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Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries across the world. It can bring different people together from all around the globe and touch all areas of the planet. However, what about the places and people being toured? How do they feel about this expanding industry? The researcher traveled to the Bahamas in order to investigate the impact of tourism on the community and what perceptions the local Bahamians have of the tourism industry. Through field research to the Bahamas this researcher answered the question: what are the Bahamians perspectives on tourism and how does tourism impact their lives and community?

BEHIND 'TOURISTVILLE': THE IMPACT OF TOURISM ON THE BAHAMIAN COMMUNITY

By

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DEDICATION PAGE

I dedicate this thesis to my family. Especially my mom and dad without whom I wouldn't be where I am today. They instilled in me the drive and compassion necessary to undertake in this research and with their support have guided me through my education.

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Here I would like to thank my thesis committee Zoe Pearson and Andrew Garner for all their help and support throughout this process. I would especially like to thank my advisor David Messenger for all his continued support and encouragement to push myself to finish this thesis and for staying with me the many changing ideas I had.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries across the globe which has expansive effects that have been analyzed by many different disciplines. The thought-provoking aspect to tourism, is its invasive ability to permeate into the farthest reaches and corners of the earth and bring cultures together that otherwise might never meet. Although plenty of research focuses on the tourism industry itself, there is less research devoted to studying the effects of tourism on a population and even less on the local populations perceptions of tourism.

In the Bahamas, studying the Bahamian local's reactions to, perceptions about and how they're affected by tourism is particularly important since tourism is their number one industry and source of revenue. Although I could discover comparable research in other countries in the Caribbean region and around the world, there seems to be a significant gap in the research on studying the perceptions of the locals on tourism in the Bahamas which is the gap that this research will attempt to fill.

Throughout my field research in the Bahamas, the main question guiding the research project was what are the Bahamians perceptions on tourism and how does tourism impact Bahamians? I determined that the Bahamians had an ultimately positive perspective on tourism, but this aligns with previous research and theories on this subject that those whose livelihood depends on tourism will often think more positively of it. Even though it is positively portrayed, the Bahamians actions against tourists and the observable impacts on the community questions whether tourism is as beneficial for the community as it is portrayed.

This research attempts to be pertinent and valuable to the field of tourism studies. Although there is other research about the local perspective on tourism in other areas, there has been little research on this subject in the Bahamas. It is particularly relevant in the Bahamas to study this and adds value to the literature because tourism in the Bahamas is such a significant part of their daily lives and their main source of income country-wide. By studying a country whose economy relies significantly on tourism, it provides a source of information on how tourism can affect a country that has high levels of tourism established over many years. This research tackles tourism from the perspective of the local, and looks at the impact of tourism from their perspective rather than that of the industry to give insight into how tourism affects the daily lives of the people who are the toured. As many Bahamians stressed, even though tourism has its pitfalls, they wish for it to be increased (Armstrong, 2017). Because tourism is their main source of revenue, they desire more tourism and continuous streams of tourists in order to provide for their families. For tourism to be successful, however, the tourism employees need to be happy in order to make the tourists happy. This research gives insight into what makes the Bahamians happy and how tourism affects them so that the industry can hopefully make positive changes for the locals. It also adds to the literature on tourism from the perspective of the toured.

This thesis will be organized into three chapters. The first chapter will focus primarily on introducing the research. The first section will be the regional context and background which will help to give the reader background information on where the research took place and why the research is relevant to this area. This will include the literature review which breaks down into the following sections: Introduction, Tourism and its Theories, Tourism in

the Caribbean, Tourism and the Community, Local Perceptions of Tourism, Tourism and the Environment, and Conclusion. Following this I will delve into the research and its significance, followed by the methodology.

The second chapter will focus on the local population and their perceptions on tourism. It will start by giving some background on the people to understand where their perceptions might be coming from. This will be followed by a section on their perceptions on tourism gathered from my research and will attempt to explain why they might have presented certain perceptions during interviews. The last section will highlight their reactions to tourism whether conscious or unconscious and what this tells us about the impact of the industry.

The last chapter will focus on the impacts of tourism on the people and the community. It will begin by addressing the impacts of tourism on the environment and the spin-off applications of this impact. Then it will move into addressing the sociocultural and economic impacts of tourism, why these are important, and why they might be present. As the first chapter is setting up the research and the second chapter is providing the data received from the interviews and participant observation, the last chapter is truly a culmination of all the research gathered. It analyzes all the information gained throughout the research and attempts to determine what might be some of the underlying factors for why the data was as collected. This chapter attempts to challenge the dominant narrative of the Bahamas as a tourism destination and look beyond the surface at its impacts on the community. Much of this chapter will be guided by political ecology framework as it provides a useful lens for evaluating a situation beyond the dominant narrative.

Overall, this research is attempting to add to the literature the perceptions of the Bahamian population on tourism and the wider implications of tourism on the country of the Bahamas as there is relatively little in the literature on these subjects in the country of the Bahamas.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The countdown begins to that accumulated vacation time on the horizon. You begin to daydream about your ideal vacation experience as you stare at the calendar on the wall boasting pictures of relaxing, tropical, island destinations. The Bahamas is one such country that embodies all the qualities of an island vacation. Expertly catering to the needs of tourists seeking the sea, sand and sun tourism, with a little Bahamian flare, the Bahamas provides an escape from the daily lives of many working individuals. But what about the people who live on the island? Is the Bahamas an escape or a trap? The Bahamas has proclaimed itself as a one stop shop for island vacations but how exactly did this come to be?

The history of the Bahamas is similar to many other Caribbean countries that were once occupied and managed by colonial powers. The establishment of viable social, political and religious systems in the Bahamas began to develop from around 900-1500 AD with the arrival of the Lucayan people who settled there (Our History, 2017). Unfortunately, due to the Lucayans' peaceful nature, they were 'easy targets for enslavements' and within 25 years of Christopher Columbus landing in the 'New World' in 1492, all the Lucayans were wiped out due to a mix of slavery and disease (Our History, 2017). The Bahamas fell under English rule in the 1600s. Also from 1600-1700s the Bahamas was a central hub for piracy, most famously

for pirates such as Blackbeard and Calico Jack, as the 700 islands and shallow waters made a great environment for hiding treasure (Our History, 2017).

During the American Civil War the Bahamas greatly profited as they helped to ferry cotton to Britain. When the American government also passed the 18th amendment of prohibition, the Port in Nassau was expanded to account for all the increased flow of goods, in particular, alcohol (Our History, 2017). Unfortunately, however, when prohibition ended, so did the Bahamas' booming prosperity. In 1898, the Bahamas began to attempt to turn the economic downturn around but using the Hotel Steam Ship Service Act to open their doors to the world (Our History 2017). The Bahamas was rather on the forefront of accepting tourists, as the rest of the Caribbean nations did not follow suit until swiftly after WWII (Gmelch, 2012). As the Bahamas national website states, "since then, everything from Prohibition bringing well-to-do Americans to the closure of Cuba to Americans has impacted tourism in our country" (Our History, 2017). These changes were highly promoted and supported by international organizations including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund as prime sources for country development. Shortly after the boom of tourism, the Bahamas received independence from the United Kingdom on July 10, 1973, after 325 years of British rule, although they are still a member of the Commonwealth of Nations (Our History, 2017).

The Bahamas itself, is a developed country located in the insular region of the Caribbean. It is located on the outskirts of the Caribbean Sea, more in the Atlantic Ocean than in the Caribbean (See Appendix A). Its location is also extremely proximate to the United States, with the closest point being accessible by only a forty-five-minute boat ride. The Bahamas consists of hundreds of islands of which only about 30 are inhabited. According to

the CIA factbook, the Bahamas is one of the wealthiest countries in the Caribbean, with the majority of their economy dependent on tourism which attributes for approximately 60% of their GDP. It also accounts for two thirds of their entire workforce (Palmer, 1994). From these statistics, it is easy to see how the Bahamas is dependent on tourism (Crick, 2003). The tourist product that the Bahamas offers is extremely developed and appeals to the United States which is the major tourism market for the Bahamas due to the close geographical proximity, shared English language, and direct equivalence from the US to Bahamian dollar (Pratt, 2003). Tourists who want a quick getaway from the United States can easily go to the Bahamas for a quick trip whether through a short flight from Florida or on a cruise.

The Bahamas, like many other Caribbean countries, exemplifies the 3S or seas, sand and sun destination. But more recently, this is becoming not enough (Crick, 2003). In order to diversify and brand itself through a destination image, which will be discussed in further detail below, the Bahamas has promoted itself as a diverse nation with something for everyone. They advertise each island as individual and varied from each other and push that you should not only explore the main islands but also the outer 'family islands' as well. Another unique selling point the Bahamas advertise is the Bahamian hospitality with friendly and warm people. Further, the Bahamas sells the proximity to the United States, equivalence of the Bahamian and US Dollar, the fact that they speak English and their long-standing friendship with the United States as branded images for their unique island destination (Crick, 2003).

The Bahamas cares about the tourism industry and revolves around it so much, that it is intertwined into their daily lives. One example of this is the Bahamas Host program, which

is required for many workers in the tourism industry. It's a mandatory training program sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism that is promoted to teach customer service and hospitality. This program was so groundbreaking in its nature for the Caribbean, that it inspired other such programs in other Caribbean countries, most notably Jamaica. Further, examples of the dependency the country has on tourism can be seen through the involvement of small children in the selling of goods to tourists and the fact that the only college on the island's clear majority of majors are tourist centric. Life on the island for children is a grooming process that readies them for a career in the industry, since that is an area in which they are likely to be successful.

For the purposes of this research, I traveled to the islands of New Providence (specifically the capital city of Nassau) and Grand Bahama (specifically the city of Freeport). These are the two most populated islands of the Bahamas. The current population of the Bahamas is around 350,000. Nassau, New Providence is the capital and the most populous with around 250,000 or around 70% of the population. Freeport, Grand Bahama is the second most populous island in the Bahamas and is called the 'second city.' The islands outside of these two are called the 'family islands' and are generally sparsely populated in comparison to the two major islands (Palmer, 1994). This is partially due to the exodus to Nassau and Freeport by citizens wishing to seek employment in the prosperous tourism industry. Nassau and Freeport both have cruise ship terminals and plenty of tourism businesses that initiate and run tours and excursions. The tourism industry on the two islands include nature tourism activities such as scuba, snorkeling, swimming with dolphins, and swimming with stingrays. But they also offer casinos, cultural excursions, duty-free shopping, and all-inclusive resorts.

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Many of these offerings are day trips on the islands in the form of excursions, tailored for the purposes of cruise ship tourists who only have a few hours on the island. There are also day-long tours that are run to surrounding 'family islands' of the Bahamas such as Exuma Cay and Abaco which are more sparsely populated and operate more isolated tourism activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

I. INTRODUCTION

Before conducting the research, it is important to establish where the literature lies regarding the impact of tourism on the lives of local inhabitants. The current literature does supplement many findings that were produced through this research project. The importance of this project however, is that although there has been research on the effects of tourism on local inhabitants and local inhabitant's perceptions about tourism, there is little to no research in these areas in the country of the Bahamas. This is a gap in the research that I will attempt to fill in order to add to current literature on the subjects of tourism impacts on locals, and local perceptions of tourism. The third chapter of this research, which evaluates the impacts of tourism on the community at large, will be evaluated largely through the lens of political ecology, which in itself is a framework with which to evaluate problems and situations that may in public discourse be presented quite differently. As Douglas describes, "political ecology presents an interdisciplinary lens for analyzing environmental conflicts concerning the social relations of actors, often dubbed as "stakeholders," within such conflicts" (2014, p. 8). This lens evaluates problems and situations from many disciplines including, political science, ecology, anthropology, economics, social science, international relations,

environmental studies, and many others, to provide a complete and holistic framework for evaluation.

II. TOURISM AND ITS THEORIES

The importance of studying tourism, is paramount to multiple academic fields. Due to the robust and continually expanding nature of the tourism industry, its reach permeates into multiple disciplines including social sciences, sciences and economics. This is because of the nature of the interchangeable host/guest interactions and the multiple actors involved in the tourism process. Tourism is an industry that can touch all corners of the globe and can present a way for cultures to collide, meld, and be put on display simultaneously.

As discussed, tourism is a powerful industry that has reaches in all corners of the globe. In 2012, the number of recorded international travelers passed 1 billion for the first time (Moore, 2015). The World Tourism Organization predicted in a recent study that by 2020, 7.8 billion people will participate in a foreign trip (Bennett & Gebhardt, 2005, p. 15). The growth of the industry has been bolstered by organizations such as the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, and the United Nations World Tourism Organization during the peak of the neoliberal age as successful strategies in development. This is exemplified by the fact that it is the leading source of export earnings in almost one-half of the less-developed countries (Usher & Kerstetter, 2014, p. 321). Within the tourism literature, most scholars will equate the advent of mass tourism with the aftermath of World War II, in which travel became more accessible for the general public, and the war hardened world was inspired to experience different cultures and people in order to avoid the mistakes of the past (Lisle, 2000). At its core, "[t]ourism is based on the desire for the pursuit of

happiness" (Enzensberger, 1996), and it is the drive to find happiness and experience cultures that push the industry. One interesting aspect of tourism versus other industries is the very nature of the host/guest or tourist/toured. This dichotomy is a socially constructed idea that can be frequently switched (Chambers, 2009). The amazing impact of tourism, is that the locations tourists select are not limited by geography or culture. Tourism can literally exist in all areas of the globe in one fashion or another. From traveling to an iconic tourist location such as Walt Disney World to traveling to the barren reaches of the world in Antarctica if you can dream it, you can do it. Tourists make their decisions on where to travel based off the 'tourist gaze' in which Debbie Lisle states is

> a geographical imagination full of all the different "elsewheres" one could visit is further divided into "zones of safety" where the modern tourist gaze operates freely, and "off-limits" areas where the tourist gaze refuses to enter. (2000)

Tourists perform a form a risk analysis when deciding where to travel for their vacation. A common risk analysis combination of a 'zone of safety' and an 'elsewhere' would leave a tourist to desire a tropical location such as an island resort or a cruise ship. This is because it falls easily into the category of being an 'elsewhere' with very little risk outside of the 'zone of safety.' This imagining of different 'elsewheres' is conjured up by tourists who wish to travel to places different from where they are from. As it was stated, for many people who do not live in a tropical paradise, images of sandy beaches and warm breezes are appealing to the tourists as a safe and yet still exotic location.

The tourism literature is an interdisciplinary and multifaceted subject of research which has various theories and nuances that provide insight into its actions. From the aspect

of social science, tourism has been stressed as a cultural phenomenon that stems from a dialogue between its actors (Chambers, 2000; Guerrón, 2010). There are many different activities that fall under the tourism umbrella as well as many different types of tourism. For example: sustainable tourism, nature tourism, mass tourism, volunteer tourism, medical tourism, and many more all make up the industry. Each of these types of tourism have sub-branches with more specific types of experiences within them. For example, nature tourism is any and all tourism occurring or interacting with nature and is an umbrella which can include: ecotourism, wildlife tourism, marine tourism, adventure tourism and more (Weaver, 2009). The categories are not mutually exclusive, and certain tourist activities can belong to multiple tourism types. For the purposes of this research, in the context of the Bahamas, much of the tourism that is found on the islands includes: nature tourism (which includes 3s tourism, marine tourism, wildlife tourism, ecotourism) and mass tourism (which includes cruise tourism, resort tourism and casino tourism). As stated, however, the categories are not mutually exclusive and some activities can fall into multiple tourism categories.

