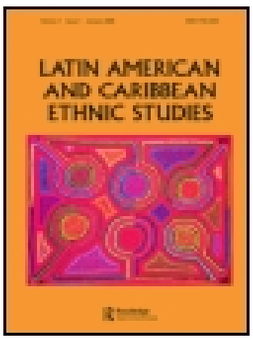

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First Time Days and the Development Life: Afro-Costa Rican Narrative Memory and the Critique of Racial Inequality in Global Restructuring

Darcie Vandegrift

Afro-Costa Ricans in Puerto Viejo critique the injuries of the economic transition from agriculture to tourism during the past three decades. I use the term 'narrative memory' to draw on the insights of Fields and Benjamin, describing the interpretive framework created by remembering and the place where the subject dialectically constructs the past and present. Narrative memory creates an inheritance of understandings, emotion, and analysis through which to understand the here and now. Narratives of 'first time days' define Puerto Viejo as a space characterized as formerly Afro-Caribbean, economically prosperous, and collaborative. These recollections contrast with the present ('now days'), demonstrating that nostalgia is not an elite act to be easily dismissed, but rather an important diagnostic tool for actors to critique the racial inequalities generated by global restructuring.

Keywords: Afro-Caribbean; narrative; memory; tourism; Costa Rica; neo-liberalism

Introduction: Memory and Nostalgia as Critique

Thomas runs a small business he founded in 1993 from the porch of his house in Puerto Viejo, a town of fewer than 2000 residents located on the South Caribbean Coast of Costa Rica. From his small café, and through the tours of his farm given to mainly European and North American tourists, Thomas observes as the town where he grew up experiences the transition from farming to tourism. In 1998 Thomas remained one of the few Afro-Costa Ricans who still owned coastal property; he worried that eventually tourism would 'sweep out' all black people on the coast, due to what he and others called the development life:

> If they (the young people in town) stand up and they really decide to work what they have in the front area, they will have space. If they don't balance themselves to come up to, directly on the level of the outside they will be in trouble. Because you have to balance yourself to live more or less different . . . after this they will be living the development life. If you can't balance yourself to live the development life you going to get sweep out . . . The tourists who come now is all right here, but [the town is] going to

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> have more. Others will have to really stand up and know what we doing or if not we going to be sweep out. We have to be careful or if not we going to be replaced by strangers, by local tourists . . .

Thomas describes the development life as a new set of everyday conditions created by the expansion of tourism. 'Local tourists' describes Europeans and North Americans who live in Puerto Viejo. The two phrases relate directly; the development life includes many changes as Puerto Viejo transforms into a space dedicated to hosting global tourists: a new dominance of service sector work, increasing construction and control of foreign white property owners, and the constant pressure to sell land for high prices. These sales remove Afro-Costa Ricans from homes along the areas deemed favorable to extensive tourism development. The development life offers uneven prospects for Afro-Costa Rican economic survival, which black residents contrast sharply with the economic patterns of pre-tourism Costa Rica, a time espoused by the term 'first time'.

This narrated history serves to name the injuries created by inequalities structured into new global capitalist formations. Interview participants did not use first time to describe a long-ago, 'old-time people' (Price, 2002). Instead, 'first time' describes the past in Caribbean English (Allsopp, 2003, p. 232) and, more specifically, a past deployed in creating narrative memory. Through these memories, shared in qualitative interviews, residents of Puerto Viejo dialectically interpret Puerto Viejo as an historical and contemporary space. Through this interpretative work, they contest power relations that otherwise remain unquestioned in public discourses articulated in media coverage of the region (for example, Pratt, 2001).

To theorize the critical work accomplished in comparing past and present through narrative, I use the term 'narrative memory'. This term describes the interpretive framework created by remembering, the place where the subject dialectically constructs the past and present. This memory work creates a legacy for the present, an inheritance of understandings, emotion, and analysis on which to understand the here and now. Narrative memories operate as a kind of diagnosis of what is wrong in the current patterns of economic and cultural relationships emerging from the growing presence of tourists and local tourists. Memories deployed to analyze the present do not construct history in the same way as historiography might. Through the recollection of Puerto Viejo's past, Afro-Costa Ricans identify the places in which shifts in relations of production have disadvantaged them, not only economically but also in more elusively identified ways involving cultural autonomy and community cohesion.

The concept of 'first time days' in narrative memory creates a paradoxical set of responses and discomforts. While this recollection of the past actively imagines Puerto Viejo as a space for Afro-Costa Rican cultural and economic survival and sovereignty, the construction of Puerto Viejo as a previously Afro-Caribbean place gives little chance for speakers to imagine their assertion of influence within the contemporary economy. Thus, while these narrative memory acts provide a powerful diagnostic tool for identifying emergent inequality, they perhaps have limited ability to construct adaptations or resistance to economic transition.

