 1984 to a more formal infrastructure with the establishment of the *Harquail Theatre* and the *National Cultural Foundation.* While the foundation has concentrated on theatre productions, it has also offered art workshops, occasional lectures, exhibitions, as well as a recent publication on the work of Miss Lassie, a local artist. The relative cultural orientation of this work has, however, occasioned some disagreement among past and present supporters of the foundation along lines that incorporate the expatriate/native Caymanian distinction in an ironic reversal. According to David, a Guyanese expatriate who, in 1993, had been working with the Cultural Foundation for a number of years:

> Cayman hasn't made a decision about where it wants to go. Are you Caribbean?...A lot of Caymanians would prefer not to be associated with the Caribbean and then there are quite a few people who would. The reason they don't want to be associated with the Caribbean—and it is a fallacy—is that for them, the Caribbean is synonymous with poverty.... What do you pass onto young people? Do you also bring in Caribbean influences? We are trying to show people that you don't always have to go far to find excellence, that you can find it in the region.

Joanne, an American expatriate businesswomen living in Cayman, had helped organize a major exhibition of Caribbean art held at the Harquail Theatre. In her speech at a launch of an adjunct exhibit at the museum, she noted that the Carib art exhibit reminded people that, "we are part of a very special region and that region is not Miami, it's not Britain, it's the Caribbean." In contrast, Mark worried that the influence of several key figures in the Cultural Foundation had resulted in an overly marked and potentially distorting Eastern Caribbean influence.

> This island is not shaped by Eastern Caribbean thinking. It is shaped by the Northwest Caribbean. Its roots are in the Northwest Caribbean. It's wrong [the emphasis on Eastern Caribbean] and we don't need it. Our roots are in Cuba, Honduras and the Southern United States and Jamaica to a certain extent.

Mark's concerns were echoed in a 1995 address to the Caymanian Legislative Assembly by the Education Minister. The minister criticized the Harquail Theatre for putting on too many "Eastern Caribbean plays" and for featuring too prominently the patois of other countries in these plays. In his view, this was not Caymanian culture. If the object was exposure to other cultural influences, then there should be exposure to North American and European plays also. He had seen the Carib art exhibit and found it very interesting, but thought that the Caribbean angle had been overdone.

The position, both self- and other-appointed, of expatriates, often themselves North American or European, as defenders of Cayman's identity and natural resources from rapacious overdevelopment and Americanization is also echoed in the establishment of the *National Trust* which closely followed on the establishment of the Cultural Foundation. Throughout the short history of the Trust, expatriates have figured prominently as founders, staff and members. The Trust, a conservationist movement, was originally expected—as was the National Cultural Foundation—to serve as an umbrella organization for a wide variety of environmental and heritage pursuits.

Among these was the *Memory Bank* (otherwise known as the *Oral History Bank*), a project which, inspired by its earlier Jamaican counterpart, was initiated in 1984 by Margaret, then newly appointed as Museum Officer. The Memory Bank was supposed to record the recollections of elderly Caymanians, and was expected originally to rely on the efforts of volunteers in each of the National Trust district chapters. But the volunteer corps proved less than systematic and many potential respondents died before they could be interviewed. This emphasis on Caymanian elders as mnemonic repositories of authentic "Caymanianness" extended well beyond the work of the Memory Bank, and was frequently echoed throughout my research. I was repeatedly advised by Caymanians as well as expatriates that I should concentrate on interviewing the former to get a truly "authentic" view of Cayman and it was often assumed that, like the Memory Bank, I would focus my attentions on elders who could give me a description of the "true" Caymanian culture which had preceded the transformations of the last 25 years. In contrast, however, to the respondents sought by the Memory Bank, the full-time interviewer who was eventually hired by this project was not a native

Caymanian but a resident with acquired Status, who was born and raised in Canada.