Tourists determine where they want to travel based on Urry's tourist gaze as described above. There are, however, different types of tourists with differing thresholds for their own 'zone of safety.' Cohen describes four different types of tourists which includes: the organized mass tourist who travel in large groups and often have their travel planned ahead of time, the individual mass tourists who use the same facilities as the mass tourists but make more individual decisions about their trip, the explorers who arrange their own trip but still make use of the mass tourist facilities, and the drifters who avoid contact with other tourists and attempt to delve deeply into local culture and often stays longer (Mason, 2016). These

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different types of tourists will present themselves differently to the local host population and will affect the local population in different ways as will be described in a further section.

Due to the invasive nature of tourism, and its pervasiveness throughout society, it can be argued that tourism is not only selling material items but it is also selling experiences, and more importantly it is selling culture. Tourism often involves a commodification of culture (Scher, 2010). This commodification is often promoted by neoliberal economic policies attempting to create a niche market for their clients. The advertisement of a 3S (sea, sand and sun) destination, is not quite enough anymore when hundreds of other countries are advertising the same thing. If 3S is the only appeal for a destination, what then is the difference between Bali or the Bahamas? Therefore, "we come full circle here. The structuring force of neoliberalism produces an emphasis on culture (a non-competitive market niche), yet also provides the hegemonic model of what counts as culture" (Scher, 2010, p. 8). Culture therefore becomes commodified as an experience that tourists can partake in when they choose their travel destination. The Bahamas is a prime example of this as their culture is, in essence, advertised as the having the friendliest and most hospitable people you will meet (Our History, 2017). As Moore states,

> This [the Bahamas] is a country in which it is possible for the Minister of Culture to say (in 2011), "be yourself is the biggest lie. You might be in a bad mood and that inhibits performing a service (for the tourist). Service exalts the server." This opinion is countered by Bahamian intellectuals who argue that this view unnecessarily makes citizens "a wax paper people,"" (2015)

This presentation of culture becomes as Scher describes above an almost cyclical effect. A country has a culture that is unique to them, which then becomes promoted and advertised as unique to the world, which then becomes controlled by hegemonic forces who determine what culture is for that destination based on what niche market the country can fill.

Another debated theory within the scholarly tourism works is the demonstration effect. This theory describes the cultural adoption by a less developed host nation of a first world visitor. This could lead to the host nation adopting the visiting nations verbal phrasing, clothing styles, food consumption patterns, and other cultural patterns exhibited by the visiting tourists. Although some scholars have promoted the demonstration effect as a problem that affects many Less Developed Countries (LDCs) with tourism industries (Perez, 1975, Archer, 1975), others have touted that the demonstration effect is largely hypothetical with no clear quantitative evidence to support the claims and the demonstration effects are 'indirect at best' (Mcelroy & Albuquerque, 1986).

The field of economics also provides contributing theories to the tourism literature which include the revenue leakage and multiplier effect. Many authors have discussed the prevalence of revenue leakage in LDCs with large portions of their GDP dependent on the tourism industry (Brandon, 1993; Chambers, 2009; Daye, 2009; Gmelch, 2012; Moore, 2015; Weaver, 2007). Revenue leakage occurs when a significant portion of the income generated from tourism is lost to international stakeholders involved either in the development, creation or investment of tourism, gain more revenue from the tourism industry than the host nation. This can be multiplied by the fact that in order to bolster their tourism industry, many LDCs had to forgo agricultural endeavors to pursue tourism and thus have to import many

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agricultural products multiplying the amount of revenue lost to international stakeholders. This problem is particularly prevalent in the Caribbean where the islands are mainly serviced by foreign transport systems to bring tourists in and these foreign companies have direct control over the numbers of flights and dockings arriving in the country. Tired of dealing with local authorities, some cruise ship companies have further curtailed this complication by buying off islands in the Caribbean and developing them as their own tourist site. This provides a short pay off for the country in the short term, but millions of dollars in revenue lost in the long term. One such example of this is the Walt Disney Company, whose cruise line segment purchased an island in the Bahamas called Paradise Cay. Many of their cruises from Florida only goes to this island and back, losing any revenue the Bahamas could be gaining from tourist purchases and keeping the revenue within the Disney Cruise Line.

Another theory prevalent in the tourism literature is the social exchange theory, which is a generally agreed upon theorem which is discussed by many scholars (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003; Haobin, 2014; Rasoolimanesh & Jafaar, 2016). This theory often aids in determining the attitudes of residents towards the development of tourism. The theory is described as "an exchange of resources between parties who aim to benefit mutually from such exchange" (Haobin et. al, 2014, p. 911). Specifically, regarding tourism, locals who participate more in this mutual exchange, or derive more benefits than costs through this exchange, are more likely to support an increase in tourism development. If there are a substantial amount of perceived personal benefits from tourism then tourism is more likely to be supported.

Butler's theory of staged based models of tourism or a tourism life cycle is another theory that is widely regarded throughout the literature of tourism studies (1980). Although his theory has been expanded upon, the general concept of the theory remains the same. Stage based models help to show how the tourism life cycle grows, peaks and declines. As Hunt mentions, "in most results residents' attitudes towards tourism, and outcomes for host populations, worsen with increasing experience and involvement in tourism" (Hunt & Stronza, 2013). In essence, the longer and more pronounced the local population's exposure to tourism is, the worse their perceptions of tourism become. Several authors have produced small changes or differing scope focuses to Butler's theory including Weaver's four types of tourism which ends in unsustainable mass tourism, and Prideaux's lifecycle which places more stress on geopolitical factors (2007, 2005).

The last theory to note in tourism studies is Doxey's irritation index. This is similar to Butler's lifecycle model which posits that increased exposure to tourism worsens local perceptions overtime. This theory states that resident population's attitude towards tourists and tourism will change negatively overtime with increasing exposure. On the first visit by tourists, the locals will experience euphoria and excitement, but as the tourism lifecycle continues attitudes will move through various stages of apathy and can end in eventual aggression (Mason, 2016).

Understanding the various theories that are present in the tourism literature is important to create a grounded understanding of these theories in relation to the results found throughout the research process. Along with understanding broad tourism related theories, it is important to understand tourism as it relates with specific aspects of my research.

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III. TOURISM IN THE CARIBBEAN

The insular region of the Caribbean, is an area where sun, sand and sea are all lumped together to create the ultimate tourism experience. The Caribbean is widely touted as the world's premier travel destination and is often the first thing that comes to mind when someone thinks of an island getaway. However along with this, it is also one of the most dependent regions on tourism in the entire world (Daye, 2008). The region is a compilation of archipelago islands that is comprised of 34 nation states. The entire region boasts a population of 60 million with a variety of backgrounds and languages that all share a similar history of European colonization (Daye, 2008). From this colonial period onward, a dependency began to develop. This dependency has continued to grow and change with the world. What once began as a colonial dependency, is now an economic dependency. The Caribbean region's future is intrinsically linked with the tourism industry. To highlight their contribution to the tourism sector as a whole, it is ranked 13th in size internationally, but 1st in 'relative contribution to regional economics' (Daye, 2008, p. 1). Another highlighting factor is that the regional host to guest ratio in the Caribbean is 2:1 in contrast with the global average host to guest ratio of 13:1 (Weaver, 1994). This exemplifies just how much tourism the region experiences and encourages as it serves as a vital component of their GDP. The region caters mainly to northern, white, American or European clientele (Bennett & Gebhardt, 2005). In the Bahamas specifically, the vast majority of their clientele comes from the United States due to a multitude of factors including geographic proximity, equality of currency, and ease of language.

The 'tourism product' that the Caribbean sells, however, does not come without its challenges. Environmentally, the Caribbean is already facing many threats without the addition of tourism including climate change, natural disasters, changing ocean temperatures and beach erosion. For example, the Caribbean's coral reefs are already among the most endangered in the world, and yet the formations are consistently promoted in destination image as being one of the most important tourist attractions for the region (Weaver, 1998). When adding in the 'tourist factor,' other environmental impacts become apparent. Although these impacts cannot be singled out from tourism's effects alone, tourism is a contributing factor to beach erosion, increased pollution, poor waste management, water supply problems, and degrading coral reefs. In a cyclical effect, the aforementioned environmental threats will recurrently affect the tourism industry. To explain, most of the tourism in the Caribbean is dependent on nature and nature tourism. If the idyllic beach that the tourists imagine and expect to see is not presented, they will no longer want to come to the Caribbean for their 3S needs. In essence, as the tourism industry effects the environment, so the environment effects the tourism industry. From a political ecology standpoint, this shows that there is a clear link between people and nature. Although in advertisements of the Caribbean, the beaches will often be shown devoid of people, people and nature and in the Caribbean, exist in a cyclical loop and must be considered together.

The importance of the environment for Caribbean nations should be of paramount importance as that is what helps them to promote a tourism product to consumers. Without this, many Caribbean economies would not be able to survive. This dependency stems from the brainchild of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank promoting that tourism

was a quick fix to aid in development (Gmelch, 2012). Gmelch perhaps describes this dependency best by stating, "tourism exerts a greater, more pervasive influence on the countries and cultures of the world than any imperial power ever has. As McLaren has noted, "The sun never sets on the tourist empire"" (2012, p. 10). Tourism is a trap that enraptures less developed countries with the appeal of greater economic growth. But this growth also comes at a price, once tourism becomes your major commodity, it is hard to produce anything else. Further, tourism itself is a tumultuous industry as it is inconsistent and highly dependent on external variables. From natural disasters to terrorist attacks, there are a multitude of factors that can affect tourism numbers (Weaver, 2007). For countries and individuals more specifically who rely on tourism to survive, this can be extremely dangerous. As Wilson describes,

> Caribbean is thus: forced to choose between an industry it 'deep down' does not really want, and the economic fruits of that industry which it needs and which, it seems, more and more only tourism will provide. This conflict explains why Caribbean people 'intellectually' understand that tourism is economically important but act out, perhaps involuntarily, social attitudes hostile to the industry (1996, p. 96).

The Caribbean in particular, is deemed even more dependent on the 3S tourism model than their South Pacific counterparts (Weaver, 2007) and are thus forced to brand themselves uniquely to compete with fellow Caribbean countries on the tourism market.

The unsteady nature of the tourism market and the tough competition for visitors in the Caribbean region forces destinations to create a unique 'tourism product' by destination branding (Moore, 2015). Since the 3S 'tourism product' is losing its edge as more destinations

promoting the same image come onto the market, the countries of the Caribbean must find a way to distinguish themselves and present a unique tourism product to bring in tourists. Whether this is through promoting their unique cultural aspects or highlighting positive attributes to tourists such as cheaper fares, geographic proximity and ease of travel, each of the countries in the Caribbean has the vital task of promoting a unique image to the international market (Burac, 1996). Unfortunately, destination branding can sometimes serve as an injustice to the location (Wilson, 1996). For example, although dominant image of the Caribbean is often thought of and portrayed as a homogenous region, it is actually one of the most heterogenous and ethnically diverse regions in the world (Guerrón, 2010). Each country has its own ethnically and historically unique culture and people, which is often lumped into one giant reggae inspired stereotype.

This Caribbean image is further often tainted and warped to meet Western imaginary of visiting idyllic and pristine destinations. This dominant western paradigm is the one that Knill described spoke to the perception of people, particularly in the west, to their natural environment which includes the "anthropocenic belief that humans are separate from and superior to the natural environment, which only has status as a 'resource' or commodity available for exploitation…it has no intrinsic worth" (Weaver, 2007, p. 32). This leads to the commodification of nature where the image is promoted through marketing campaigns of both foreign companies and the local islands who are trying to sell what the Western world wants to consume. These uniformed advertisements promoted to consumers, depict culturally uniform images of paradise (Guerrón, 2010). Often these images are depicted with little to no locals present which afform to the idyllic beach setting that the Western consumer is seeking.

As Weaver states, marketing often reinforces these ideas of the Caribbean as remote and unspoiled with primitive cultures that have traditional and authentic lifestyles (2007). Due to the promotion of the islands in this way, some locals in Caribbean countries feel as though it is a rebirthing of the colonial situation through tourism where they are denied access to their own beaches or are denied tourism jobs because of the color of their skin so the country can maintain the image that the tourists desire (Gmelch, 2012, Chambers, 2009). This can present an issue, however, when the tourists come and the image they imagined is broken. This can be broken by the 'intrusion' of locals on tourism beaches or the encroachment of local practices into the tourism activities. As Daye notes, "it is the underlying powerlessness of these destinations that exposes the underbelly of representations of fantasy. The deconstruction of the Western imaginary of Caribbean Paradise therefore challenges the perpetuation of the exploitation of these destinations for Western consumptions" (2008, p. 23). This problem is of course, not exclusive to the Caribbean, but presents a poignant issue worth discussing when providing academic background to Caribbean tourism.

IV. TOURISM AND THE COMMUNITY

In order to understand why locals in tourism destinations hold certain perceptions about tourism, it is important to understand some of the ways in which tourism can produce change in a destination and on its people. Proven through multiple studies, there are many ways that tourism can potentially affect the community including through economic, social and environmental impacts (Torkarchuk et. al, 2016). Some of the economic and social impacts will be discussed in this section, whereas environmental impacts will be discussed in a later section.

Economically there are many different ways in which tourism can influence a community. One notable theory is marginalization, which is prevalent throughout the political ecology literature, but becomes significant for this research. Two different dictionary definitions describe marginalization as 'the treatment of a person, group, or concept as insignificant or peripheral' or 'to place in a position of marginal importance, influence or power.' In essence, marginalization is when certain people in a population are given less access to power and can be treated as insignificant. In the case of tourism, this often manifests itself in regards to resource or income distribution of tourism benefits. Many researchers have discussed the unequal distribution of tourism benefits throughout many tourism destinations, which continues to be a prevalent problem (Anglin, 2014; Usher & Kerstetter, 2014; Walpole & Goodwin, 2001, Weaver, 2007). From the lens of political ecology, the reason for this unequal distribution is found to have many potential causes, but most of them revolve around power. Those who have the power, make the rules. Depending on where someone falls with regards to this marginalization, could have an impact on their perceptions of tourism as a whole. If they derive more benefits from tourism, they might have a different perspective than one who derives less benefits and finds themselves as a marginalized member of the community.

Another issue that is prevalent economically with regards to tourism is the unsteady nature of the tourism industry. In many interviews conducted throughout my research and many of the case studies I reviewed, locals will comment on the difficulty of providing for their family by relying on the tourism industry. On a small scale, with local straw market vendors for example, cruise ship traffic can affect how much money they bring in for the

week. On a large scale, natural disasters, like hurricanes that rip through an island, can cause a setback for weeks with regards to tourism revenue for the entire region. Relying on such an unsteady industry as a major revenue source can be one issue that can affect local perceptions. Other potential economic impacts due to tourism include diversion of resources, food and realty inflation, economic dependency, and excessive subsidization (Gmelch, 2012; Lepp & Harris, 2008; Mason, Mcelroy & Alberqueque, 1986; Rasimoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2016).

There can also be many ways in which a community is socially effected by tourism. However, as Gmelch mentions, the evaluation of social impacts of tourism on communities is much often more difficult to measure than economic impacts as they are less quantifiable (2012). In some instances, the social impacts can be positive. Oftentimes with tourism, the country gains more revenue which can improve overall quality of life for the residents. In order to attract the tourists, first world infrastructure often must be built to draw them in, which in turn positively impacts the locals who are living in tourism areas (Hall & Lew, 2009; Usher & Kerstetter, 2014). Further, tourism can sometimes reinforce cultural identity in order to promote this unique cultural experience to the tourists (Chambers, 2009). Tourism organizations can put on cultural festivals that celebrate and attempt to rebirth local culture. This occurred with the Junkanoo culture throughout my time in the Bahamas (Armstrong, 2016). However, this attempted reinforcement can also lower local involvement in these promoted cultural events, since they are intended more for the tourist's benefit than theirs.