In this article, I examine how black Costa Ricans deploy narratives of first time days to interpret how they feel affected by Puerto Viejo's integration into global tourist circuits. I draw from the three primary themes mentioned in interviews, exploring how these ideas diagnose the transitions experienced in Puerto Viejo. First, narrators discuss Puerto Viejo as a formerly all-Afro-Caribbean community, in contrast to the present demographic described as a 'mixed nation'. While this comparison suggests the insecurity of shifting identities theorized by Featherstone (1995), an underlying critique of emergent racial inequality formulates from the narrative. Second, speakers evoke past economic security and community cohesion of the agriculture 'payday' compared with the contingent and precarious livelihood prospects in the present tourism 'development life'. Finally, narrators recall the previous economic structure of Puerto Viejo as embedded in mutual aid and cooperative practices, in contrast to liberal individualist tendencies prevalent in small-scale tourism work. Memories differ from historical chronicles; I do not evaluate narratives for 'getting it right' in terms of what occurred 10, 30, 50 or 100 years previous. Instead, those describing the past evoke imagined worlds, employing narrative memory to create the 'historically situated imaginations' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33) of a people and place under transition from by a globalized tourist economy and growing expatriate population. Memory work, beyond a way of expressing concern about shifting identities within modernity, also performs as method to diagnose the injuries and inequalities emergent in neo-liberal restructuring.

Critiquing Global Capital through Memory

Individuals reinterpret the past in light of present conditions (Ducharme & Fine, 1995; Schwartz, 1996, 1997). The act of remembering is often discussed as a collective practice of memorializing public figures (Schwartz, 1991; Olick & Levy, 1997), with analysis of memories and space more focused on the geographies of monuments (Johnson, 1995; Leib, 2002), museums (Till, 2001), or other sacred spaces. Less attention has been paid to the memory work about communities discussed among intimates (May, 2000) or in individual narratives (Fields, 1994). When narrators organize reflection on how economic change has unfavorably altered everyday spaces, their accounts are sometimes dismissed as nostalgia (Featherstone, 1995), elite (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Carroll, 1985) or inaccurate (Coontz, 2000). Usually, discussions of nostalgia focus on how actors feel uncertainty about identity and place in light of the unsettling characteristics of modernity (Urry, 1990).

As May (2000) notes, social actors' micro-level interpretations of personal experience in turn informs how they come to view larger society. Here, I argue that this process is a dialectic in which both past and present are constructed through narrative memory, fleshing out concerns about tourism in a way that captures both the material and emotional ledgers generated by a development trajectory. Memory involves historical events, but it is also an interpretative process filled with the promise and ache of desire. We do not just remember back; we also return to the here and now, constantly comparing present and past, constructing meaning for each in a dialectic. The result is much more than just nostalgic storytelling or boastful

renditions of future progress. Karen Fields (1994), building on the work of Walter Benjamin (1969, pp. 83–109), notes that stories about the past are much richer than mere 'information'. Benjamin and Fields emphasize the importance of the 'counsel' that each story holds, the open or covert kernel of usefulness the listener can draw from the narrative. Narrative memories told to assess tourism development in the Americas demonstrate how residents in a local space assess globalization processes.

Tourism development in Costa Rica, as in other parts of Central America, is often touted as a great hope for the region, an opportunity for states to generate foreign currency with the possibility for 'cultural preservation' (Boo, 1992; Ryel & Grasse, 1991). When analyzed as a detriment to economic prosperity (Hall, 1990; Stonich, 2000), often local actors' interpretations – particularly about cultural sovereignty and its relation to economic production – are omitted. Narrative memory creates a useful tool to do what Arturo Escobar (1995, p. 5) describes as 'bracketing the familiar' about economic development practices – in this case, questioning small-scale international tourism as an economic development strategy – so the historical production of the economic formation and the cultural space it envelopes can be seen.

The cultural and economic shifts of global restructuring have material consequences as spaces become reorganized for new economic circuits such as tourism. Particularly for communities experiencing shifts in the organization of work and community life due to economic globalization, memory and nostalgia serve as a diagnostic for the present inequalities. Attention to these narrations, told in interviews, creates two key findings. First, while much recollection focuses on shifting from stable to contingent identities (echoing previous work on nostalgia and modernization), narrators point sharply to the redistribution of economic and cultural resources in which global processes create a more stratified local space. Second, while these narratives actively imagine Puerto Viejo as a space for Afro-Costa Rican cultural and economic survival and sovereignty, the construction of Puerto Viejo as a previously Afro-Caribbean place gives little chance for speakers to imagine themselves as asserting influence within the contemporary economy.