The "Bank" shifted its affiliation from the National Trust to the *National Archives* which opened its doors to the public in 1992, but was formally established in 1991 along with the *Museum* and Public Library. While original plans called for a purpose-built building, the Museum has instead been housed in Georgetown's renovated Old Courts Building, and opened to the public in November of 1990. The Museum's official promotional literature identifies its mandate as the "preservation, research and dissemination of all aspects of the Caymanian heritage for present and future generations." In practice, this mandate is interpreted in two small permanent exhibitions, one on the "natural history" of Cayman which focusses on the islands' undersea habitats and formations, while the other focusses on "how Caymanians survived in the early days with little outside world contact," specifically turtling, rope making and shipbuilding.

Meanwhile, the National Trust pared down the original broad expectations of its supporters towards a dual focus on preserving and protecting natural and architectural sites of important environmental and historic importance. The Archives' mandate, on the other hand, is to manage the organization and storage of government records, as well as to identify, and where possible also acquire and preserve archival material relevant to the Cayman Islands from around the world.

There are two important trends to note about this institutional proliferation. First, while the progressive formalization of these organizations has involved their separation and even occasional jurisdictional tensions, their development was from the start closely intertwined, and this remains the case. Thus the founders of the Oral History Bank included a small group of high school teachers who were in turn also involved in the Theatre Group, the National Trust, the National Archives and the Museum. The former high school teachers are each now working as senior managers for one of these institutions. Helen Harquail,[6] who donated the land and the building for her namesake, the Harquail Theatre, is also a founding member of the National Trust. What was a relatively small network of people interested in the development of this sector has certainly grown. The National Trust currently has around 1 000 adult and 700 juvenile members (Yearbook 95, 1995: 460-461). But the core of active members, supporters and staff of these institutions still remains small and their relationships and activities often crosscut. As I noted above, the Carib art exhibition mounted at the Harquail Theatre included an adjunct exhibit at the Museum. Museum staff provided logistical and practical support to the Cultural Foundation in setting up and dismantling the exhibit. The Museum mounted its own exposition of the historic "Ten Sail" wreck, dominated by archival materials which were later ceremoniously deposited in the National Archives. Representatives from the National Archives, the Museum and the National Trust all serve on the Government Historic Sites Committee which is overseeing the restoration of St. James Castle at Pedro.

Secondly, the development of these organizations shifted very rapidly from volunteer, ad hoc arrangements to formal, government sponsored and regulated institutions. All of these institutions have been officially established through the passage of special government legislation, specifically the Cayman National Cultural Foundation Law of 1984 which set up the Foundation which runs the Harquail Theatre; the 1987 legislation establishing the National Trust; and the Institute of Caymanian Heritage Law which was passed in 1991 and called for the formation of a National Archive, a National Museum and a National Library. The staff of these latter three institutions are in fact civil servants and are directly employed and paid by the government. The National Trust and National Cultural Foundation are more autonomous, but are nonetheless financially dependent on government grants. This level of government intervention and sponsorship is noteworthy in a country which still has no public-transportation system, government-funded national health or social security system.

Icons of Authenticity

These are not, therefore, populist organizations. Given their artistic, literary and ecological foci, it is not surprising that they have tended to appeal to a professional, middle-class elite and they have all experienced some difficulty in enlisting more general participation in their activities. Mike complained about the sparse attendance at a series of information/consultation meetings sponsored by the National Trust to discuss a proposed revision to the government development plan. While he, himself, is a long-standing National Trust supporter, he has found it hard to interest even his wife and children in these issues. "People are just concerned with paying the bills." The Museum and Cultural Foundation would like to increase local participation in their respective activities. Nonetheless, these public institutions do represent an attempt to respond to and manage more popular concerns.