Tourism also socially has the potential to upset the local population's daily lives. In some tourist areas, like Nassau, Bahamas for example, it is extremely difficult for the locals to escape the tourism sector. The entire island of New Providence, Bahamas boasts over two-

thirds of the country's population and yet is only twenty-one by seven square miles. When you add this to being one of the most popular tourism destinations in the Caribbean, along with having the largest cruise terminal in the Caribbean, it is easy to understand why it might be difficult for the locals to find a reprieve from all of the tourist activity. Gmelch found some of the same issues in his research to Barbados, and spoke of locals getting tired of the endless questions and unapproved pictures (2012). Additionally, other potential impacts can include increased crime, crowding in urban and residential areas, cultural changes, and inauthentic cultural representations (Usher & Kerstetter, 2014). These factors can influence the ways that locals perceive tourism.

V. LOCAL PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM

Perceptions of tourism are often derived from the varying impacts described above. It is impossible to determine what perceptions locals will have on tourism in every destination as the situations and issues are different depending on many sociocultural, environmental, economic and political factors. There are, however, different theories that may help provide academic framework to determining local perceptions about tourism and why they might be present. Anderson was one of the first to describe the nation state as an imagined community (1983) which has gained widespread acceptance and use throughout the tourism literature (Lepp & Harris, 2008). This idea is that everyone in the nation is connected imaginarily. As it is not possible to know everyone in one's country, the imagined community is born when there is a connection between groups of people that never meet. As Lepp & Harris point out, tourism is more recently being touted as an agent to help create the nation state ideal and in essence national identity (2008). They give the example of how domestic tourism in the

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United States began during western expansionism and many of the landmarks and tourism markers define and exemplify what it means to be American (2008). This can also be the experience for other tourism destinations around the world and can influence their perceptions about the tourism industry.

Also in regard to identity however, is the issue of identity homogenization which can affect many different tourism destinations. In essence, this is the idea of multiple regions or destinations being lumped into one identity and cultural representation to the rest of the world. Lepp & Harris describe a situation in Kenya, in which the entire country of Kenya is lumped into a communal Masai culture where everyone speaks Swahili. In reality however, the Masai are just one ethnic group in the region and Swahili isn't even their native language (2008). This problem is one that is similarly occurring in the Caribbean. Often the nations are treated as a culturally homogenous region. During my field research, I even saw representations of this where many Bahamian vendors sold Jamaican merchandise to tourists (Armstrong, 2016). When I asked them about it one vendor stated, "it doesn't matter the tourists don't know where they're at anyways. They think everywhere in the Caribbean is Jamaica" (Armstrong, 2016). This identity homogenization due to the tourism industry can affect the local's perceptions of their self-identity. It could even alter their identity or encourage locals to present a false identity to tourists in order for them to be successful as in the case I mentioned above.

Another factor that could help to illuminate local perceptions of tourism could be the quality of life index. This is often used in the context to describe how someone is doing and feeling. As Usher & Kerstetter mention, "patterns of behavior, values, thoughts and feelings

as well as perceived impacts [from tourism] affect QOL" (2014, p. 322). Determining

people's quality of life helps to "show how an area is doing not only from an objective

physical design perspective but also from a subjective human response perspective"

(Andereck & Nyaupane, 2010, p. 248). Depending on people's quality of life, their

perceptions and views about tourism may be different. This can also tie into the

marginalization theory discussed above in which people who are in the 'out groups' with less

equally distributed resources from tourism will most likely having a correlating lower quality

of life than those in the 'in group' and can thus have different perceptions about tourism and

its effect on their life. Andereck & Nyaupane describes many ways in which tourism can

affect quality of life positively and negatively including through positive factors such as job

creation and higher personal standards of living, and negative factors such as crowding,

increased crime, increased cost of living and friction between tourists and residents (2010).

Mason, however, possibly describes this relationship best and illuminates a relationship that

seems to guide much of the field work conducted for this thesis as well. His research was

conducted in the Scottish Highlands twenty years apart and through both periods he

determined throughout all that time that "those directly involved in, and hence dependent on,

tourism were more likely to be positive about tourism" (2016, p. 50).

There are also copious discussions throughout the literature on factors and generalities

that can affect local perceptions about tourism (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2010; Andriotis &

Vaughan, 2003; Crick, 2003; Gmelch, 2012; Haobin et. al, 2014; Tokarchuk et. al, 2016;

Usher & Kerstetter, 2014; Weaver, 2007). Weaver and other researchers discuss the truism of

the cost benefit analysis that locals perform in relation to tourism. In essence, if they derive to

much cost and not enough benefit from tourism, their reactions and perceptions can be negative and vice versa (2007, Andereck & Nyaupane, 2010). Many researchers have also pointed to truisms in regard to tourism employment, where those that are employed in the tourism industry and are dependent on it for their livelihood are more positive about tourism and its development (Mason, 2016; Usher & Kerstetter, 2014). Crick explains an example in the Bahamas where this is a case in which, "according to Bahamian officials, tourism has been highly regarded by most Bahamians because it is so central to the economy (2003, p. 155). This is a claim that I can also affirm through my interviews and field research with Bahamian locals. Another correlation that can influence perceptions is that the further distance locals are from tourism centers, the less support they will have for tourism. And lastly, all of these connection's levels of tolerance can be challenged if the number of tourists begins to exceed the number of hosts (Usher & Kerstetter, 2014). Further, overtime with prolonged exposure to tourism, many locals will begin to develop categories or stereotypes of tourists which can alter their perceptions about the industry as a whole and effect their interactions with tourists themselves.

In regard to locals and tourists, it is important to look at the established literature on how and why locals can react to tourism in certain ways. Weaver mentions in communities where the 'front stage' areas or the 'tourism approved areas' and the 'back stage' or 'local areas' are kept separate; the locals often will not have as many problems with tourists as they have a place to retreat (2007). However, hard tourists (those that want to delve into the local community) can often break through this veil and into the backstage areas, sometimes sparking resentment and conflict between the tourist and the toured. In areas where the front

stage and back stage are blurred, as is the case discussed earlier with Nassau, Bahamas, resentment and conflict between the tourist and the toured can occur. As Gmelch points out, often how locals feel about tourism is dependent on the sheer number of tourists there are (2012). If there is increased pressure, crowding and overwhelming numbers of tourists, friction can sometimes occur. Especially when the stage lines begin to blur and no matter where the tourists are they 'expect local people to be cheerful and courteous' (Gmelch, 2012, p. 25).

Further, Doğan describes several different strategies that locals can utilize against tourists including that they can resist, retreat, perform boundary maintenance, revitalize local culture or adopt foreign culture (Chambers, 2009). Boissevain is another scholar who describes several coping mechanisms that locals can employ including, covert resistance, hiding, fencing, rituals, organized protest, or aggression (Chambers, 2009). Although it would seem much of the literature might suggest that tourism has mostly negative effects on the community, Mason argues that communities still actively seek out tourism to come into their communities and will put up with some of the negative impacts to partake in the positive benefits (2016).

VI. TOURISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Lastly, it is important to round out this discussion of literature by reviewing the literature surrounding tourism and the environment. This is particularly prevalent to this research because tourism in the Caribbean is extremely dependent on the environment and their ability to present the idyllic environment that is part of the Western imaginary. It is important to discuss the environment as it ties into tourism as a whole. Here, I will stress the

underlying theme of political ecology prevalent throughout this thesis, as the many theories and disciplines presented here will act as lenses to evaluate the situation in the Bahamas at a level that is beyond the surface in an attempt to better understand tourism from the perspectives of the local community and why they are that way. Political ecology can help us to understand the power relations in the tourism literature and evaluate the underlying reasons for various tourism related situations.

Although the research itself is not revolved around solving a political ecology problem, I found that by utilizing the framework of a political ecologist, the industry of tourism in the Bahamas is more easily analyzed. Therefore, the last chapter of the thesis in particular will utilize this framework. This is because political ecology evaluates issues from multiple different lenses and disciplines and how they intersect to form conclusions that might not otherwise appear at face value. Tourism is a fitting case study for political ecology as tourism is often shrouded in nature, the use of nature, who has the power over nature and the value of nature as a commodity. By evaluating the data collected from the field research and analyzing it from the perspective of political ecology, I was able to determine underlying truths about tourism that the locals themselves might not even realize.

Perhaps the best descriptor of political ecology is to describe it by what it is not; *apolitical* ecology. As Robbins describes, "this is the difference between identifying broader systems rather than blaming proximate and local forces; between viewing ecological systems as power-laden rather than politically inert." (2012, p. 13). Basically, political ecology does not take any situation for face value but rather analyzes the intersecting factors that influence the situation and the power struggles that permeate the issue. In the case of tourism, political

ecology presents an extremely useful framework as the majority of the world's powers at be will tout tourism as a country life-saver and development maker. Many organizations such as the IMF, World Bank and UNWTO will almost explicate that tourism is a key to development as it utilizes the already established natural landscape to make a profit. However, the underlying impacts and effects that tourism has on the population are less likely discussed such as dependency, challenges to identity, unequal distribution of benefits leading to marginalization and power struggles over resources. This is why political ecology will help to guide, especially the latter half of, this research to evaluate the underbelly of the tourism industry.

It is important to address some of the ways in which tourism is discussed in the literature to affect the environment. Many authors have discussed the relationship that tourism has with the environment (Anglin, 2014; Attz, 2009; Burac, 1996; Cashman et. al, 2012; Chambers, 2009; Douglas, 2014; Gmelch, 2012; Moore, 2015; Mosedale, 2015; Onofowara & Owoye, 2012; Shelton, 2016; Usher & Kerstetter, 2014; Weaver, 2007). Tourism itself can have almost a cyclical impact on the environment. Tourists can seek the 'pristine image' of nature when they partake in many tourist activities. Tourists that live in a city may want to take a holiday to the countryside or those who live in mountain areas may want to take a visit to a beach. It is normal for humans to seek nature as they find an intrinsic value in it. Tourism in itself, however, can negatively affect the environment; but tourism promoters need to present an idyllic environment in order to draw in the tourists. Therefore, in a positive fashion some tourism destinations will eventually place more emphasis on protecting and preserving the environment to continue to offer the environment for tourist consumption. Therefore, the

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environment and tourism participate in an intricate circle of life in an attempt to both utilize and preserve nature.

Beaches, in themselves, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of tourism due to them being confined spaces (Chambers, 2009). Weaver specifically mentions that tourism itself has been cited as the 'primary culprit' in the erosion and deterioration of the Caribbean region's coral reefs due to the spin off effects of diving, boating, and hotels (1998). Chambers also describes several ways in which beaches can be affected. One can be the displacement of locals who may depend on the beach for their livelihood in competition for the best beaches (2009). The power struggle over the best areas of the beach is an issue found in many island destinations. Many locals are completely barred from beaches as more private residences and resorts crop up. Residents are often outbid for decent locations, and with rising costs of living associated with the rising tourism industry, they often cannot afford to live along their own coastline even on an island destination. Further, once private companies come in, they have a tendency to 'soil' or ruin an area due to the tourism activities. To compensate, there is a lot of 'slashing and burning' happening in the Caribbean where companies will abandon completed or unfinished projects and move to entirely new ones (Chambers, 2009).

Climate change is another environmental issue that poses a particular problem for island destinations and the cyclical relationship between tourism and the environment as described above. Climate change is when changes in the earth's properties for an expansive period of time change whether from natural or human activity (Cashman et. al, 2012). Cashman highlights that island states are particularly vulnerable to this change (2012) and Attz provides a specific example as to why. The ideal temperature for tourists is 21 degrees

Celsius, but the temperature data for the Caribbean already suggest their average temperature is now over that (2009). Attz states that if the data proves correct, the Caribbean will eventually become hot enough that it will be unattractive as a tourist destination, highlighting the importance and fragility of the island environment (2009). Other risk factors for islands in regard to climate change involve the increase of natural disasters from which small island destinations are particularly vulnerable, and rising sea levels which can lead to increased levels of beach erosion and can put any coastal based marine tourism activities at risk (Attz, 2009).

Other ideas circulating in the literature in relation to tourism and the environment is surrounding the social construction of nature. Nature itself, can mean different things to different people. And people in different parts of the world will think of a different image when asked to picture the word 'nature.' The social construction of nature thesis essentially states that "representations of reality are inextricably linked to the physical world; it seeks to elucidate the role of structures in the conceptual construction of nature, society, and environmental problems" (Douglas, 2014). However, nature can also be viewed as a commodity. Onofowara & Owoye perhaps explain best the importance of the commodification of nature and state

> the consistent growth of international tourist arrivals and tourism receipts over the past several decades has convinced many developing countries, which have little to offer but nature, that tourism is a means by which they can cover their needs in foreign currency, diversify their economy and reduce reliance on traditional agriculture and industry, and ultimately grow and develop (2012, p. 160)

This illuminates the importance of the commodification of nature in relation to tourism. In many countries, nature is all they have to offer in regard to tourism. They may have little resources to collect or industries to produce but if they have nature, they have a way to make an income. Especially if they are just beginning to sell their tourism product. But nature can be viewed in many different ways. Reduced access to nature can impact locals socially who are used to having freedom of access to nature allowing it to be a part of their culture. Further, locals may look at a beach differently. Materially they might think of the beach in terms of agriculture, whereas a hotel industry may look at it in terms of building a prime vacation spot. The power struggles over how nature is utilized, who has access to nature and even how it is thought of is a problem that is prevalent in many tourism and island destinations. These conflicts of how nature is viewed and constructed, and ultimately commodified are prevalent throughout the tourism literature.

VII. CONCLUSION

Overall, this literature review helped to illuminate the status of the literature surrounding tourism, the impacts tourism can have on communities, and how this can influence tourist perceptions. This literature review helps to establish where this research falls with regards to the presented literature. This research aims to provide continuing data to support the presented theories in regard to tourism. Although there has been research on how tourism impacts communities and how those impacts affect local's perceptions about tourism, this study has seen little research on the island of the Bahamas. Thus, this research aims to add this study to the field, and help to substantiate previously mentioned theories and claims about tourism.

RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH AND SIGNIFICANCE

The goal of this research is to develop a foundation of the perspectives that the Bahamians have about tourists and tourism in their country. Further, it is presented to analyze the effects that tourism has on the community and people of the Bahamas, the reasons why and the wider implications of those effects. The guiding research question is what are the Bahamians perceptions of tourism and what affects does tourism have on the Bahamian people? Sub questions will inadvertently be raised through the research.

In regard to the Bahamians perceptions, further questions will look at why do the Bahamians have altogether positive perceptions on tourism? There are theories that would posit that increased exposure to tourism would create a decreased tolerance for tourism and tourists (Hunt, 2013) so why did the majority of the Bahamians interviewed view tourism positively? Further, why do the Bahamians view some tourists different from others? How do the Bahamians feel tourism impacts their lives? And are their words reflecting their actions? Do Bahamians react as positively to tourism in their actions as they claim to do in conversation?

With regards to tourism's effect on the Bahamas, the third chapter will address such pressing questions as what affect does tourism have on the environment? What wider implications does this environmental effect have on the people themselves? Is there a difference between how tourists and locals view nature? What is the importance of commodifying nature in the Bahamas? Further questions will be addressed in regard to the

sociocultural impacts. What are the sociocultural impacts of tourism on the Bahamian people? Has tourism changed the culture of the Bahamas or the identity of its people? And lastly economic questions will be addressed. Most importantly perhaps is why is the Bahamas dependent on tourism and what impact does this have on the people?