Process of Inquiry

This article reflects research carried out in Puerto Viejo, located on Costa Rica's South Caribbean Coast, during a series of fieldwork projects totaling 14 months between 1991 and 2006. Except where noted, I draw all quotes from interviews at the beginning of the tourism boom in 1997 and 1998. The primary materials for this article come from 22 semi-structured interviews with Afro-Costa Ricans in 1997 and 1998 and informal follow-up with 12 of the original participants in 2006. During these interviews, participants explained the changes they had seen over time and the comparisons between first time days and the development life. To examine the context in which these memory narratives emerged and to characterize the conditions created by the emergent tourism industry, I also draw from field notes created during participant observation, two surveys of all businesses in 1998 and 2006, untaped informal interviews and analysis of material culture such as tourism brochures, websites and maps.

The interview participants in the large project represented Puerto Viejo's racial and ethnic demographics, although this article focuses more extensively on Afro-Caribbean participant interviews. In all interviews, the participant chose her or his preferred language (Spanish, US or British Standard English, or Limonese Creole; Mosby, 2003, pp. 56–57). Typically, interviews in one language would be interspersed with words or phrases from another, and Creole speakers would utilize British or US English syntax and vocabulary to help me understand. I have translated all Spanish interviews to English and have used US English spellings in this article, although with Creole syntax when used.

On its balance, this article, like all interpretations, offers a perspective embedded in the researcher's multiple social locations. However, my primary effort is centralize the categories of analysis that emerged in the narrative memory of Afro-Caribbean interview participants. The central mode of inquiry involves the intensive interpretation of Afro-Caribbean narrative memory to illuminate how emergent inequalities and economic transitions are understood when brushed against the grain of history. Rather than evaluating their narrations by criteria based in positivist accounts (i.e. is what the speaker says 'true' in the sense that it mirrors historiography of the region?), I explore how subjects narrate the changes occurring, creating my interpretation based on the topics and concerns raised by the interview participants.

'Racial' Categories in Puerto Viejo and Author Location

The racial/ethnic lexicon used in Puerto Viejo draws from multiple referents and intertwines tightly with nation-based categories. A sufficient description is the subject of another article, but my use of terms here attempts to be both clear to non-Puerto Viejo readers as well as attentive to self-naming practices of peoples living in Puerto Viejo; I do not attempt to unravel the 'accuracy' of racial mythology. Many racial/ethnic groups had terms to self-define and to discuss others. For example, transnational residents from the United States, Canada, and Europe might be understood as white in US discourse, but in Puerto Viejo would also be called 'gringo', 'local tourist', or 'foreigner' [*extranjero*]. English-speaking Afro-Costa Ricans refer to new migrants as 'local tourists,' a phrase that describes new settlers who live in the local space while engaging in practices that resemble more transient leisure travelers.

Costa Ricans who self-identified as of European ancestry would refer to themselves as *ticos/ticas*, or, less frequently, as European or white. I refer to such Costa Ricans as *tico/tica*, or white Costa Ricans. Costa Ricans typically defined themselves as racially/ethnically dissimilar to Ladino Nicaraguans. Nicaraguans living in Puerto Viejo were marked as racially other, referred to as *nicas*. I use the terms 'Afro-Costa Rican', 'Black', and 'Afro-Caribbean' to discuss African-descent Costa Ricans and Central Americans living in Puerto Viejo. Racialized categories are at the core social definitions, and the effort towards clarity sacrifices a great deal of complexity (Wade, 2006).

Afro-Costa Ricans view themselves, and are viewed by Costa Rican society, as an ethnic group (Gabbert, 2006), with social differentiation achieved through both

cultural markers such as language, economic niche participation, spatial location and history, as well as phenotypic markers defined in Costa Rican Spanish as '*Afro*,' or, less respectfully, *negro* and in Limonese Creole as *black*. Previously, most Afro-Caribbean-identified people would speak Limonese Creole and Spanish, with a preference for Creole (Palmer, 1994); but in the late 1990s and early 2000s, most adults under 40 years old were comfortable in both languages, with many preferring Spanish.

Ethnic distinction was imposed externally by labor market and social discrimination as well as geographic segregation, despite significant state efforts at assimilation in the mid-20th century (Sharman, 2001; Harpelle, 2002). This social boundary also achieved benefits for Afro-Costa Ricans and Caribbean immigrants who distinguished themselves from poor *mestizo/a* workers on banana plantations in surrounding communities, as well as from indigenous peoples living in the region.