If, as Mike and a number of other conservation enthusiasts claimed, it is often difficult to activate appre-

hension about the pace and physical/social impact of development, anxieties about the presence of expatriates are common and far from being the preserve of a professional elite. And that anxiety has generated a broader search for an iconic and ideological repertoire which can express and underscore the claims for continuing primacy of one class of residents. As Margaret explained: "We're the first settlers. With this whole Caymanian versus Paper Caymanian thing,[7] people are proud to trace their roots." By the same token, the cultural sector is enjoined to trace collective "roots." The mandates conferred on the cultural industry by government legislative decree are replete with references to Heritage and preservation: calls to "preserve" and develop Caymanian culture; "arouse public interest in Caymanian Heritage ... increase knowledge and appreciation of, and respect for Caymanian Heritage," preserve the architectural and natural heritage of Cayman, preserve historical documents and so on (Yearbook 95 1995: 454-458). The novelty of this passion for heritage and preservation is well exemplified by the severe paucity of history textbooks for most of Cayman's period of settlement as compared to the flurry of historical chronicles emanating from the cultural sector over the last few years.[8]

In both written and oral accounts, this construction of Caymanian "heritage" features certain common themes. First, there are the chronicles of relative poverty and hardship. Children, it is recounted, had numerous chores and often had long walks to reach their one-room schoolhouses. Most families had few possessions. Traditional wattle and daub houses were small and furnishings basic. And making a livelihood through the sea was difficult and dangerous. "Turtling was a hard life, my boy, as we had to brave all sorts of weather and discomforts. Many good men were lost in hurricanes" (Cayman Islands Education Department, 1989: 138).

A corollary theme emphasizes the independence, dedication and resilience inspired by this way of life. *The Cayman Islands Who's Who and Business Guide* (1992) describes a Caymanian "tradition of hardiness and independence." The primary social studies text produced by the Education Department lauds the dedication and devotion of previous generations of men and women who worked under difficult conditions "to build the nation" (1989: 168-169). According to a *Human History of Long Ago Cayman* offered by S. O. Bertie Ebanks, and published by the Cayman National Bank and Trust Company in 1983, "The salt of the sea flowing through their [Caymanians] veins made them the tough and hardy men they became in later years, and today they are reckoned among the bravest and most skillful of sailors, taking to the sea and everything nautical as ducks to a pond" (20). Philip, a native Caymanian who worked for the Ministry overseeing the cultural sector, emphasized the autonomy and suspicion of authority engendered by this earlier way of life:

> People here have historically seen themselves as independent. It may have to do with the whole emergence from slave society or the physical isolation of the islands' enforced self-sufficiency. They try to avoid the direction of external parties. One tries to run one's own life. One is not subject to the direction of others. This has probably influenced people's view of life, death and religious beliefs.

While the foreign maritime adventures of earlier generations of Caymanian men are accorded central significance in this narrative of a hardy, seafaring people, the arrival and contributions of thousands of migrants over the last 25 years are almost always excluded. The Memory Bank includes interviews with Caymanian emigrants who have settled elsewhere but come back to the islands for regular visits, or with Caymanians who have spent their working lives elsewhere but returned to Cayman when they retired. In 1993, the Memory Bank interviewer was hoping eventually to visit Honduras, Nicaragua and Cuba to interview Caymanian emigrants living there. More locally, she was also planning to interview younger Caymanians about their recollections of more recent events. But these plans do not appear to include interviews with expatriates living in Cayman. The Museum, in spite of its focus on the recent history of the islands, provides no indication of the presence of expatriate workers or their impact on the development of Cayman. In spite of the recent flurry of efforts to chronicle Cayman's past, I could not find any history texts focusing on the experiences and contributions of expatriate workers. The representations produced by the cultural heritage programs, for the most part, disregard the contemporary Cayman with its foreign banks, cable television and video imports, supermarkets, chain restaurants and hotels, tourists and foreign workers. The claims to authenticity of the national identity being constructed, so laboriously and self-consciously, by these institutions derive from largely abandoned lifestyles that predate the economic development of the last 25 years. These practices are likely to be as unfamiliar to most Caymanians under the age of 35 as they are to recent migrants to the islands, but cultural ownership is still credited to the former by virtue of descent and explicitly denied the latter. According to Margaret:

> Some people think that once people get Status, they should be considered just as Caymanians. Some people that have Status, they feel that they've been here 15 or 20 years and that they're more Caymanian or know more about Cayman than that young Caymanian that's only known the Cayman of 10 or 15 years. Say they came here when they were 30 and the young person who was born in a Caymanian family has always been here. Who is more Caymanian?