This research will be guided using political ecology to evaluate the tourism industry in the Bahamas through an intersecting and multidiscipline lens. The play of power in the Bahamas has direct ties to many of uneven impacts felt by the locals because of tourism. On surface value, tourism may seem altogether positive, and the locals discuss it with a primarily positive outlook. However, when delving into some of the underlying factors and intersecting issues surrounding tourism, it does not present itself in an altogether positive light. Although it can be argued that tourism has bolstered the economy of the Bahamas and provides the majority of the job employment opportunities, the dependence created on tourism has produced long term effects which some of the local Bahamians I interviewed had begun themselves to notice (Armstrong, 2016).

The importance of this research is to provide insight into how tourism impacts the people of the Bahamas and how they feel about tourism. This is important for a variety of reasons. To begin it is important to the tourism industry because the more positive reactions that the local population has to tourism the better they will behave in response to tourism and the happier the tourists will be, leading to increased tourism activity and profit. In effect, if the local perceives a higher benefit than cost for tourism, they will behave better and perform better around tourists. This will in return benefit the industry. Especially since the Bahamas is not only advertised for its sea sand and sun market but is marketed that it has Bahamian

hospitality and warm Bahamian people, keeping up this image is paramount to the success of the industry. It is further important as it adds more research to the literature in regard to local perceptions on tourism especially in those with heavy tourism numbers and a long history of tourism. The Bahamas is also an important case study as it is a small island destination, one of many, who rely on tourism as a major portion of its economy. But with the Bahamas being the leading tourism destination in the Caribbean, with the largest cruise terminal and close proximity to the United States, it presents itself as an interesting case study which should prove valuable to comparative research in the future and also for establishing an increased knowledge of the impact of tourism on small island destinations.

METHODOLOGY

In order to answer some of the questions such as how does tourism impact the Bahamian community and what are the Bahamian resident's perceptions about tourism, I conducted my field research in the Bahamas for seven weeks and conducted 47 interviews and extensive participant observation (For a list of interviewees please see Table A). I utilized a mixed method approach to my methodology in my field research in order to not only interview residents to get an understanding for how they felt about tourism, but also to participate in their lives and observe them around and not around tourists. This was in order to help aid in determining some of the impacts that tourism might have on the community that the residents themselves are either unaware of or don't acknowledge. To provide a broad sweeping aspect to this research, I traveled to two geographic locations in the Bahamas including Freeport, Grand Bahama, Bahamas and Nassau, New Providence, Bahamas. They are geographically different as well as differing in population and area. Grand Bahama island

possesses half of the population as New Providence, but is nearly four times the size. This did provide a different feel on the two islands, that the residents themselves also acknowledge. Otherwise, they share the same language, have the same tourist cliental, and both have similar marine tourism activities and cruise terminals.

The research began by conducting a review of the current state of literature to determine where this field research was to fit in with regard to existing research and theories within the field of tourism. Once arriving in the Bahamas, I began by conducting participant observation, easily blending in as a tourist and able to interact with locals from the perspective of a visitor. In this way, I was able to observe some of the attitudes and behaviors that Bahamians exhibit towards tourists, even ones they themselves might be unaware of. Throughout this process, I kept extensive field notes of any notable occurrences that happened with me or other observable interactions. After figuring out a lay of the land I began to branch out and talk to locals about tourism. These interviews were unstructured and often times conducted in a casual matter. Most of the Bahamians I interviewed were at their jobs. This was for a combination of reasons. Including for ease of access for the Bahamians themselves, the difficulty and uncomfortability for Bahamian cultures to sit down and conduct formal interviews, and the ability to also observe guest interactions with Bahamians while conducting interviews. This did limit my ability to record conversations, and I instead had to rely on field notes. The methodology however, led to the ability for me to establish relationships with the local Bahamians I was able to interact with, learning not only about how they felt about tourism, but also about their lives and their families. This further helped me to understand the far-reaching impact that tourism had on their lives.

CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the background of the Bahamas as a tourism setting. It set up the regional context so that the reader can understand how and why tourism is so important to this island economy. Further, this chapter presented the literature review, which outlines the tourism theories and trends in the literature that will help guide this research. Lastly, this chapter provided a complete outline of the research, the questions that guide the research, and the significance of the research and concluded with an overview of the methodology used to gather data and guide the field research.

CHAPTER TWO: THE LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

The Bahamian people are generally kind and as many tourists would state that I talked to 'service oriented' (Armstrong, 2016). They seem to always be smiling and ready to help tourists in need. But how does tourism affect the Bahamians themselves? How do they feel about this industry which is such an integral part of their lives? The country and by default its people rely on tourism for income but how do the people feel about this? Do they support tourism, do they like tourism, or do they despise the industry and their dependence on it?

This chapter will begin by discussing the Bahamian people, a little bit of their history and also breakdown the specific people I talked to in regard to their occupation. The chapter will then delve into the perceptions the Bahamian people have about the tourists in particular and then the tourism industry broadly. It seems the tourism industry was discussed in an overall positive manner in contrast to tourists themselves who were often labeled and discussed in joking or negative viewpoints. Finally, it will conclude with the reactions that locals have to tourism and why some might react in a contrary way from the positive note stated in their interviews.

THE PEOPLE

It is important before delving into a chapter about the perceptions the local people of the Bahamas have about tourism, to first explore a little bit about the people themselves and the reason the island is such a popular place for tourism. There are a couple of general demographic and geographic features that make it the optimal place for tourism. Geographically, the Bahamas is located within extremely close proximity to the United States which makes it easy for quick island getaways. The official language of the country is English which makes vacationing there simple, as well as the Bahamian currency is on par with the

US Dollar making ease of transactions. All of these factors contribute to the propensity for it to be a highly popular tourism destination.

From my time spent in the Bahamas, I had come to know the people who lived there as generally extremely kind and family oriented. The population is 90.6% black and extremely Christian oriented with only 5.1% of the population who do not identify with some sort of Christian religion (CIA Factbook). Most of the population of 327,316 people in the Bahamas live in urban areas, especially on Nassau, Bahamas where two-thirds of the Bahamians live (CIA Factbook). This leads to extremely crowded cities especially when adding in the tourism population that visits the island every day. Often times, tourism zones are right next to residential areas and it is often hard for Bahamians to escape from tourism areas.

The majority of Bahamians work in or around the tourism industry. Further, most of the Bahamians I talked to and interviewed worked in tourism. Please see Table A for a list of people who I interviewed.

Most of these people I interviewed were at work. This was for multiple reasons including the ease of access, as most people were much more accessible in a work environment and it was hard to talk to Bahamians when they were 'off the clock.' Further, by interviewing them in this environment, when they were around with and interacting with tourists was a good way to not only interview them but also to observe them in their daily interactions with tourists. Often, I met these people by just approaching them, but I also used the snowball effect when some people I talked to would lead me or introduce me to others

they thought I would like to talk to. For the interview guide I utilized with some of the questions I asked please refer to Appendix B.

Further, in this section I would like to talk about the life and living conditions of the people in the Bahamas and the difference between living conditions on the two islands. This is important, because in order to understand the people's reactions and perceptions about tourism how they live and are influenced by tourism shows how it fits into the preexisting tourism theories. I visited two islands during my time in the Bahamas; Nassau, New Providence and Freeport, Grand Bahama Island. The people on both islands had different views on life, and in return different views on tourism.

To begin, we will discuss New Providence, Bahamas. Nassau, New Providence, as discussed above, is a highly-populated island and the capital city of the Bahamas. Connected to Nassau by a bridge is Paradise Island home to luxury resorts four and five star resorts, celebrity houses, and Atlantis, arguably one of the Bahamas number one tourist attractions and revenue generators. With the island being so small, most of its coastline is occupied by tourist attractions, resorts, or hotels. There isn't much coastline left for the people who actually live there and the coastline that is available is often too expensive for Bahamians to purchase. Except for, as one Bahamian I interviewed who said the white Bahamians who lived on the water. He joked with me that "they descend down once a year like vampires and walk through town in their white linens" (Armstrong, 2016). New Providence is considered by most locals to be faster paced and extremely competitive. They often stated in the interviews that people there don't care about each other as much as they do in the family islands (Armstrong, 2016). Those I interviewed whether in Nassau or in Freeport, talked

negatively about Nassau, New Providence (Armstrong, 2016). Many people had family connections in Nassau even if they did not live there, however, even if they had no connections to Nassau the city itself had a reputation that permeated everywhere I went.

Further, New Providence's tourism areas seemed to be more developed than those of Grand Bahama Island. Nassau often promoted Junkanoo culture and almost attempted to sell indigenous values to the tourists by advertising local festivals that more often than not, more tourists than locals often attended. Also since the island is so small, almost all the locals are influenced by cruise tourism, even if they are not influenced by resort tourism. Whereas resort tourists will be more confined to their specific area, cruise tourists are liable to venture off whether on their own or on tours across the island. Since it is so small, these tourists often end up in 'residential zones' or those 'backstage areas' talked about earlier frequently interacting with locals even when the locals themselves are 'off the clock.'

In general, the feel of Grand Bahama Island by my experience and through the eyes of talking to the Bahamians themselves was quite different. Grand Bahama island, though the second most populated island in the Bahamas, contained about a third of the people but is quadruple its size. Due to this, the feeling is much more laid back and as best I can describe more residential than its counterpart. Grand Bahama Island is still not considered a family island by the Bahamians, but many I interviewed said Grand Bahama has the feel of the family islands. As one woman I interviewed mentioned, "here, people care for each other, not like Nassau" (Armstrong, 2016). But, if everyone seemed to like Grand Bahama better, why did many people I talk to wish to go to Nassau or hoped their children could move to Nassau? One lady I interviewed described aptly that in Grand Bahama, its "hard to get a job and it

didn't really start developing as a tourist destination until the last generation" (Armstrong, 2016). For this reason, even though quality of life is considered to be better in Freeport, many people wish to move to Nassau for the potential of opportunity. This will also be discussed further in the chapter.

Freeport, Grand Bahama also experiences less tourism. This contributes to less business and less opportunity for Bahamians who live there which explains their desire to move to Nassau where there are more tourists and opportunities. Many people who live in Freeport desire more tourism and often note that their cruise terminal is out of place and the tourists that do come to Freeport do not spend much time in the city itself contributing to the economy (Armstrong, 2016). Freeport highly experiences the effect of the slash and burn theory as was discussed in Chapter One of this thesis. In Nassau, there were only seven abandoned hotels that I counted, versus in my short time in Freeport I counted fifty-two abandoned or uncompleted hotels and buildings. This is due to the weakened economy of Freeport and the propensity for business to move to Nassau. Further, Freeport has increased its dependency on all-inclusive resorts as many international companies are turning to these. This leads to more revenue for the international company but vastly increased revenue leakage for the Bahamas. During my time visiting Freeport specifically, many tourism locations had pamphlet handouts on investing opportunities for internationals in Freeport. It seems that many international companies have taken advantage of this opportunity as I counted more all-inclusive hotels than regular hotels in Freeport. One such example a resident retired Bahamian informed me was a hotel that was one of the tallest on the island (that her husband helped design the plumbing for when it was first built and flourishing) and yet was

left entirely abandoned right next to an entire international bazaar shopping center that was left abandoned as well (Armstrong, 2016). Business seemed to only be able to develop in close proximity to either the cruise terminal or the all-inclusive hotel areas where it was easily accessible for tourists.

Freeport also possesses a much smaller airport and cruise terminal than Nassau (Nassau possessing the largest cruise terminal in the Caribbean). Freeport experiences increased taxes by the government that helps to push tourism business to the capital city of Nassau. Many Bahamians, however, in both locations seemed to resent the government in some way. Having recently had national elections, most people I interviewed, even those who wanted to see the new government come into power, were disappointed by their actions once acquiring power (Armstrong, 2016). Many locals spoke about how the current government only developed tourism locations and did not put much stock in community infrastructure, such as a developing a sidewalk that ran along the beach from the cruise terminal to the tourist centered fish fry in Nassau (Armstrong, 2016). Further, since the new government came into power, they introduced more import taxes and a VAT tax that increased the prices of goods for everyone on the island. Lastly, many of the Bahamian people feel as though they are constantly being watched by the government. One Bahamian I interviewed said that the punishments if you did anything wrong against tourists was far greater than if you did anything against a fellow Bahamian (Armstrong, 2016). Furthermore, the rules and regulations in place are harsh. One Bahamian I interviewed said it took six months for him to get a license to sell his art next to the cruise terminal (Armstrong, 2016). For this reason, when I asked any Bahamians about the government regulations they often looked around to

make sure no one was listening before telling me of their harsh rules and their dissatisfaction, ignored the subject entirely or said, 'oh no we don't talk about that here' (Armstrong, 2016).

All of these factors of daily Bahamian lives is important to understand the reactions and perceptions that the Bahamians have of tourism and the tourists themselves.

THE PERCEPTIONS

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE TOURISTS

In this section, we will discuss the Bahamians reactions specifically to the tourists themselves as well as their perceptions on the tourists and how they discussed them during interviews. Unlike how they discuss the tourism industry on the whole as positive, when asked about the tourists, the Bahamians would often jump into embarrassing tourist stories that they experienced working in the tourism industry. One example, came from a freelance tour guide that I interviewed who had worked in the industry for over forty years. She mentioned that she one time met a group of students who had gotten so drunk that they lost their friend. They asked around the entire next day but did not find their friend until another Bahamian luckily found him passed out in the back of an alley (Armstrong, 2016). Many local Bahamians were excited to tell these sorts of stories as if they wanted to show that they were better than those who vacationed there.

Further, Bahamians often described the tourists in relation to their cultural difference. As Haobin et al. describes, describing tourists in terms of their cultural differences from themselves actually helps to affirm their social identity (2014). In essence, we are us because we aren't them. This description the Bahamians had for cultural identification also led to

labeling. Boissevain describes this through his theory of six coping strategies; he mentions that some locals will utilize covert resistance in order to deal with the stresses of tourism (Chambers, 2009). Covert resistance in when locals respond to the disparity between themselves and the tourists by

> gossiping about and stereotyping tourist in less than favorable ways, obstructing and deliberately misleading tourists, and displays of rudeness toward tourists. Boissevain maintains that such behaviors help people who are placed in a subordinate position maintain their self-respect (Chambers, 2009, p. 58)

This helps to explain why the Bahamians themselves were so willing to talk to me about their funny tourist experiences and explain their stereotypes to me because they were displaying covert resistance as well as reaffirming their own self-worth (Armstrong, 2016).

Here I would like to talk about some of the categories or stereotypes that the Bahamians talked about in regard to tourists. Many Bahamians spoke about racial divisions such as "the Chinese only drink tea" according to one Bahamian I interviewed and Americans are "conversational" and "pushy" which multiple Bahamians I interviewed mentioned (Armstrong, 2016). There were also two common divisions that almost everyone I interviewed mentioned. This was the division between cruise and hotel tourists.

To begin, cruise tourists were often described as the 'cheapskates' (Armstrong, 2016). Many Bahamians would talk about cruise tourists being rude and cheap and always rushed because of their limited excursion time off the boat. They were less likely to buy authentic crafts and more likely to buy the mass-produced items. One Bahamian I interviewed

mentioned that they even "try to use coupons form the ship and spend cheaper" (Armstrong, 2016). Another Bahamian I interviewed mentioned that cruise tourists are "sort of frustrating because they are always in a rush" (Armstrong, 2016). In this case, when I observed Bahamians interacting with cruise tourists, they often treated them differently. They were often shorter tempered with them and would offer them the base packages of whatever they were selling. To the Bahamians I interviewed, cruise tourists are often associated with younger tourists and families (Armstrong, 2016). For example, in a restaurant when the server walked over to the table on one side of me with young adults she mentioned all their different types of soda and beer, whereas on the other side of me with a table of older folks, the server ran through their more expensive liquors.