In this article, I draw categories and create interpretations from the ideas of the participants and the qualitative fieldwork I completed. In 1997 and 1998 I worked in tourism in Puerto Viejo, acting as a participant-observer as a manager at a local small lodge [*cabina*], a childbirth educator, and a member of the Tourism Chamber of Commerce. I attended meetings and demonstrations around security issues and wrote a series of journalistic articles for local and national English-language publications about Puerto Viejo local news. As a white, US resident fluent in Spanish with previous residency in the interior of the Limón province, I was received as both a typical local tourist (short-term, foreign, not Afro-Caribbean, living in the region) and an unusual hybrid who moved across languages in a way peculiar from most US expatriates. In my social locations as a young mother and a 'researcher,' I received invitations for entry into the community not offered by some suspicious of the morals and intentions of local tourists as a group. As a newly-arrived local tourist, I met limitations in access with some long-term Afro-Caribbean and local tourist residents.

Puerto Viejo and Shifting Global Economic Niches

The social organization of Puerto Viejo shifted dramatically in the 1990s with a rapid transition from agriculture to tourism and the accompanying arrival of white Canadian, US, and European migrants who retired or established businesses in the coastal towns from all along the South Caribbean Coast. During the 1990s, increased North American affluence, globalized communication methods and less expensive air travel increased flows of global tourism and long-term north-to-south migrants. The resulting changes often create more ambivalent responses from local destination communities as new arrivals alter the economies, public spaces, and power relationships of their hometowns. Puerto Viejo's ethnoscape (Appadurai, 1996) increasingly resembled that of other Circum-Caribbean tourist destinations such as Belize (Sutherland, 1996, pp. 259–282), consisting of white Europeans, North Americans, South Americans and Costa Ricans as well as migrant Nicaraguans, Jamaicans, and other Anglophone Caribbean nationals. Afro-Costa Ricans previously defined themselves in relationship to other Costa Rican populations within national borders (Palmer, 1993, 1994). The arrival of wealthier long-term visitors, migrant

retirees, business investors, and local tourists created new social relations, resulting in new ethnic and class identity work in response to shifting power configurations.

These flows of affluent visitors and settlers were desirable for Latin American states seeking foreign currency in the wake of structural adjustment. Costa Rica has one of the strongest tourism sectors in Latin America, with between 900,000 and 1.4 million visitors per year between 1998 and 2003, generating between $550 million and $940 million in foreign currency annually during this time (Instituto Costarricense de Turismo, 1997, 2004; Loría & Vargas, 2002). Tourism has been Costa Rica's first or second-highest generator of foreign currency since the late 1990s. Despite devastating effects of structural adjustment, Costa Rica's economy grew during the 1990s largely due to tourism expansion (Campbell, 2002).

Afro-Costa Ricans living in this rural region between the Limón province capital and the Panamanian border previously held relative economic and cultural dominance (Palmer, 1993, 1994; Purcell, 1993; Jermyn, 1995). Within new economic and ethnic configurations, Afro-Costa Ricans encounter new practices within the local space that challenged previous configurations of ethnic identities. The region whose residents defined it as once a place of 'only black people' became part of a development paradigm in which Afro-Caribbean residents fear that they as an ethnic group may be permanently disadvantaged or even swept away by economic forces of global capitalism.

In a sense, Afro-Costa Ricans adjusted to the reconfiguration of the local economy during the 1990s. Land was sold. Jobs were acquired – or, if not, families migrated away from the coast. Actors exercised agency given the possibilities available in a complex social terrain. Yet as people survive, succumb, or flourish in the transition, they also interpret the changes, critique, condone, feel angry about, and thoroughly dissect them. In the following three sections, I turn to three areas that residents compared between 'first time days' and 'now days': black identity versus the 'mixed nation', the 'payday' versus the development life, and mutual aid versus economic individualism.

Black Identity versus the 'Mixed Nation': Puerto Viejo as an Afro-Caribbean Community

Afro-Caribbeans situate their own identities within the context of multi-ethnic and multi-national populations, others who arrive from the outside over the past 20 years, as well as earlier arrivals and a long-time indigenous presence. Being 'from Puerto Viejo', in contrast to the arrival of outsiders, is a status constantly rearticulated in light of a changing local situation (Abram & Waldren, 1997, pp. 1–13). Tourism alters everyday life beyond increased commodification, economic instability and employment hierarchies. In interviews, black residents deploy narrative memory to comment on the shrinking presence of black public space, black-oriented business, and Afro-Costa Rican dominated civic life. Surf shops and bars with satellite television displace black-owned pubs and Protestant churches as the predominant public hangouts and centers of social life.