For Margaret, in such a comparison, it is the young Caymanian who should still be judged as more authentically Caymanian, because s/he has not been previously shaped by the experiences of a childhood and adulthood elsewhere. S/he knows nothing but Cayman. This reasoning, however, disregards the contradiction between the denigration of expatriates' previous experiences outside Cayman and the celebration of Caymanian seafaring and voyaging in the construction of national identity to which Margaret has contributed. But her point is clear. She is building a cultural corpus for one category of contemporary residents of the Cayman Islands, not for everyone. This is a heritage and identity being claimed only for people who either themselves lived in Cayman long before its recent transformations or whose ancestors did. Others can learn from it and even be encouraged to do so, but they cannot derive their national identity from this knowledge.

Nation Building and Globalization

Most of what has been so far described resonates with well-known practices of nation building: the search for distinctiveness, the arbitrariness of the cultural symbols chosen, the social boundaries thereby being defined and the effort to legitimate particular hierarchies of power.

> From recent studies of nationalism, finally, we have learnt that the relationship between cultural practices and reified culture is not a simple one, and that ideologists always select and reinterpret aspects of culture and history which fit into the legitimation of a particular power constellation. (Eriksen, 1993: 118)

So what is the power constellation that is being legitimated here? The objective is not greater political autonomy for Cayman. Indeed some of the most passionate Caymanian nationalists and critics of unfettered development are also critical of Britain for not intervening more actively in local affairs.

> The British administration should be perceiving that they are going to get into an internationally embarrassing position. They will perceive that they should take over this country and start to take responsibility for this country. They haven't allowed us the benefit of their superior knowledge and skill. If the British administration remains one of sleeping colonialism or sleeping imperialism then people will eventually want to know who is really managing their affairs. British crown colony will become more unpopular.

Neither is the objective greater economic autonomy. None of the cultural workers I spoke to argued that it would be possible for the country to loosen its dependence on foreign capital or even significantly overcome its reliance on an expatriate labour force. Rather the boundaries and powers being defined refer to the internal composition of Cayman's resident population. The aim, it would seem, is to provide a cultural and ideological underpinning for Caymanian citizenship vis-à-vis the nearly 40 percent of the residential population who do not share this package of statuses. Hence comes the insistence that what is authentically Caymanian predates the economy and lifestyles in which both status holders and expatriates participate.

Caymanian nation building is not a rejection of globalization. On the contrary, it is an attempt to ensure a particular population's preferential access to local instances of a global economy on which they utterly depend but in which they are very minor players. As George, a local Caymanian businessman explained: "Caymanians realize that Cayman is just a speck. Because of the Maritime tradition, Caymanians realize that Cayman is part of the world." The "tradition" being constructed thus combines a distinctiveness defined in opposition to newcomers with an equal emphasis on the continuity of Caymanian openness to foreign influences. It becomes easier, therefore, to understand why a government, notoriously reluctant to curb the pace of development and foreign investment, or to provide publicly funded social programs, would have so quickly moved to appropriate a role as the sponsor and regulator of the cultural sector. This is, after all, a government elected through a system that enfranchises only one segment of adult residents. The cultural sector's definition of that segment and their offspring as the only "true" Caymanians legitimates the government and entrenches the political class from which it is drawn. It provides an ideological and historical rationale for another area in which government regulation has been very visible: immigration and labour policy, while "explaining" Cayman's dependence on foreign invest-

ment as one chapter in an ongoing national embrace of internationalism.