Hotel tourists on the other hand were often associated with older folks. The local Bahamians often considered these people to want to know more about the island, the people, and the culture (Armstrong, 2016). They were often willing to venture out a bit more, whether due to their extended time on the island or the propensity that many Bahamians described above as wanting to get to know the culture cannot be determined for sure. It would be interesting to study if cruise tourists were given more time on the island if they would act more like hotel tourists. In essence, is time the only factor in their interactions with the local Bahamians? One local I interviewed stated that the hotel tourists "care more, look more, talk to you and sometimes come back to see you again; they are more interested in the community" (Armstrong, 2016). Whether this is actually the case, this is the way that the local Bahamians perceive these different tourists. Perception is important because these

different perceptions, as mentioned earlier, effect interactions between the tourists and locals and often will dictate the way the locals will act in particular situations.

Interestingly however, in Freeport, almost all tourists were looked at more negatively. This could be due to a number of factors but I feel one pertinent one was the fact that Freeport seemed to have more all-inclusive resorts than Nassau and there were not as many cruise ship tourists that made it into town since it was a forty-five-minute drive to Port Lucaya (the major tourist attraction of the island). Therefore, almost all tourists there were looked down upon in contrast to the tourism industry as a whole which was looked at positively. Many in Freeport mentioned with contempt that most of the tourists were from the cruise ships or stayed "locked up in their hotels and don't want to spend their money out here. They will go back to their hotels for what they need" as one Bahamian mentioned during an interview (Armstrong, 2016). All of these perceptions of tourists are important. From my field research and observations of Bahamians they varied their interactions depending on what stereotype they grouped someone in by first glance and could change their interactions if they decided to move you from one category to another. From personal example, many Bahamians I first approached would start asking me questions about what I wanted to buy or daily specials as if I was a cruise tourists, but quickly changed their attitudes when I began asking them about their lives and telling them about my research (Armstrong, 2016).

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TOURISM

In respects to tourism in general, the overall reaction from most people I interviewed was that they viewed tourism and its industry in a positive light. Out of the forty-seven interviews I conducted, 72% percent of them spoke of tourism positively in contrast to the

16% percent who viewed tourism negatively and the 12% percent who remained neutral on the subject (Armstrong, 2016). But why is that? Why do they talk about tourists themselves negatively and tourism as a whole positively?

Those who spoke of tourism positively almost always referred to it being positive because it 'created jobs,' or 'it's their livelihood,' or 'we rely on it' (Armstrong, 2016). But they used these phrases positively. There were only a few Bahamians who mentioned the positive aspects of working in the tourism industry because they liked meeting people, but most mentioned phrases along the lines of, 'it's good because we couldn't survive without it' (Armstrong, 2016). One particular Bahamian I interviewed stated that "in the Caribbean and particularly in the Bahamas, tourism is the number one industry, that's why we have more taxis and more hotels, that's why it's positive" (Armstrong, 2016). These explanations alone are interesting. It seemed that most Bahamians felt it was positive because they worked in the industry and therefore it was how they made their living. Without it, they would be out of a job and the country as a whole would not be as wealthy of a country as it is today.

Most everyone I talked to, when asked how many members of their family worked in tourism, jumped into a long-recounted story of all their family and extended family members who worked in and around tourism. Only three people I interviewed explicitly stated that they were the only members of their family who worked in tourism (Armstrong, 2016). This would support my observations as well. In many craft stands and businesses, the local Bahamians would have their children there from infant to teenager. Their children would often help make sales to the tourists. When I asked one Bahamian about this, she mentioned, "I am trying to give them the best life. Teaching this…this is the best life" (Armstrong, 2016). Another

Bahamian I interviewed stated, "it gives us something to hope for and something to be better for-for our children" (Armstrong, 2016). In Mason's twenty-year research project on tourism in the Scottish Highlands, he seemed to reach many of the same conclusions I am drawing in my research. He states that "those directly involved in, and hence dependent on, tourism were more likely to be positive about tourism" (2016, p. 50). I found this to be altogether true for my research as well. Those who worked in tourism or had ties to the tourism industry were those who were more positive about it. Tourism is their life, their livelihood. As one Bahamian stated, "the only way we survive, well survive isn't the right word exactly, the only way we function is when we have a flow of [tourists]" (Armstrong, 2016). They think of it positively because it is how they make their living. Those I interviewed who spoke about tourism negatively were either older or in many cases retired.

One other explanation why most of the people who spoke negatively about tourism were older, however, can also align with Doxey's irritation index. As Mason explains,

A number of theories have been put forward regarding the social-cultural impacts of tourism. One of the best known is Doxey's irritation index or irridex…in this theory, advanced in the mid 1970s, Doxey claimed that the resident population, or hosts in a tourist area, would modify their attitudes to visitors over time. Doxey suggested there are a number of stages in the modification of resident attitudes. When tourists first visit, Doxey argued, they will be greeted with euphoria and then, over time, as the tourist numbers grow, attitudes will move through stages of apathy, annoyance and finally to outright aggression towards the visitors" (2016, p. 50)

Basically, increased exposure overtime can lead to increased irritation and dissatisfaction with the industry. Doxey explains this on more of a community or resident population level, but I seemed to find that this also applied to individual people and their reactions and interactions with the tourism industry overtime.

One lady in her sixties that I spoke with had worked in the industry for almost forty years. At the beginning of the interview, she spoke with the regular Bahamian hospitality. She mentioned how much she loved meeting new people and people from different cultures. As we continued our interview however and as I met her several days after that, she began to open up more and begin explaining her grievances with the industry. She revealed to me her personal stereotypes of tourists and began explaining how she felt tourism had ruined the Bahamas. She stated that,

> before tourism there was very little farming, low money, and everyone was nice and helpful. After tourism brought in all the money, everyone is jockeying for a position, the atmosphere in the community is much more competitive and not as nice as it once was (Armstrong, 2016).

Interestingly, even those who had an overall positive outlook on tourism would often mention specific grievances with the industry that perhaps they were not even aware they had. For example, in some quotes from my interviews they would mention that "the tourism industry is lacking and needs help," "tourism is good but I wish we didn't rely on something that was so up and down," and "tourism is bad because we are so dependent on it and it is not regular so it hurts the business and economy" even if they would say the overall industry was good (Armstrong, 2016). It was as if there was always a but… It seemed as though the Bahamians

subconsciously recognized the pitfalls of the industry but were, as discussed above, groomed for it in some cases since birth. As well as the fact that there are hardly any other options for job opportunities or education outside of tourism.

One of the most fascinating occurrences was when asked about tourism almost a sixth of those interviewed would state, "tourism is our number one industry" almost as if it was rehearsed or ingrained into their subconscious (Armstrong, 2016). And perhaps it is. As one Bahamian I interviewed mentioned, "tourism is part of Bahamian culture" (Armstrong, 2016). In many cases she is right, their unique culture developed alongside of gaining independence and the vastly growing tourism industry in their country.

Another fact about the Bahamians that I found interesting was along with their positive feelings about tourism, they also spoke about how they wanted to increase the tourism on the island. This seems to go against what Usher & Kerstetter proposed when they stated that increased numbers of tourists and a higher tourist to local ratio would decrease levels of tolerance (2014). Gmelch also mentioned that "how locals feel about tourists depends largely on the sheer numbers of people visiting. Small numbers are easily tolerated and may be enjoyed…But too many tourists can overwhelm locals and produce considerable indifference, if not hostility and antagonism" (2012, p. 25). In contrast to both of these authors statements, the Bahamian people wanted more tourism and more tourists. Why was this the case? One Bahamian helped to illuminate this by stating "I would support increased tourism because when we don't have enough tourism to make a living its bad, our people depend on it to survive" (Armstrong, 2016). Again, it seems that it is dependent on the dependency, and the intertwined nature that tourism has in the very culture of the Bahamian people. The

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Bahamians realize that the more tourists they have, the more revenue they bring in. Further, the pitfalls of the industry being unreliable was a factor that propelled many Bahamians to want more tourists to visit. As one Bahamian I interviewed mentioned, "the ship days are only three days a week, but we wish they were everyday" (Armstrong, 2016). These 'ship days,' were the days when they would generally have three or more cruise ships in port bringing in more tourists to spend money on the island.

Further, many Bahamians inquired about my research. I had multiple Bahamians ask me if my research would help bring in more tourists or if I could talk to the government about bringing more tourists to the island (Armstrong, 2016). When I would ask what they wanted to change about tourism or whether they supported it, they would only mention they wanted more tourists and argued that the Bahamas marketing campaign was terrible (Armstrong, 2016). They stated it almost exclusively featured the Atlantis resort so when the tourists arrived, they were often upset that the entire island was not, in fact, like Atlantis.

REACTIONS TO TOURISM

All of these discussions with the locals, illuminated how they felt about tourism. But often, their actions did not follow their words. As described above, many Bahamians would stereotype tourists, they would often talk about tourists negatively amongst themselves or in cases of personal experience, harass tourists (or me who looked like a tourist) that were outside of tourism areas. As one Bahamian I interviewed explained, "tourists don't leave 'touristville' and most people aren't happy when they do" (Armstrong, 2016). These cases could be simple verbal harassments and name calling to physical aggression that I had an unfortunate personal experience with. This animosity was much different than that displayed

by the Bahamian people when interacting with them in 'touristville.' Why was this the case? One Bahamians helped to explain by saying, "everyone is friendly in the Bahamas because we have to be. Because tourism and hospitality are so important to our community and our survival" (Armstrong, 2016).

Even though these events seemed to counter what the Bahamian people were stating in my interviews and contrary to their wish to bring in more tourists, it did align with Dogan's forms of adjustment theory and Boissevan's six coping strategies. Dogan lists multiple adjustment mechanisms that locals employ against tourism whether conscious or not. Some that are pertinent to this research include 'retreating' and 'boundary maintenance.' As Chambers helps illuminate, retreating is when locals will actively try to avoid tourists (2009). As mentioned above, due to Nassau's small size and large population with the added number of tourism visitors, it is easy to see how some locals can get frustrated when they feel that they cannot get away from tourists. Further, boundary maintenance explains how communities support and encourage tourism but attempt to create a boundary for tourism in an effort to separate local life from tourist activities. Although Nassau attempts this through its strategic placement of tourist attractions or by a literal wall that separates the tourist areas from 'the ghetto' as one Bahamian called it, the lines become blurred. Tourists easily wander from 'touristville' into 'the ghetto' without recognizing the distinct difference. It is easy to understand why local residents would become agitated, annoyed, or even hostile when tourists enter some of the only areas they are able to retreat on the small island. Boissevan describes similar reactions to tourism (Chambers, 2009). He describes covert resistance, which was discussed above, and also 'hiding' and 'fencing' which almost correlates directly with

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Dogan's forms of adjustment 'retreating' and 'boundary maintenance' listed above. Boissevan further illuminates two other strategies including 'organized protest' and 'aggression' which can be seen in the examples listed above as well.

CONCLUSION

This chapter begins by illuminating the people of the Bahamas. It also breaks down the people I interviewed in regard to their occupations for this research. It explains the perceptions that the Bahamian people have about tourists specifically and tourism more broadly. From the research, it is gathered that these two perceptions are different, as the Bahamians perceptions on tourists individually are more cynical but they possess a more positive outlook on tourism as a whole. The question was asked why is this the case? From some of my interviews, I began to discover that it was because they relied on tourism for their income, so therefore they would want more tourism and react positively to it. This aligns with some aforementioned research on tourism specifically the research of Mason (2016).

However, the reactions of locals to tourism often countered what they were stating. I witnessed instances of labeling and talking about negatively tourists behind their back. As well as isolated instances of hostility, harassment and violence against tourists. Wilson perhaps best described these actions I witnessed in relation to tourism in the Caribbean when he stated that the locals "understand that tourism is economically important but act out, perhaps involuntarily, social attitudes hostile to the industry" (1996, p. 96). Overall, what they say is not necessarily what they do but through my research it seems that from the Bahamians I spoke to many want to see tourism increase to bring in more revenue with the hope of increasing their quality of life.

CHAPTER THREE: THE IMPACT OF TOURISM AND THE COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I discussed the Bahamian's perspectives on tourists and the tourism industry more broadly and the impacts of tourism on the individual lives of the Bahamians. In this chapter, I will be discussing the impacts of tourism on the wider Bahamian community. This chapter will evaluate the effects of tourism on the community attempt to highlight the intrinsic relationship between tourism and the environment in the Bahamas. This chapter will challenge the dominant narrative and socially constructed view of the Bahamas as a 'paradise' and will demonstrate that the tourism industry does not present as perfect a picture as it would appear. By viewing the situation of the tourism industry in the Bahamas in a more critical light, the chapter will answer the question of: what are the underlying impacts of tourism on the Bahamian community and why are they important?

By looking at the issue with a critical and interdisciplinary lens, the participant observation and interviews I conducted in the Bahamas begins to tie together in an interconnected web. In particular, for this research political ecology becomes an extremely useful framework as Robbins states to examine what problems might occur due to issues of control over 'access, aesthetics, and landscape production' (2012, p. 177). Tourism practices are often intrinsically tied with political ecology motifs including conservation and control, identity, the commodification of nature, and the social construction of nature which, in the Bahamas is no different (Shelton, 2016). This chapter is important because it examines the impacts of tourism on the community level. Tourism at the community level is a pervasive force that can permeate through all levels of society. As Gmelch states, "tourism exerts a

greater, more pervasive influence on the countries and cultures of the world than any imperial power ever has" (2012, p. 10). The powerful and infamous ability that tourism has to potentially change a community down to its very identity can be alarming.

This chapter will evaluate the impacts of tourism on the community within three different disciplines including from the environmental, sociocultural, and economic impacts. Together, by evaluating the impacts of tourism on different aspects of society, the chapter will prove how the tourism industry is more complex and its impacts more pervasive than what is presented in the dominant image and narrative of islands destinations. This chapter will define how tourism has many spheres of influence that impact the population and how it can create lasting effects on the wider population of the country.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Throughout the tourism literature, there is often a connection between the tourism industry and nature as many tourism activities find their foundation in nature. In the Bahamas, the connection between tourism and nature is highly prevalent and most of the tourism activities in the region involve nature in at least some capacity. The region sees millions of tourism arrivals every year who are coming to the Bahamas to experience the 'paradise' so often advertised and portrayed in every television commercial, online ad, and calendar. But how does the relationship between tourism and the environment affect the community?

In the Bahamas, almost all tourism is some form of nature tourism, revolves around nature tourism, or is a subset of nature tourism. Unless you come to the Bahamas and exclusively stay at the hotel or go to the casino, you'd be hard pressed not to find yourself

immersed in nature at some point during your trip. Many of the tourism experiences offered in the Bahamas revolve around the ocean such as boating, fishing, snorkeling, sunbathing, scuba diving, water sports, and animal experiences such as dolphin, stingray or sea lion encounters. These are often offered as excursions through hotels or cruise ships. These experiences fall under the nature tourism category and all are dependent on the environment. The tourism in the Bahamas is designated as 3S or sun, sand and sea tourism (Weaver, 2007; Daye, 2008). 3S tourism neatly falls under nature tourism and 'is often associated with large-scale and mass resort tourism' (Weaver, 2007, p. 21). This is unquestionably the case in the Bahamas, where most of their revenue as a country derives from tourism and they are the largest driver of tourism in the Caribbean basin (Weaver, 1994). Although some of these activities could be considered ecotourism, such as snorkeling they are not exclusively ecotourism as they are not always conducted in a sustainable way. As a couple of examples, during my field research I encountered snorkeling excursions in which tourists would step on the reef with their fins which could lead to increased degradation of the reefs which is already a prevalent issue in the Caribbean basin region.