Memories of first time days articulate a fear of the disappearance of the very existence of black people in the town. Black residents often experience the tourist

economy as alienating and marginalizing, with an increasing number of spaces where they feel uncomfortable because of racialized social difference. These spaces vary in size. Some are as small as the 'all-gringo movie night' that an expatriate began at his hotel. Other spaces of exclusion include the seashore itself. A neighbor, 18-year-old Janet, confides to me in Spanish that she avoids the beach because 'white people make me feel terrible, the way they look at me'. The effects of the inequalities in global capital across nations and across historically racialized populations become everyday experiences within the boundaries of a town remembered by Black residents as Afro-Caribbean cultural and economic territory. The growth of the tourist economy and the new presence of foreign business owners convert the town into a tourist space, a white visitor and expatriate space, threatening – in the estimation of many black residents – the very survival of Afro-Caribbean people in Costa Rica. Mr Charles, aged 78, describes his youthful memories of Puerto Viejo:

> 'When the UFC planted banana in Costa Rica, the Spaniards don't know about banana work, so they bring in Jamaicans. The whole country, the whole Atlantic flood with Jamaicans. They build the highway. There were good and bad, but . . . 95% were good people'. Mr. Charles recollects that the whole coast was Jamaican, or Afro-Caribbean I ask him if any indigenous people lived on the coast at the time. He acknowledges that some indigenous Bribri and Chinese immigrants, as well as 'Spaniards' (white Costa Ricans from the Central Valley) lived in Puerto Viejo. He does not mean this as a concession or a contradiction to his previous statement. He repeats that in his recollection, the 'whole coast was Jamaican'.

This narrative memory creates a framework to situate concern with how the arrival of foreigners seemed to cause black people to disappear, to be absorbed into the newly dominant cultures of greater Costa Rica, and on international tourist culture (constituted by white Europeans and North Americans) through interracial heterosexual relationships, cultural erasure, and a realigned economy. Miss Francine compares the past with her present concern about how black youth who choose to cohabitate with white, foreign partners:

> Now, you still see black people, but soon you will not see any black people because of mixing, mixed nation. Have the Spaniard with the black. The American with the black. Will there still be a part of the black in the mix? Mixed, mixed, mixed! The colored race go down. Because you have, what you call them? Very, very few black you find here.

Many, too young to live a past before the beginning of the 'mixed nation', perform similar narrative memory acts. Eighteen-year-old Bernice describes the problem of shrinking property ownership by Afro-Costa Ricans. Bernice was only a child when tourism development began, yet she, like Mr Charles and Miss Francine, constructs narrative memory around the issue of local racialized populations. 'I don't remember because I'm pretty young, but they let me know how was the culture in Puerto Viejo'. She raises her voice. 'I want it that way, you know. I don't want it like this'. 'What was that like?' I ask. She responded:

> Only black people live here! Only, only. There were a few, like, a black man married to a Spanish woman, you know, that's ok. We used to get along. We didn't have to have . . . people from San José. They come here; they have the biggest house in Puerto Viejo. They are that way. . . . People from outside [*afuera*] trying to own here. It's not

> like Jamaica! I want to be like Jamaica. Jamaican don't want people own there. Jamaican people fight for they property. But here, no. Everybody just, come in and buy, yeah, live here. And there's no mostly black people here. Just a few. Maybe there are 500. But most of them just . . . I just like it first time days.

In this memory narrative, previously (first time days) she does not define interracial relationships and the resulting children as the end of Afro-Caribbean people in Puerto Viejo. Many people who identified as black to me also described having a parent or grandparent they defined as white. The 'mixed nation', the meeting and intermingling of Afro-Caribbean, white Central American, Chinese immigrant and indigenous people, has a 400-year presence in the region (Harpelle, 2002; Palmer, 1993, 1994). In the late 1990s, however, narrators such as Miss Francine and Bernice perceive these shifts as a threat to black culture. Narrative memory finds trouble at the moment of the redistribution of power and economic prosperity along racialized and national axes. The sadness lurking when people describe the 'new' racial mixing of a town that has always been 'racially' mixed coincides with a loss of economic opportunity and community, two important components that first time days might not be able to pass on to future generations. 'Race', as in all locales, is constructed by daily experiences and grand historical trajectories. In Puerto Viejo many Afro-Costa Ricans define the region as historically black, a racial formation (Omi & Winant, 1994) constituted in previous structures of Afro-Caribbean economic dominance in this small space.

The question is not whether Puerto Viejo was ever a place that was 'only Afro-Costa Rican'. Narrating Puerto Viejo as an all-Black town is less about idealizing racial homogeneity than a way of talking about Afro-Caribbean cultural sovereignty, a time in which a space of imagined cultural autonomy existed, and Afro-Caribbeans did not live on the margins of the town where they were born.