Ironies in the Manufacture of Authenticity

The symbiosis between the cultural sector and the progress of economic development is well illustrated by the importance of tourism in both. The National Trust's largest project is the development of the Botanic Park as a tourist site. Indeed, the project won an ecotourism award in 1993 (Yearbook 95, 1995: 459). Most visitors to the Museum, located just beside the main Georgetown cruise-ship landing site, are tourists. Perhaps the most ambitious historical restoration project is that of St. James Castle in Pedro (usually referred to as Pedro Castle). In spite of its name, this is not a castle but it is one of Grand Cayman's earliest and largest buildings. One of its major claims to historical significance is the fact that it served as the meeting place for the first Legislative Assembly of Cayman. The development of this site is being sponsored by the Caymanian government, overseen by a committee with representatives from the cultural institutions and is meant to eventually serve as a major tourist site, complete with a sound and light show. In short, much of the clientele of the cultural sector's effort to preserve and promote Caymanian identity and heritage consists in fact of foreign visitors.

Furthermore, most of the staff that work in Cayman's institutions are foreigners. The restoration of Pedro Castle is being carried out by a Canadian firm. The majority of the professionals who work in the Museum, National Trust, National Archives and Cultural Foundation are expatriates working on short-term contracts. A few more are what Margaret referred to as "paper Caymanians," i.e., former expatriates who have been granted Status rather than acquiring it automatically through birth and descent. Obviously, this substantial expatriate presence reflects the rapid expansion of the cultural sector and its consequent needs for very particular qualifications and expertise. There are some training schemes for Caymanians in place, although at least one staff person expressed some consternation at the reluctance of the government to fully fund these programs. But the involvement of expatriates is also striking among supporters and volunteers of the cultural institutions.

When the National Trust holds its district meetings, the presence of expatriates in the audience is strikingly evident. The National Trust was indeed founded largely as the initiative of a visiting American. Expatriates have featured prominently as sponsors and facilitators for the Harquail Theatre. The Carib art exhibition was mounted principally through the efforts of foreign residents, both as volunteers and staff. Expatriates are active on the boards of most of these institutions.

Occasionally this support simply reflects pragmatic self-interest. For example, some investors and managers in the tourism, and especially the watersports industries, worry that environmental degradation could adversely affect the long-term health of their industry by making Cayman less attractive to visitors. They, therefore, supported the National Trust in its concerns over proposed amendments to the government development plan in 1995. There is also no doubt that many North American and European expatriates have been influenced by the widespread interest commanded by the environmental and conservation movements in their countries of origin. Some of the foreign residents involved in this sector have long-standing interests in the Arts for which there are few outlets in Cayman, save the activities sponsored by the cultural institutions. As noted earlier, other expatriates, initially attracted by what they viewed as Cayman's exotic or Caribbean character, have been dismayed by its visible Americanization and have therefore supported efforts to invigorate a sense of local distinctiveness. But there are also many foreign workers who, given their appointments and occupations, have a vested professional interest in the development of a cultural sector dedicated to the discovery and protection of a Caymanian heritage and environmental resources.

Whatever the personal motivations of foreign residents involved in these institutions, it is doubtful that the cultural sector could have evolved as rapidly or as extensively without the presence of the expatriate and tourist populations. Their numbers have significantly contributed to the development of a critical population mass, large enough to support this number and range of institutions. They have contributed models and expectations drawn from similar kinds of institutions and movements in their countries of origin which have helped shape the blueprints for Caymanian counterparts. In short, as activists, staff and consumers, non-Caymanians have provided crucial impetuses for the emerging cultural industry.

By the same token, the infrastructure for this industry would not have been possible without the influx of foreign capital, generated by the transformation of Cayman from a small-scale maritime economy to an international financial and tourist centre. It is this economic growth that has made possible the government, and to a lesser degree corporate financing, necessary to provide office spaces, equipment, salaries for professional and support staff and educational and training programs both within Cayman and in universities abroad.