In the Bahamas, there are competing social constructions of nature between locals, tourists, and the tourism industry. From a political ecology perspective, it is important to explore how nature is viewed and what affect this will have on how the environment is utilized by differing stakeholders. Nature in the Bahamas is often viewed from the standpoint of commodification. Many Bahamians are dependent on nature through either fishing or tourism. Their revenue and livelihood is essentially based off the sea. Whether by income earned through conch fishing, for example, or from the tourism revolving around the ocean.

For many Bahamians, the ocean is just part of life. As one Bahamian who worked as a tour guide said, "the sea is life, and our lives depend on it" (Armstrong, 2016). Later in the interview the same Bahamian said, "my money comes from the sea" (Armstrong, 2016). The Bahamians are dependent on nature and therefore socially view the environment, and in particular the sea, different from tourists. To them, the sea is life and nature is something with which to make their living. Chambers explains how these different social constructions of nature can come into conflict where "the local population associated with a natural environment might, for example, be experiencing the place as a frontier. Here, the battle for human survival is uppermost in their minds" (2009, p. 76). In contrast, the tourists are viewing the sea from a relaxation and recreational perspective and are looking for something different in the sea than the locals. While the locals might be looking for opportunities that can provide for their families, the tourists are looking for the pristine and idyllic vacation space where they can consume the natural in a reactional setting. Another stakeholder in nature is the tourism industry, who also view nature from a commodification standpoint. However, since these stakeholders hold the majority of the power, they make the key decisions in regard to how and where nature should be commodified.

The Bahamians rely on the environment, as does the tourism industry as a whole. In many cases, this has a dual effect. The Bahamians want to keep the environment clean and pristine to draw in the tourists. Many of the beaches are groomed and there are multiple trash pickups that occur in the morning hours on most of tourism laden beaches. However, the upkeep of the beaches is not consistent throughout the Bahamas, and more attention is often paid to beaches with more tourists.

When viewing the beaches at Paradise Island in New Providence, Bahamas, a large scale, international tourism resort megaplex (which one Bahamian called "the Disneyland of the Bahamas" (Armstrong, 2016)) versus local public beaches, the results were astounding. The tourism industry in many areas of the Bahamas attempts to match the 'western imaginary' of the Bahamas that is advertised and that Chambers describes as "ideals of remoteness, the search for paradise on earth, and cultural as well as erotic intrigues" (2009, p. 79). This western imaginary of remoteness and paradise on earth is what the Western tourists seek when they come to the Caribbean.

At Paradise Island, the beaches were pristine and matched the dominant image and Western imaginary socially constructed by many of the tourists who visit the Bahamas. The sands were white, the water was clear, and the beach provided numerous water sport activities to complete the tourist's experience (See Appendix C). In contrast, public beaches or shore side areas that were not for tourism use often looked 'untamed' with 'excess seaweed' and 'more coral to step on' (Armstrong, 2016) as some of the tourists and locals interviewed mentioned (See Appendix D). This discrepancy played into the social construction of nature by the dominant image of the Bahamas as 'pristine, untouched, white sandy beaches for miles.' In order to attract tourists, and especially high class clientele that the Atlantis brings in, the tourism industry strives to make the dominant image a reality.

In order to achieve this image Western imagined paradise, the large resorts such as Atlantis continually groom their beaches. They continually plow the beach and clean up excess seaweed every night to match the image that the tourists who come to the island have in their minds. But, does this grooming of the beach and surrounding waters have detrimental

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effects? For example, coral itself is vital to tourism as coral reefs are needed to repopulate the sand on the beach (Gmelch, 2012), but as one employee at Atlantis mentioned, they must ship in sand to fill the beaches at Paradise Island (Armstrong, 2016). Is the focus more on meeting the Western imaginary of what the Bahamas should look like without regards to the long term environmental impacts? Although they frequently have to ship in sand does not necessarily mean that the grooming or tourism activity is the cause of the degradation to the reefs, but it is something that has not necessarily been studied and could have intertwined effects.

The different social constructions of nature, and in particular the tourists view of nature in the Bahamas, influences the need to attempt to meet the Western imaginary for the tourists so that they will want to continually come to the Bahamas. Although the Atlantis resort on Paradise Island was one example, there were many throughout the Bahamas that show tourist areas attempting to portray the dominant image of what a vacation getaway to the Bahamas *should* look like. To further address this image, locals are often barred from resort beach property to attempt to preserve the pristine image of the beach as being unspoiled by the local population. As Chambers describes, "competition for the best beaches can easily lead to displacement of local inhabitants and threatens traditional means of livelihood" (2009, p. 78) and in regard to the Bahamas, the dominant and powerful stakeholders are not the locals themselves but the tourism industry. Therefore, in the Bahamas locals are often restricted from private resort or residential properties that take up the invaluable positions along the best areas of the coastline.

Advertising, as discussed, often presents an unachievable image for the tourism industry to achieve. As Weaver explains, "marketing reinforces this Eurocentric dominance

when it emphasizes travel to 'remote' and 'unspoiled' destinations where 'primitive' cultures with their 'traditional' and 'authentic' lifestyle eagerly wait to be 'discovered' by the intrepid white tourist-explorer" (2007, p. 132). Many times, when tourists arrive in the Caribbean their dominant image of the 'pristine beaches' will be challenged. Although the tourism industry strives to present the dominant image of the pristine untouched beaches shown in advertisement, this is not always the image that greets the tourists when they arrive. Many beaches along the cruise terminal as described above, look nothing like the beaches on Paradise Island which are groomed to the standards the tourists expect. And often locals, especially in Nassau, will utilize the beaches next to the cruise terminal spoiling the pristine and unspoiled Eurocentric image as described by Weaver above.

In the tourism areas there are, as mentioned above, a plethora of marine activities for a tourist to partake. Nearly all tourism areas on the islands are situated along the coastlines and appeal to the sea, sand and sun mentality that tourists come to the Bahamas to experience. Not only, however, do the hotels and resorts offer a myriad of marine activities for tourists to participate in, but cruise ships also offer what are called 'excursions' for tourists to choose. These excursions are 'add ons' to the cruise experience that allow tourists to take part in activities off the boat. I was able to attend multiple excursions in the Bahamas and also interviewed several tour guide/excursion operators working the industry. From the findings, the excursions are often unmonitored or scantly regulated. Although many excursions will give 'safety spiels' at the beginning of the activity, the safety instructions given are not enforced. One excursion stood out in particular for its contradicting rules versus the level of

enforcement. On Eight Mile Rock, Grand Bahama Island I participated in a snorkeling excursion.

To begin, I was brought to the location by my own tour guide. The location was a well-structured day resort which had food and drink stands, water craft rental, bathrooms and changing rooms, and a covered picnic area. The tour guide then turned me over to the operators of the area who gave a mandatory spiel about not feeding the fish, not grabbing wildlife, not stepping on the coral and other ecologically important safety instructions. The only problem was although they claimed this was mandatory before snorkeling, I saw many tourists skip the educational spiel and the company had no way of monitoring which of its guests received the information or not. After this, we were released to our own devices to go into the sea. The area where we were had rough tides, but a rocky barrier that allowed a coral reef to grow. However, the coral reef in the area was extremely degraded. The reef was almost devoid of color, there was hardly any fish, and they even had to set up concrete artificial reefs which when I asked one of the safety spielers about it said, "it's what brings in the fish" (Armstrong, 2016). Further, although the tourists were given a safety spiel, I saw almost all rules given being violated in some way or another. Tourists were feeding the fish bread to try to draw them over, stepping on the coral, and aggravating wildlife, including sea turtles. So why is this story important?

The islands of the Bahamas revolve around marine tourism. This includes any and all tourism that revolves around the sea including such activities as snorkeling, SCUBA diving, water sports and swimming. This particular instance, shows both the impact that tourism can have on the environment and the greater impact that it can have on the wider country. It is

obvious that the tourism at Eight Mile Rock was impacting the environment. Although there is no comparison to what the environment looked like before the advent of tourism in the area, the employee at the area mentioning that the artificial reefs were there to bring in fish shows that they had to take measures into the hands of man in order to draw wildlife back to the location (Armstrong, 2016). Also, the color of the coral was not healthy and vibrant but dilapidated and dull. If the effects of tourism can be seen this influentially in this location, imagine the wider implications across the islands in tourism heavy spheres of influence. Although the degradation of the environment in the Bahamas is not impacted *purely* by tourism, the effects by the industry are noticeable and pervasive across the islands.

The degrading impact of tourism activities puts the island of the Bahamas in a precarious position. To begin, they need tourism to survive. Tourism is their livelihood and without it, very little revenue would flow into the country. However, their tourism depends on the environment and its ideal condition. So, what is the solution? Do you halt tourism in a specific area, like Eight Mile Rock for example, to regrow and revitalize the environment? But if you do that, you lose the immediate revenues that can be made from the attraction. Or, do you let tourism continue in an area being degraded by its activities until it is no longer suitable for the wildlife, which in turn ends its value as a revenue producing attraction? The way forward is not a simple one, but whether the issue is addressed presently or in the future, it is an issue that cannot be ignored.

Another difficulty created by the relationship between tourism and the environment is the effect on the population during economic downturns. The Bahamians who work in tourism are often just making ends meet. They generally live with their family and extended

family in a small house, and are dependent on the revenue that tourism brings in. As one

Bahamian who worked at the Straw Market stated, "there are some days I go home with

nothing" depending on how the tourism flows are that specific day (Armstrong, 2016). The

Bahamians that are dependent on tourism therefore become a marginalized portion of the

population. Their lives become fragile, and dependent on perfect conditions in order to

function and survive. One Bahamian I spoke with explained how he had been kicked out of a

beach he normally frequented to sell his paintings because it changed hands into a new

privatized resort (Armstrong, 2016). This is one effect of the competition for power and

control for local resources and land, that affects those dependent on the land for their

livelihood. This man now had to find another, less populous beach in order to sell his shell

paintings. Another impact is the effect of economic downturns and natural disasters on the

population.

The aftermath of natural disasters is noticeably pervasive throughout many levels and

segments of the society. As is stated throughout much of the political ecology literature, there

is no such thing as a natural disaster and in the Bahamas, as with most island locations, this

can be seen as its effects can be particularly disastrous. Although most island destinations

already have difficulties with waste management, this increases ten-fold after hurricanes as

they have a dramatic increase in trash in a very short period of time. There are other strains on

the island as well, due specifically to the pervasive effects of tourism. To explain I will use

the example of a retired women who lives in Freeport, Bahamas. Although we talked often

during my field research, we have also continued correspondence after my return to the

United States. She was explaining to me that in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew (a

September, 2016 hurricane), she still had her windows boarded and busted two months later. Although the government said they would aid the Bahamian citizens in repairing their homes, she said that the majority of the aid so far has gone to rebuilding the tourism resorts and buildings first. But why was this the case? Why not help your own citizens first?

The answer is due to the Bahamas dependency on tourism. In the aftermath of a hurricane the Bahamian government focuses first on rebuilding the tourism industry in order to bring revenue flowing back into their country. Although this might seem appalling at first glance, in actuality, the government is doing what it can with a difficult situation. If they aided the local Bahamians with their homes first, they would have their homes rebuilt to standard, but no way to make money in order to feed their families. So, although the local Bahamians are dealing with the aftermath for longer than they wish, they have been able to bring tourism and through that revenue a way for the Bahamians to make a livelihood. This example exemplifies how large portions of the population are marginalized. Weaver possibly addresses this the most eloquently as he states that "it is a truism that the costs and benefits of ecotourism (as with all other forms of tourism) are never equally distributed within a destination and that resentment can result when certain groups or individuals perceive that they are bearing too many costs or not deriving enough benefits" (2007. P. 132). As portrayed in the story above in the case of the Bahamas this statement seems hauntingly accurate. Although those Bahamians who are entitled with the means to fix their own properties after the hurricane have already done so, those who are dependent on tourism or society continue to be impacted.

Tourism and nature are closely intertwined in the Bahamian society. In order to bring in the tourists, they need to meet the dominant Western image the tourists expect. They need to provide activities and opportunities for them to participate in the full sea, sand and sun experience. In essence, tourism is a driver of the environmental practices throughout much of the Bahamas. Due to this, large portions of the population are pushed aside behind more powerful stakeholders to access to natural resources and areas.

SOCIOCULTURAL IMPACTS

Along with environmental aspects, the impact that tourism has on the Bahamas can be seen through the sociocultural segment of society. As discussed, in the Bahamas tourism is a pervasive force throughout all levels and portions of society. If you are one of the 267,000 people living on the 21x7 sq. miles of Nassau, Bahamas, the nation's capital and the most largely populated area (CIA Factbook, 2016); it is highly likely that you will run into at least one tourist or tourism related activity or area each day. Although most of the tourism activities revolve around the coastlines throughout all the Bahamian islands, with Nassau being as small as it is and having the majority of the tourism activity in the Bahamas, it is easy to have a happenchance meeting with tourists in the interior of the island. Other research has also explored the pervasive nature of tourism throughout other societies such as Gmelch's research about the Barbadian people. He explains that

> privacy has been lost in villages and neighborhoods near tourist attractions. Along the routes traveled by visitors, locals may feel the intrusion as tour buses and tourists in their cars gawk at people. The tourists, of course, are interested in seeing the "living culture"... It is authentic, unlike the contrived things and events that comprise most of

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their touring activities and tourist attractions. But many locals tire of being

photographed and of being asked endless questions (2012, p. 25)

This is similar to the effects tourism has had on the Bahamian population. The question

presented is what affect does the inescapable tourism industry have on the Bahamian

community? And how do they process and deal with its impacts?

Tourism has had a stirring impact on the people of the Bahamas down to their very

core. The very identity of the Bahamian people has become intrinsically tied to tourism. I

heard repetitive phrases from the Bahamians I interviewed such as "we are a customer

oriented people," "tourism is our livelihood," and "our lives revolve around the sea"

(Armstrong, 2016). These seemed to be thematic throughout the interviews and shed light

onto an important fact that the Bahamian identity is changing. Older Bahamians who barely

remember a time before the booming growth of mass tourism in the Bahamas said that the

Bahamas is not how it used to be. One older lady I interviewed mentioned that "the Bahamas

used to be nice, the people used to be nicer, now it's dog eat dog. Tourism has changed who

we are" (Armstrong, 2016). Another younger Bahamian I interviewed even said that tourism

"has made the [Bahamian] people want American things and makes them be more American

than Bahamian" (Armstrong, 2016) But why is this change important and why is it

happening?

The identity of the people of the Bahamas has become oriented around the tourism

industry and all that comes with it. Identity is an important aspect of any culture. It is how

people view themselves. Often identity is comparative, such that 'I am not 'A' therefore I am

'B'' (Mason, 2016). But more and more in Bahamian society, the comparison is becoming

increasingly more intermixed and the two sides, or the 'us versus them,' are losing their

distinct qualities and molding into one. Much of the Bahamian identity has become

intermixed with American or sometimes even other cultural values from other areas of the

Caribbean. This emulation is explained through both the demonstration effect and cultural

homogenization.

The demonstration effect is described by Mason to be when inhabitants of a

destination begin to imitate the activities and culture of a visiting, more developed country

(2016). In the case of the Bahamas, since their largest clientele for tourism is the United

States, they are often seen imitating American behaviors, speech, and enjoying American

activities. For example, all sorts of American businesses such as McDonalds, Starbucks and

KFC have cropped up throughout the Bahamas and are increasingly popular. KFC in

particular, is extremely popular among most of the population, with a significant number of

cars on the islands promoting the company with bumper stickers. To further this

demonstration effect, there has been actual cultural homogenization where the cultures of the

United States and the Bahamas have actually melded together. In fact, many of the Bahamians

I interviewed had family or friends in the United States and will make frequent trips between

the two countries. The homogenization for these two countries is actually not surprising. The

Bahamas is extremely close to the United States in terms of proximity, share a currency, and

speak the same language. Further, since the Bahamas is the tourism driver of the Caribbean

and the overwhelming majority of its tourism comes from the United States (Daye et al.,

2008), it is no surprise that the two countries have begun a melding process. But why does

this meld process matter?