Tourism and Economic Sovereignty: The Payday versus the Development Life

Puerto Viejo farmers shifted from bananas to cacao (chocolate beans) beginning in the 1940s. Afro-Caribbeans in the South Caribbean enjoyed a good standard of living, even prosperity, during the height of cacao production from 1940 to 1979 (Palmer, 1994). During the 1970s almost all landowners had savings accounts, and many traveled to the United States or throughout Central America to visit family. The cacao era brought the economic stability of a steady payday and the interconnectedness of Afro-Caribbean farm families participating in a common economic sector.

In 1979 cacao farming began a decade-long decline due to a fungus that destroyed production. The *monilia ruralis* disease chronologically overlaps with structural adjustment pressures and state policies that hastened Puerto Viejo's transition away from cacao (Molina & Palmer, 1997; Edelman, 1999), leading to land sales *en masse* to foreign owners. The collapse of chocolate farming coincided with structural adjustment pressures and state policies that hastened Puerto Viejo's transition away from cacao. Many families sold off at least part of their holdings. The push of *monilia* and state policies resulted in a slow transfer of the most marketable tourist property

from black cacao farmers to white North Americans, Europeans, and, in smaller numbers, Costa Ricans from the Central Valley.

Other black landowners tried to sell a part of their land and invest the proceeds in a new business. A few (approximately a dozen individuals and families) who started businesses early (before 1993) or had large amounts of capital to develop coastal properties met with success. The town's most successful native-born business owner became a congressional representative for the South Caribbean in 2002, largely due to the experience he had gained leading the Puerto Viejo chamber of commerce. My surveys in 1998 and 2006 found that foreign-owned businesses opened all along the South Caribbean Coast during the 1990s and 2000s, comprising over 80 percent of the new tourist microenteprises in Puerto Viejo that survived more than a year. Thus, a successful black-owned business was more exceptional than illustrative of the business climate for Afro-Caribbeans.

'*People Came Back*' *and People Go* '*To the Back*'

Afro-Costa Ricans still living in Puerto Viejo note a curious result of tourism expansion. The transition brings back some residents who left after the collapse of cacao farming but also decreases the economic control of Afro-Caribbeans over the region. Thomas, one of the most successful black business owners quoted at the beginning of the article, explains: 'This town, when the *monilia* pass through here [there were no longer] really [very many] people'. However, those who returned did so in a context of vanishing economic sovereignty. Thomas continued: 'Lot of people came back. Lot of younger set [who] sold out and never do nothing with [their] money turn around and . . . work for same one who bought the land from them'.

One Italian restaurant sits on property referenced by Afro-Caribbeans who discuss land sales in the area with me. Johnny, aged 25, explains to me: 'There this man . . . used to own the restaurant and the house that was next to it. He sold them both to them Italians, and now he rents a house since he does not own one'. At first, he explains, the man had to rent the house from the same Italians to whom he had sold the land to but eventually moved 'to the back', the area away from the sea, in order to reduce his expenses. Johnny, concurring with Thomas, uses this man's story as a cautionary tale of how selling property leads to downward mobility and eventual removal of Afro-Costa Ricans from the town. Tourism brings opportunity for land sales but can remove Afro-Costa Ricans from the coast, relegating black residents to the inland ('the back') away from the more economically prosperous coastal area.

Some Afro-Costa Ricans invest in tourism businesses on land farther 'in the back', a less desirable location. Business surveys from 1998 (author survey) indicate that revenue potential is much lower for inland, black-owned businesses than for white foreign-owned businesses located along the coast. Some white-owned businesses earn as little as $800–900 a month in the high season, but the median income for the period was $4800 a month in 1998. In contrast, black-owned businesses earn a median of $1872 a month during the high season.

No Payday in Puerto Viejo

Land sales and subsequent business ownership creates a context of increased ethnic and nation-based stratification. In interviews, Afro-Costa Ricans identify a primary local problem to be a lack of steady employment. Historians document paydays in Limón's banana plantations as violent and chaotic, as men disputed pay levels or engaged in violence while intoxicated (Putnam, 2003). In Puerto Viejo, however, narrators remember the payday quite differently, contrasted to the tourist economy with a racialized and nationality-stratified labor hierarchy. Residents describe longing for a local economy in which hard work brings predictable, sufficient remuneration. Luis, a taxi-driver tracing his family to 19th-century Jamaican immigrants, notes the lack of a steady source of income. In a 2006 interview, he recalls 'first time days' of the cacao economy:

> Like, you know, in the States or anywhere you have a payday every fifteen [days] or every week. No payday in Puerto Viejo . . . [H]ere they don't have nothing like every fifteen days like in the cacao time. Every fifteen days you see the place jammed . . . the salon, the store, everything was jammed for payday. Everyone would go to get your pay. Everybody pay, everybody come out to get paid in cacao time. But now, we don't have that no more. No pay day.