Conclusion

There is a tendency to contrast nation building and globalization as two contradictory trends in the late 20th century. The former orientation, it is assumed, wanes as the latter waxes (Hannerz, 1996). The Caymanian case suggests the possibility of a rather different relationship between these trends.

Over the last decade, a number of publicly funded institutions have emerged in the Cayman Islands charged with the discovery, exploration and promotion of a Caymanian national identity and historical consciousness. They have emerged at a time in which increasing dependence on foreign capital and imported labour has generated both affluence and anxiety among many Caymanians about their ability to maintain a primary share of the opportunities arising in offshore finance and tourism, the linchpins of the contemporary Caymanian economy. The work of the cultural sector, while limited in popular appeal, has responded to these widespread anxieties by seeking to establish and reaffirm the status of one category of residents as rightful inheritors of Cayman and as such legitimately accorded special residential, electoral and employment entitlements.

The evolution of the cultural sector thus interlaces with a local competition for the benefits of globalization being waged through a selective definition of the relationship between place and population. The capital fueling the Caymanian economy may originate and financial control may continue to reside outside the country, but access to the opportunities this capital is generating is being defined in terms of access to Cayman, with work permits and temporary residence for some and Status/citizenship with permanent residence and preferential employment for others. But the emerging cultural institutions are not only a *response* to globalization through the affirmation of national distinctions. They are also, inescapably, the *product* of that globalization. Their development has borrowed heavily from the examples of similar institutions elsewhere, and the influence of the training and education of Caymanian managers in other countries. Their proliferation and expansion has relied on public funds generated by the growth of the financial and tourist sectors which serve an international clientele. Expatriates and tourists have been a conspicuous and vital segment of the audience and volunteer supporters for these institutions. And finally, the elaboration and growing professionalization of these organizations have been dependent on the expertise of expatriate personnel.

The irony of the incorporation of Cayman into global capital and labour markets is that it has generated anxiety about which category of residents will benefit but enough wealth to "contract out" the enterprise of nation building.

Notes

1 This study was made possible by a grant from the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Field work was conducted between 1993-96. For confidentiality purposes, aliases have been used in place of the real names of the individuals interviewed for this study.

2 Apart from the Cayman Islands, these include the British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, Montserrat, the Turks and Caicos Islands and Anguilla.

3 Grand Cayman is only 22 miles long and is only 7 miles wide at its widest point.

4 This ratio is drawn from a Labour Force Survey conducted by the Government Economics and Statistics Office.

5 Caymanians usually reserve the term "Status-holder" only for immigrants who have applied for and were granted Status by the Immigration Board. People who were born in Cayman, of Caymanian parents are generally referred to simply as Caymanians. The Immigration Law and Policy Directives or the Caymanian Protection Law, as it was known before 1992, does not, however, employ this terminological distinction.

6 I have not employed an alias for this person since her bequest and relationship to the National Trust are public knowledge, nor was she one of my "informants."

7 Paper Caymanian is a term sometimes used to refer to former expatriates who have been granted Status.

8 The Cayman Islands Archive and Oral History Bank published four books in a period of only three years. These include two publications which made use of the Oral History Bank interviews: Heather R. McLaughlin, *Cayman Yesterdays: An Album of Childhood Memories*, Georgetown: Cayman Islands National Archive, 1991; Heather R. McLaughlin, *The '32 Storm*, Cayman Islands National Archive, 1994. An additional two publications made use of archival material and these include: *Our Islands' Past*, Vol. 1: *1802 Census-Corbett's Report*, a joint publication of the Cayman Islands National Archive and Cayman Free Press, 1992; *Our Islands' Past*, Vol. 2: *Wreck of the Ten Sail*, a joint publication of the Cayman Islands National Archive and Cayman Free Press, 1994.

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