Although the Bahamas has adopted many American cultural practices and is becoming more Americanized as many Bahamians I interviewed stated, this is not reciprocated, however in the United States (Armstrong, 2016). Perhaps some would argue that this change is negative. After all, tourism is often touted as a relic from the age of colonialism, and the less developed and tourism dependent country is the one adopting most of the practices and culture of the developed and hegemonically powerful country. This is not an uncommon experience of tourism and one that has been described in the literature as reinforcing the 'feelings of servility and cultural inferiority' (Wilson, 1996, p. 97). Although this can be argued, it seems that the Bahamian people and especially the younger generation do not feel this is the case. This could be in part because tourism has such an influence on their lives and they are so dependent on its revenue that they accept the change that is occurring, but it also could be that the world in itself is changing and the idea of the intermixing of cultures is becoming increasingly accepted by society especially in younger generations.

Although tourism may be the driver for unconscious identity change overtime, tourism is also the conscious driver of identity change in order to produce revenue. As Lepp and Harris describe this seems to align with cultural homogenization, this is the idea of multiple regions or destinations being lumped into one identity and cultural representation to the rest of the world (2008). The Bahamians almost monopolize on the fact that much of the Caribbean is considered to be culturally homogenous to much of the Western world. Since tourism revenue is how the majority of Bahamians make their living, they continue to find more ways in which they can increase that revenue. This has resulted in changing the culture and identity presented to tourists to meet the dominant image the tourists expect from the Bahamians.

Many Bahamians stated about tourists, especially cruise tourists, that they often didn't know the difference between the Caribbean islands, rarely knew which Caribbean island they had docked at, and viewed all islands of the Caribbean as Jamaica (Armstrong, 2016).

Through my research, I began to notice that many of the products in the Bahamas were Jamaican inspired in that they often had a Jamaican color scheme, featured Jamaican style art, or featured Jamaican artists, in particular Bob Marley. When I questioned a multitude of Bahamians about this, one Bahamian who worked a stand outside of the cruise terminal summed up the problem perfectly by saying that they made things and bought things to sell this way because "that is what the tourists want. That is what they think they know, so that is what they get" (Armstrong, 2016). Another Bahamian who worked in the straw market stated that "most of them [the tourists] don't even know the Bahamas and Jamaica are different countries" (Armstrong, 2016). I found this exceptionally striking. These Bahamians, who have their own unique art, dance, music, and cultural identity were *altering* the identity they presented to tourists to fit the dominant image of what the tourists expected. Why? Because according to the Bahamians I interviewed if they sold things that were exclusive to the Bahamas, that featured Bahamian culture and colors and music and art, they "would not make as many sales" (Armstrong, 2016). When you arrive at the cruise terminal in the *Bahamas* you are greeted with a reggae band singing Bob Marley and vendors selling black, green and yellow goods (which relates to the flag of Jamaica not the Bahamas see Appendix E). Perhaps Burac sums up this effect best when he explains,

> The sun, warm sea, white sand, palm trees and creole way of life are no longer enough, by themselves, to attract visitors. With the development of the tourism

potential in a large number of temperate and tropical islands, easily accessible by

plane from the major potential client centres, each destination has found out that it

must do its utmost not to take competition for granted (1996, p. 71)

The fact that the Bahamian society feels the need to present a different cultural

identity to tourists shows the huge power and control that tourism has over this heavily

tourism dependent society. There have been attempts to revitalize Bahamian culture through

festivals such as the Junkanoo festival, and through nationalistic ads from local beer

companies such as Sands and Kalik; however, these festivals are often run during the heat of

the tourist season to also monopolize off the greater flow of incoming capital and the beers

are also heavily advertised to tourists. Although identity is an integral part of any community,

the Bahamian cultural identity is presented as adaptable to the wants of the tourists.

Another prevalent social issue I found during my research was that the majority of the

population was limited to jobs in the tourism industry. From my interviews with the

Bahamians, they informed me that there were hardly any jobs available for 'regular people'

outside of the tourism industry (Armstrong, 2016). I asked them what jobs they were likely to

see when they opened the classified ads in the newspaper and overwhelmingly they responded

you would only see tourism jobs listed there (Armstrong, 2016). The people are essentially

forced into the industry and groomed for the industry at a young age as the parents know that

it is where their children will have their best chance at success. These are the people who are

hit harder by any international economic trends and any types of natural disasters. They are

further marginalized through the unequal distribution of financial and social benefits.

Power and control is also a prevalent issue throughout the Caribbean. Locals are often barred access from the best beaches and displaced to accommodate the growing need for more hotels and resorts. The tourism industries and the government hold the power in the country. The majority of locals are often forced into minimum wage jobs in the tourism sector with little opportunity for self-development. They often have to have the means to travel outside of the country for a good education and opportunities for advancement. Gmelch, for example, found a similar theme in during his research in Barbados. He highlights that, "locals are denied access to their own beaches, the best jobs go to non-nationals or those with the lightest skin, and humble service roles and low-wage jobs predominate the tourism sector" (2012, p. 10). This description of society is one I found similarly in the Bahamas, and one that many local Bahamians express antagonism towards.

With all of these touristic issues permeating every facet of society, how do you cope with tourism and adjust to its changes at the community level? In the Bahamas, an almost two-fold initiative is undertaken where the Bahamians will attempt to embrace tourism and also shut it out. On one hand, the Bahamas attempts to revitalize culture through cultural festivals and nationalistic advertisements. However, these attempts at cultural revitalization are also initiated during tourism intensive periods of the year. Contrasting this effort, many areas of the Bahamas utilize what Dogan calls 'boundary maintenance.' This is where "a community actively encourages tourism but also tries to maintain a strict line between activities related to tourism and those related to the maintenance of local social structure" (Chambers, 2009, p. 57). This 'boundary maintenance' in the Bahamas is often controlled by the purposeful placement of tourists and in some cases literal boundaries. In Nassau, New

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Providence, Bahamas there is a literal wall dividing the area of 'touristville' as one local referred to it from the residential area, or as he referred to it, 'the ghetto' (Armstrong, 2016). Although 'the wall' was a relic from the colonial days and the old battlements, it has also become a dividing line between tourist activity and day to day life for Bahamians. Tourists will sometimes venture beyond 'the wall.' Some will not notice the difference and pass unknowingly into residential areas but others will quickly retreat back to 'touristville,' for they are greeted with slum living, degrading infrastructure and crime, breaking their Western imaginary of what paradise should look like. In Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, Bahamas, the boundary maintenance is even easier since it is four times the size of Nassau. Since the cruise terminal in Freeport is almost 45 minutes to any tourist attraction, tourists that venture out on excursions off of the boat must be driven anywhere. Therefore, they are dropped in tourism designated areas and their presence is more easily regulated.

The need for coping mechanisms comes from the deeply rooted and unescapable influences that tourism has on the social aspects of Bahamian life. Tourism has affected the Bahamians on many different social levels, but also has widespread economic impacts for the entire community.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The myriad of social effects that tourism has on the Bahamian community are widespread and engrained in the very fabric of society. Tourism also has widespread economic effects on the community of the Bahamas and interrupts and affects the daily lives of Bahamians. This section will begin by explaining the extent of the dependency the Bahamas has on tourism and how this impacts the community. Further, this section will

explain why the tourism industry is an unreliable source of income and why this affects the Bahamian community as whole.

To begin, a small explanation of Bahamian tourism industry is needed. In the Caribbean, tourism accounts for almost one-third of all regional exports (Daye et al., 2008, p. 1). As was mentioned earlier, the majority of Caribbean, and specifically Bahamian tourism, revolves around the environment with tourists come to the Bahamas to experience the 3S tourism industry of sea, sand and sun. According to the CIA Factbook, "tourism together with tourism driven construction and manufacturing accounts for approximately 60% of GDP and directly or indirectly employs half of the [Bahamian] archipelago's labor force" (2016). In fact, a sixth of the Bahamians interviewed mentioned, unprompted, that tourism was the Bahamas' number one industry as if it had been rehearsed (Armstrong, 2016). These figures and the statements by the Bahamians are honestly astounding. These statistics help to explain why the majority of jobs available to 'regular' Bahamians are in the tourism industry and numerically highlights how astounding of an impact tourism has on the overall economy and by extent the society of the Bahamas. The large amount of tourism revenue has grown overtime as the Bahamas switched from being an economy almost entirely dependent on agriculture to one overwhelmingly dependent on tourism. Multiple scholars discuss the dependency of the Caribbean on tourism and its impact (Daye et al., 2008; Weaver, 1994). Daye mentions that the statistics "underscore the overdependence of many destinations on the fortunes of the industry…many of these [Caribbean] countries rely on tourism as a lead sector to stimulate growth and development" (2008, p. 3). Weaver highlights the pervasive nature of tourism in multiple small island destinations in the Caribbean as he explains that "the relative

economic contribution of international tourism among these smaller island destinations ranges from 10 percent of the GNP in Guadeloupe and Martinique to 50 percent or more in the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, Anguilla and Antigua" (1994, p. 159). What is astounding being that this statistic was from his research conducted in 1994, but the trend has been increasing throughout the Caribbean, which can be shown by the Bahamas revenue accounting for approximately 60% of the GDP as evidenced above. But why is this important for the Bahamian community?

Out of the 47 people interviewed 10 people specifically mentioned that they "rely on tourism to survive" (Armstrong, 2016). It is important to break down this statement. These people were saying if they did not have tourism, they would not be able to make a living and provide for themselves and/or their family. This has huge implications for the wider society of the Bahamas. They have become so dependent on tourism that ten people, without prompt, mentioned that without tourism they would not survive. Other Bahamians mentioned that on days when tourism was low or the ships were not in, they would bring home nothing (Armstrong, 2016). That means, for example, an entire ten-hour day of work was put in at the Straw Market and they came home with no money to provide for their families. The impact of the dependency on tourism is alarming and is further highlighted by the fact that most Bahamians cannot get a job outside of the tourism industry even if they wanted to. Most of the Bahamians I talked to and most of the Bahamians I observed at work would bring their children with them to their jobs if they could (Armstrong, 2016). Whether it be selling conch shells or handmade items on the beach, at the fish fry or at the Straw Market, they were grooming their children for the industry. They were grooming their children to *survive*. The

marginalized people working in tourism have no other options presented to them and therefore they must rely on an industry which is not dependent and can disappear unexpectedly for a myriad of reasons such as natural disasters or international economic downturns.

The reliance on tourism was a dominant narrative throughout the interviews I conducted and overheard in conversation throughout the islands. One Bahamian interviewed mentioned that "the Bahamas needs tourism because it brings in money." Another mentioned "we are financially dependent on tourism." And a tour guide stated, "tourism equals more jobs equals more money" (Armstrong, 2016). All of these statements show that the Bahamians are self-aware of their dependency, and yet, there are no other options available for them.

The dependency of the Bahamas did not, however, develop quickly and out of thin air. As discussed earlier, the dependency in this unreliable industry is a first world/third world dichotomy that has survived since the age of colonialism and presents itself in a form of neocolonialism. Many neocolonialism examples revolve around the dependence of third world or less industrialized countries on those developed countries and often previous colonial powers. Both Weaver and Chambers discuss this dependency as it relates to the idea of neocolonialism in the Caribbean (2007; 2009). Weavers mentions that ecotourism and therefore tourism "appears to be a form of neocolonialism that entails a high degree of dependency on the wealthy countries for funding, markets, capital, skills and knowledge" (2007, p. 132). Chambers also explains this dependency in the Caribbean and states, "tourism has been characterized as a form of neocolonialism, serving to replicate many of the social

and economic relationships of a racist past. Factors such as these can have important implications for workers' attitudes toward tourism employment" (2009, p. 42). In regard to Chamber's statements, many of these effects were seen prevalent throughout the social structure of the Bahamas.

Also, important to note and a prevalent topic of conservation pervasive throughout the interviews, was the unreliability of the industry that they depended on for their livelihood and the impact this has on the community. As Weaver points out, "revenue uncertainties in tourism are associated with inherent demand-and supply-side risks. In the former case, leisure tourism is a *discretionary form of expenditure* that consumers are likely to curtail during times of economic or social uncertainty" (2007, p. 129). This essentially means that when tourists feel they cannot afford tourism they simply won't participate in it. That means that tourism is not a guaranteed activity people will participate in and can fluctuate with economic trends. As stated earlier, multiple Bahamians noted how they needed tourism in order to survive. Multiple Bahamians also mentioned the unreliable nature of the industry. One Bahamian explained during the interviews that "when stuff happens in America, it hits us hard because of travel warnings or long lines, people are scared to travel." Another Bahamian highlighted that "tourism is good, but your number one industry should not be based on something that is up and down" (Armstrong, 2016). The unreliable nature of tourism is particularly highlighted in the Bahamas because of where much of their tourism revenue is derived; the cruise ships. The Bahamas has the largest cruise ship terminal in the Caribbean; able to hold seven cruise ships in the port at one time. Not all days of the week bring in heavy cruise traffic however. As multiple Bahamians explained to me, "ship days are Monday, Tuesday and Friday"

(Armstrong, 2016). On those days, their statement could be affirmed as there would be anywhere from 4-7 ships in the terminal whereas on the other days of the week there would generally only be 1-3. The 'ship days' are integrated into Bahamian life. The days when the ships do not come, or only one ship comes, multiple Bahamians stated they often do not bring home money (Armstrong, 2016). While I was conducting my field research, the Allure of the Seas (the second largest cruise ship in the world) was coming to port and almost every Bahamian I encountered, understandably, talked about it. "You know the Allure of the Seas is coming on Saturday?" (Armstrong, 2016). This was the topic of conversation along the street, in coffee shops and on the beach.

Along with the unsteady flow of cruise tourism, there are pervasive unreliable economic characteristics prevalent throughout the entirety of the tourism industry in the Bahamas. For example, although tourism is the primary revenue driver in the Bahamas, not all the revenue goes to Bahamians. In the Bahamas, as well as many other Caribbean destinations, much of the revenue made from tourism is lost to revenue leakage (Chambers, 2009). Revenue leakage occurs as stated in the first chapter when more revenue is lost internationally from tourism than what is gained in the country itself. In the case of the Bahamas, the myriad of international investors often keep a higher profit than what those in the country themselves are retaining. Further, because of the Bahamas increasing demand for Western style infrastructure and living to accommodate the growing tourism industry, the Bahamas must import the majority of their products ranging from agricultural goods to building materials. This also results in a compounding loss of revenue for the country.

An example to demonstrate the unreliability of the industry and the problems of revenue leakage is the plethora abandoned buildings I counted during my research. During the field research, I counted fifty-two hotels in Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, Bahamas alone that were incomplete, damaged, broken and abandoned. This slash-and-burn effect is common in countries with abundant environmental resources where the resorts go through frequent periods of rise and decline. The problem is, not only does this contribute to leakage, but the slash-and-burn effect also "serves both to spread the threat of environmental damage to coastlines and to limit the extent to which local communities can depend on tourism as a reliable, sustainable resource" (Chambers, 2009, p. 79). The myriad of slashed and burned hotels and resorts portrays the increasing problems of revenue leakage and the chilling unreliability of the industry.