Luis's description also evokes the sense of community present during the remembered payday. The listener can almost imagine the people greeting each other in the 'jammed' stores and bars. His narrative memory of cacao time constructs a past in which all people had work, critiquing the unemployment or low-wage labor encountered by many black Costa Ricans in the local tourist economy. In tourism, employment varies with the high and low seasons, sudden rains, or events such as well-publicized crime waves. Tourists' preferences change the town's prosperity levels overnight, as in 2000 when two US study-abroad students were murdered in town, a tragedy receiving international publicity. Despite the appearance of a region constantly in motion, with people always working, tourist jobs provide lower-paying, unstable work in the minds of narrators when compared with the payday.

The payday of first time also allowed Puerto Viejo's residents to work outside of the control of a boss, beyond the reach of the kind of blatant racism found in the distribution of construction, hotel, and restaurant jobs. Black residents such as Luís remember earning what they understand to be fair and justly distributed returns on labor, in contrast to the dollar an hour typically paid for service jobs in tourism. The payday becomes a strong critique of the present global inequalities playing out on a daily basis in Puerto Viejo. The idea describes a deeper longing, a longing that remembers the history of the banana companies and cacao farming in a particular manner, obscuring the days that intermediate buyers refused to purchase the entire banana harvest or that cacao prices plummeted. The remembered payday's power extends beyond the individuals who had experienced it. Even younger people used this particular memory in conversations with me. Bernice, aged 18, describes the tourist economy as an unsatisfactory job producer. 'Well, really, there's not much

work here to do. It's hard to get a good job'. 'What are the good jobs?', I asked. She answered at length:

> Some people who have good jobs are really lucky. [The good jobs are] working in an office, working in reception, working [as a] bartender. Something where you are earning good money. But in this town, you win 2000 [colones] by day. 2000 by day – that doesn't cut it. It's more pretty when you get your *quincena* [paid every two weeks]. You can say working, yes I'm working.

As she spoke, Bernice moves between talking about wages (2000 *colones* per day) to the steadiness of receiving a paycheck every two weeks. She defines how one could be 'really working'. Bernice's account includes two critiques of the tourist economy. She does not consider the ebbs and flows in employment within the tourist economy to be a real job; the steadiness of the payday is what makes efforts pay off, and through which a kind of work meets the definition of a 'good job'. In addition, the wage rate is too low, a complaint folded into the concern about the lack of a steady payday.

Black residents remember the steady work and community-wide participation in cacao as offering something more than 'the development life'. In this context, the longing for an economy organized around the payday also comments on a time when economic inequality and racist ideology did not disadvantage Afro-Caribbeans. Luis's recollection of the payday, and Bernice's continued longing for this payday in the form of a *quincena*, condemn the inequalities generated in the present.

The Selfishness of Rotting Tomatoes: Mutual Aid versus Economic Individualism

Narrative memories imagine first time days as a time of mutual aid and community cooperation critiquing emergent neo-liberal individualism within the tourist economy. The transition from independent farming to service work increases commodification and importation of food. Prices increase, while improved transportation increases the quantity of electronic goods and clothing. The variety of available goods, partly in response to new migrant and tourist consumers, has increased over the past 20 years. Interview participants notice weaker community cohesion with the decline of locally exchanged goods. Community rituals that previously marked the exchange of local products have declined. Afro-Costa Ricans I interviewed describe the past as a time when neighbors willingly helped each other, a quality that, in their view, disappears as the population grows and tourist work replaces subsistence and commercial farming. Miss Ida, aged 52, labels the end of such exchanges as the key change between the past and present:

> [In the past], everybody live as family. Suppose somebody live over there. 'You don't have a plantain to give me?' They say, 'Sure man, come'. He get a hand of plantain. 'You want yuca? Drop by, I give you a yuca'. Now, if you don't have the money, you can't get it. And it so dear.

Although the price of produce today is high, what Miss Francine first mentions is how subsistence farming created the feeling that everyone lived 'as family'.