Further leakage is created through vertical integration, when multiple hotel chains and airlines could be owned by the same overseas firm. Gmlech describes this aptly by explaining that,

> in a pattern referred to as vertical integration, airline, tour company, and hotel chains may be owned by the same overseas firm. Such firms retain many of the profits, thereby reducing the economic gains of the Caribbean countries. The worst is the all-inclusive package holiday, in which travelers make a single payment in advance (to the New York, London, of Paris office) that covers airfare, accommodation, food, and services (and sometimes even tips). With all-inclusives, much of the foreign exchange never reaches the Caribbean…Having already paid for their holiday at home, they act

as if they left their wallets there, too. The impact on local businesses dependent upon a

tourist clientele is devastating (2012, p. 8)

In the Bahamas, this effect is seen through multiple aspects of the industry. Many of the

hotels are owned by countries based outside of the Bahamas, the majority of the airlines are

foreign owned, and the creation of all-inclusive hotels is on the rise.

To use Freeport, Bahamas as an example, almost all the hotels around the tourist

center of the island were all-inclusive. Many Bahamians interviewed expressed concern over

the growth of the all-inclusive hotels, mentioning that "it's not good for us because we don't

get any business," and "all of the hotels around here are starting to be all-inclusive and our

business gets less and less" (Armstrong, 2016). In these hotels, not only is the revenue being

lost to a foreign country who offers the vacation package, but the community is also losing the

opportunity to gain individual revenue through tourism sales in restaurants, stores, or tours.

When the hotels offer everything you could want on property, why spend the money to go

anywhere else? In Freeport, the largest hotel next to the tourist area was an all-inclusive

Canadian hotel that had a partnership with Canada Air. After touring the resort, I can

understand why the tourists get lulled into staying on the resort the entire time. There is an

overabundance of things to do including multiple infinity pools, sprawling lawns, water

sports, and poolside activities. They also had themed restaurants, and merchandise locations.

To top it off they often brought in 'authentic hair-braiders' to give tourists 'a taste of local

life,' as it was advertised.

All of these factors have widespread effects throughout Bahamian society. Tourism is

a way of life, and the dependency on tourism is one that presents a neocolonial issue. The

dependency of the community on tourism is further complicated by the fact that tourism, in itself, is an unreliable industry which is easily impacted by external stimulants.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this chapter addressed some of the difficult issues pervasive throughout the Bahamian community due to tourism. By looking at the relationship between tourism and the environment in the Bahamas and the larger social and economic issues at play, this chapter has been able to come to a couple of conclusions.

First, this chapter addressed the impact tourism has on the environment whether through its direct impact or through the needs of the tourism industry to meet the social construction of nature perceived by tourists who come to the Bahamas. This impact of the environment occurs in a cyclical relationship where the Bahamians alter the environment to feed into the Western imaginary the tourists have of the Bahamas, which in turn can negatively impact the environment, leading to the adjustment of the environment by the tourism industry in another area or in another way to satisfy that image. In contrast, the Bahamians depend on the environment for their livelihood. Not only for fishing and agricultural needs, but also for the revenue it brings in through the tourism industry.

Second, this chapter addressed the social concerns that are presented when evaluating the impacts that tourism has had on the Bahamian community. One impact was on identity and the way the Bahamians alter their culture and identity for tourists. Further, the Bahamian community is impacted by tourism through the demonstration effect, where they imitate the culture and actions of the dominant country in the touristic relationship, but also through

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emulation in order to keep the tourism revenues flowing. Because they depend on tourism for their livelihood, they have learned to adapt and do what they must to keep the tourists coming, even if that means emulating another Caribbean country's culture, Jamaica, in order to keep business. This shows how the tendrils of tourism are so powerful throughout society that the Bahamian people must become increasingly creative in their adaptation and presentation.

Lastly, this chapter discussed how tourism impacted the country economically and the effects this has on society. To begin, the country's dependence on tourism is problematic and leads to many issues throughout society. A multitude of people interviewed said that they rely on tourism in order to survive, but how do you rely on such an unreliable industry? The issue facing the Bahamian people is that most of them have no option but to put their stock in the industry as there are often no jobs offered outside of it.

In conclusion, the widespread spheres of influence of tourism in the Bahamian community is astounding especially when viewed through an interdisciplinary and critical lens which looks at the tourism industry of the Bahamas with a more critical eye.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND ANALYSIS

The Bahamas presents itself as a uniquely service oriented society whose self-identity and road to independence has developed alongside a booming and expanding tourism industry. The country's close ties with nature and tourism presented a unique case study for this research. From this research, new conclusions can be made about the country of the Bahamas in regard to tourism and its people that will hopefully provide further research for

the academic literature on perceptions local communities have about tourism and the impacts tourism can have on the community.

The first chapter, discussed the background of the research and the location for the field research. It also provided a literature review which emplaced theoretical and tourism based concepts that helped to guide the research project. The chapter then explained the project itself and the significance of the research as an addition to the academic literature as well as a benefit to the tourism industry itself, to understand how the people feel about tourism in order to keep producing a positive tourism product. Finally, the chapter concluded with the methodology of the research project.

The second chapter began by addressing the people of the Bahamas. It provided a demographic overview of the Bahamian people and followed by presenting some observations about the people from my field research. This was followed by a section on the Bahamians perceptions about the tourists. Often the Bahamians would talk negatively about tourists or group them into stereotypes to reaffirm their own self-identity. However, even though the tourists themselves were talked about in a generally negative and demeaning light, the tourism industry as a whole was talked about positively. Lastly, this chapter addressed the reactions the Bahamians had to tourism and why these are important for the tourism industry and the people of the Bahamas.

The third chapter discussed the impacts of tourism on the community as a whole. Tourism in the Bahamas impacts the community in many different segments including through environment, sociocultural, and economic aspects of life. In regard to the environment, the differing social constructions of nature in the Bahamas was discussed as

well as the importance of differing stakeholders power to make decisions in regards to the environment. In relation to the sociocultural aspects of society, I discussed the way the Bahamian's identity is challenged by tourism and how they often present an image to tourists that they believe will sell rather than what might actually be true. Lastly, the chapter discussed the economic aspect of tourism in the Bahamas. It focused largely on the dependency stemming from colonialism that has continued through today, first on colonial powers and now on tourism. It also discussed the precarious nature of the industry being unreliable and the pitfalls of the majority of the population being reliant on such a variable industry.

Although this research was able to evaluate the local perception of tourism in the Bahamas, there were limitations that could be addressed in continued study. Further research could be done using a larger subject pool, traveling to the family islands and interviewing those locals, and in the future attempting a comparative study either between the Bahamas and another island in the Caribbean such as Jamaica, or a comparative study between the Bahamas and an island in another area of the world such as the Mediterranean or South Pacific. This research however, aims to provide a foundation with which to build on for the academic literature in tourism studies regarding the local's perceptions on tourism.

There are a few overarching conclusions reached by this thesis. To begin, the perceptions that the Bahamian people have about tourism is altogether a positive one as a large majority of the people I interviewed viewed the tourism industry on the whole as positive. However, although many people viewed tourism positively, their actions did not always reflect their words as they would often talk negatively, joke, or stereotype the tourists themselves. There were further isolated instances of violent or harassing behavior against

tourists that would seem to be contrary to the interviews. Through the academic literature digested before undertaking this research, it seems that it aligns well with Mason's field research and idea that those who depend on tourism will think positively of it, but also aligns with some of the tourism life cycles described by Butler in which locals will react increasingly negative to tourists in their behaviors overtime (2016, 1980). It seems it is as Wilson describes, that the Bahamian people understand that tourism is vital to their livelihood and yet they unconsciously act out against it as its affects are not altogether positive and its nature is pervasive throughout all levels of society (1996).

Further, it can be concluded that the dependency on tourism has wide sweeping effects across the environmental, social, and economic aspects of life for the Bahamian community. Many Bahamians I interviewed felt there was little opportunity outside of tourism and yet felt that without tourism they would not be able to survive. Further, the needs of tourism drive many of the environmental, economic and social decisions that are made in the community. The power of the country lies in the hands of the tourism industry and the government and many policy and daily decisions are made revolving around tourism. Whether it is the selling of non-ethnic goods to tourists, because they sell better than Bahamian inspired items, or the tailoring of beaches to fit the dominant Western imaginary of a Caribbean paradise, much of the Bahamian's way of life is oriented around the growth and maintenance of the tourism model.

In the end, it seems that tourism is the name of the game in the Bahamas and this will probably not change in the foreseeable future. Although tourism is looked at positively by most Bahamians, the Bahamians unconscious actions against tourists can become increasingly

problematic overtime. The tourism industry and government in the Bahamas needs to attempt

to aid in some of the more problematic issues and to keep the local's needs and wants in mind

when making policy decisions. The tourism industry needs to create a positive atmosphere for

the people of the Bahamas to encourage them to continue the warm Bahamian hospitality that

the tourism industry has come to know from the country.

Appendices

Appendix A
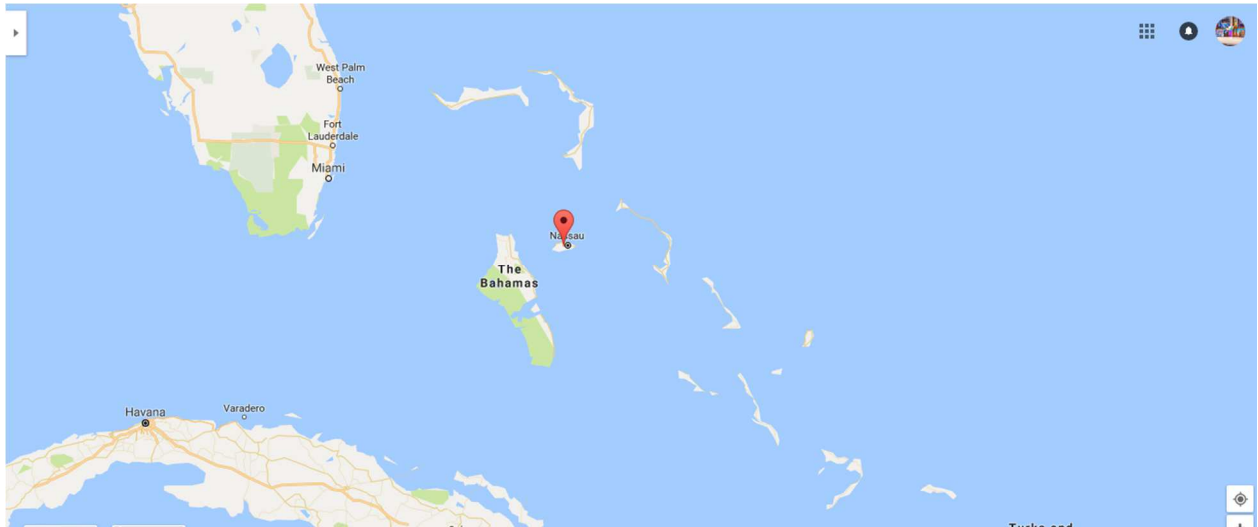
(Google Maps)

Appendix B

Interview Guide
- The impact of tourism on the community?
  - What impact does tourism have on the community of Nassau?
  - Do you feel that tourism has had a positive or negative effect on the community? Why?
  - How is tourism important to the community?
  - Has tourism improved or worsened quality of life in the community?
- Personal tourism impact?
  - How has tourism had a direct impact on your life?
  - Did you want to work a job that worked directly with tourists?
    - What did you want to do?
    - Why did you end up in the tourism industry?
  - Are most available jobs working with tourists?
  - How many people in your family work in the tourism industry?
- What tourists want?
  - Do you think tourists want to know about Bahamian history of culture?
  - How often do tourists mistake the Bahamas for Jamaica?
  - Are tourists interested in learning about the community?
  - What do you think most tourists want when they come to the Bahamas?
- Cruise tourism
  - How does cruise tourism particularly have an impact on the community?
  - How are cruise tourists different from tourists staying in hotels?
  - Is most of your business from cruise passengers or people staying on the island?
- Tourism Advancement
  - Would you support increased tourism for the Bahamas?
  - Do you think the government is spending enough resources on tourism or do they need to spend more, why?
  - Does increased tourism offer better quality of life for the community?
- Fun tourist questions
  - What tourists are your favorite tourists?
  - What is your favorite tourist story?

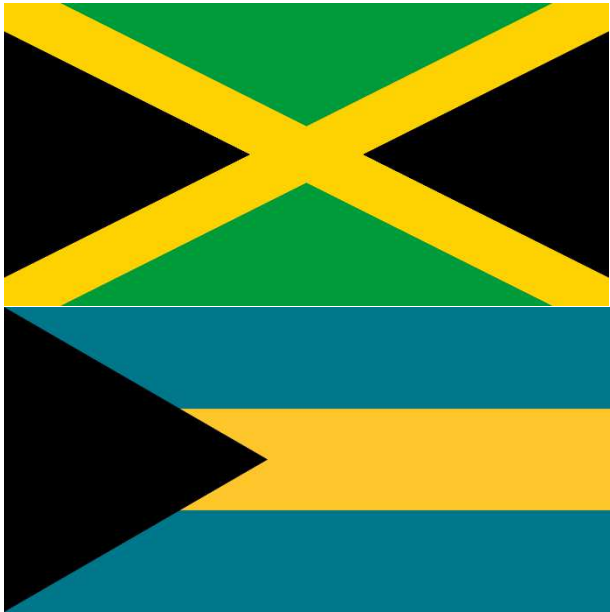**Appendix C**

(Beach at Atlantis, Paradise Island, Nassau, Bahamas)

Appendix D

(Public Beach, not currently being used for tourism)

Appendix E

(Google images, Jamaican flag and colors (left) versus Bahamian flag and colors (right))

Table A: Interviewees

Tourism Workers

Occupation	Gender	Approximate Age	Location
Casino	Female	55	Nassau
Tourguide/Freelancers	Male	65	Nassau
Recreation	Male	30	Nassau
	Male	20	Nassau
	Female	40	Freeport
Security Guard	Male	30	Nassau
	Male	40	Freeport
	Male	40	Freeport
Taxi Driver	Male	30	Nassau
	Male	40	Nassau

Unemployed/Retired Workers

Occupation	Gender	Approximate Age	Location
Retired	Female	65	Nassau
Unemployed	Male	60	Nassau

Service Workers

Occupation	Gender	Approximate Age	Location
Beer Distributor	Female	25	Nassau
Marketing	Female	25	Freeport

Retail Workers

Occupation	Gender	Approximate Age	Location
Straw Market	Female	30	Nassau
	Female	40	Freeport
	Female	40	Freeport
	Male	20	Freeport
Craft Shop Owner	Female	30	Nassau
	Female	40	Freeport
	Female	30	Freeport
Luxury Jewelry	Female	20	Freeport
Harley Davidson	Female	20	Freeport
	Female	30	Freeport
Convenience Store	Male	30	Freeport
UNEXCO Merchandise	Female	30	Freeport
Merchandise Grand Lucayan	Female	40	Freeport

Real Estate Workers

Occupation	Gender	Approximate Age	Location
Air BNB Owner	Male	30	Nassau
	Male	60	Nassau

Hotel Worker

Occupation	Gender	Approximate Age	Location
Guest Relations	Female	20	Freeport
Manager	Male	60	Freeport
Front Desk	Female	20	Freeport

Restaurant Workers

Occupation	Gender	Approximate Age	Location
Busser	Male	20	Nassau
Restaurant Owner	Male	50	Nassau
	Female	70	Freeport
	Male	50	Freeport
Server	Male	20	Freeport
	Female	20	Freeport
	Female	20	Freeport
	Female	20	Freeport
	Female	30	Freeport
	Male	30	Freeport
	Male	40	Freeport
Bartender	Female	30	Nassau
	Male	30	Freeport

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