Past experiences with mutual assistance and food sharing create a narrative memory guiding Afro-Caribbean interpretations local tourist practices. A frequent

criticism leveled against North Americans is the preference to let food rot rather than give it away. Delfiro, in his early forties, lives on-site at his local bar frequented by expatriate residents. He describes how a man from the United States walked him past row after row of tomatoes, an expensive product in the store. The white US gardener offered him none, but Delfiro later sees the tomatoes rotting on the vine in the hot sun. 'How sad to see those tomatoes die like that. He could have offered one to me, to any neighbor'.

Expatriates relocating to Puerto Viejo go to be alone, partially to escape the obligations of pleasing others. Debra, a 42-year-old US expatriate shop owner, explains her perspective, which exemplifies this position:

> I don't want to change the world anymore. I've had enough. I'm at the point where I'd rather focus more on myself then on, saving whatever. Like feeling responsible for cleaning the street. Let someone else do it more or less. I was in the Peace Corps and I was pretty active in the university in all these groups. In life right now I don't feel a need emotionally to feel important doing these things for the community or whatever. You know? If I have free time I'd rather walk, go to a beach or [something].

In addition, expatriates often have few experiences to facilitate cross-cultural living, having relocated from homogeneous neighborhoods of rural and urban sectors of North America and Europe. Networks of mutual aid exist across expatriate households that exclude Afro-Caribbeans of any nationality. As noted by Delfiro's story, a gulf runs between Afro-Costa Rican and white expatriates that both sides bridge only with cash exchanged. The tendency of foreign owners to hire other foreigners, evidenced in the surveys I conducted of local businesses, only further degrades mutual aid systems previously conducted between residents of all racial and national backgrounds. In addition to beliefs about black Costa Ricans as workers, white foreigners also express doubts about Afro-Costa Rican and Nicaraguan trustworthiness and capabilities to take care of borrowed property; these attitudes further precluded any extensive system of exchange. Animosity and racial prejudice between white and black Costa Ricans is mutual, a well-documented situation (Bourgois, 1989; Palmer, 1993) that truncates exchanges across Costa Rican ethnic groups. As some residents of Puerto Viejo struggle, commoditization of services, rather than mutual exchange, has become the rule in the globalized tourism economy. The recollection of local sharing comments on exclusionary exchange networks and scarcity in a commodified service economy.

Conclusion

Tourism continues to expand as a key part of Latin America's integration in the global economy, creating an economic order with shifting distributions of wealth and power (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). By recalling previous constructions of place, Afro-Caribbean narrators bracket global restructuring as a thing to be analyzed and untangled, not an inevitable outcome. The transition to tourism emerged from specific local and global events (such state incorporation efforts, structural adjustment, and the collapse of chocolate farming) and created consequences, both material and psychological. The acts of piecing together the past and present for

comparison reveal, through narrative memory, what stands at stake when an industry touted as benign alters a community. The accounts of the past become important not in the degree of their adherence to historiography, but in how narrative memory theorizes concerns about cultural sovereignty, restricted economic livelihoods, and increased community disintegration in the context of neo-liberal tourism development.

As Bryan Turner (1987) notes, nostalgia is not always conservative. The understanding of the present as a turn away from the authentic also serves to diagnose and critique. A longing for the past may reflect, as Turner postulates, a sense of historic decline or an absence and loss of individual autonomy with the decline of genuine social relationships. Embedding narratives of the past in an interpretation of the present context, the dimensions of marginalization created by global restructuring and integration become crystallized. Imagining Puerto Viejo as all-Black town in narrative memory serves to discuss Afro-Caribbean cultural sovereignty, a time in which a space of imagined cultural autonomy existed, and Afro-Caribbeans did not live on the margins of the town where they were born. In light of unstable earnings and unequal pay for Afro-Caribbean workers, the steady payday of narrative memory pinpoints the injuries experienced. When the past is constructed as a time of more intensive mutual aid, speakers outline a critique of exclusionary exchange networks and scarcity in a commodified service economy.

Simultaneously, the present creates the context for narrating the past. Narrative memory encompasses the nexus between asynchronic periods, pointing to concerns in Puerto Viejo about economic inequality, employment stability, and cultural sovereignty. The recollection of 'first time days' creates a paradoxical set of responses and discomforts: while this discourse actively imagines Puerto Viejo as a space for Afro-Costa Rican cultural and economic survival and sovereignty, the construction of Puerto Viejo as a previously Afro-Caribbean place gives little chance for speakers to imagine themselves as asserting influence within the contemporary economy. Interview participants identify both material and experiential concerns about the impacts of global tourism. Through moving between the here and now and historical recollection, the meaning of both are fleshed out in this dialectical process. Each story provides 'counsel', as Fields and Benjamin describe, with each telling containing insights that go beyond mere information. Narrative memory creates a tool to question the costs of small-scale international tourism as an economic development strategy.

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