

# ***Searching for Sun:***

**Expatriate Communities, Globalization,  
and Identity in the Modern Caribbean**

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## **Introduction**

“Anthropology is the study of people and culture.” These were the first words I heard in my first class on my first day of college at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. I had always known that I wanted to study people and culture in college, but—quite frankly—I had had no idea what anthropology was at the time. I still remember sitting in Professor Andrew Shryock’s Cultural Anthropology 101 class, listening to these words. From that moment on, I knew that I wanted to be anthropology major, and I believe I even declared my major that first semester. Since then, I have taken a plethora of anthropology classes in ever subfield from professors with a wide variety of fieldwork experience.

We have a saying at the undergraduate level of anthropology: it doesn’t matter what the topic of the course is supposed to be, the class always ends up being about the professor’s fieldwork. And I have found this to be true most of the time. Thus, my undergraduate course of study always seemed somewhat incomplete without having done some sort of research of my own. There is something about independent research that seems to legitimize oneself within the field of anthropology—marking the transition from anthropology student to *anthropologist*. I am extremely fortunate that I somehow lucked into one of the most fantastic anthropology departments in the country—one that enabled me with the opportunity to undertake a senior honors thesis. Writing this thesis has been one of the most spiritually rewarding, emotionally draining, and educationally challenging facets of my undergraduate career—a true capstone on an experience that has changed me in ways that I cannot yet know—and I sincerely hope that my passion for this project comes through in my writing and that it is half as enjoyable to read as it was write.

I have always tended to plan things far in advance and often do things my friends would never dream of doing. And so, in the summer following my junior year of high school—while my friends stayed home to play video games and go to the beach—I sat alone on a plane. This was the first time I had ever flown on a plane by myself. This was also the first time I had ever left the country, having grown up mostly taken family trips to national parks, with the occasional visit to Hawaii—easily accessible from my hometown of Calabasas, California, just north of Los Angeles.

As the plane touched down and I nervously stepped out into the sunshine, a wave of humidity—like nothing I had ever felt before—hit me with an unseen force. I began to perspire almost immediately, and did so for the entire length of my stay in Costa Rica. That summer, I lived with a host family in the San Jose suburb of Santa Barbara de Heredia. While my original intention had been to hone my Spanish skills (which I did), I soon began to realize—through my conversations with my host family, language instructors, and others from the neighborhood—that there was this intangible element “culture” that fascinated me. *Culture* is quite possibly the most difficult term in the entire lexicon of humanity to define. I knew I wanted to study this *thing*, this *force*, but where do I find it—where can I study it? Eventually I came to the only conclusion I could: travel and talk. But to where and with whom it does not matter—culture is everywhere, and its sheer obscurity as a concrete notion is what makes it one of the most stimulating ideas to pursue.

Anthropology, therefore, is more than a field of study, it is a way of experiencing life as a question without an answer—fully embracing the fact that there is no definition, there is no *right* answer. Those who cannot accept this major in math and business and history. They memorize facts, solve problems, and interpret data. It is for this reason that those in

other fields have often perceived anthropology as “easy” or “soft”. However, anthropologists do all of these quantitative things too—and more. Anthropologists throw themselves into the uncomfortable position of studying *people* at the level of the *individual*, of which they are themselves one. In this way, anthropology becomes a study of one’s own place in the world, an introspective look at life and difference and culture and conflict and change. As anthropologists travel and speak and listen to others, anthropologists are really studying themselves—and that is the most difficult subject of all.

Returning from Costa Rica with the so-called “travel bug” severely planted in my brain, I began to plot my next adventure. And so—nine months later—I boarded another plane and again felt the intense wave of wet heat as I stepped off onto the tarmac at the tiny airport of the British Virgin Islands in the Caribbean. I spent that summer before college living on a sailboat, traveling to a dozen different islands throughout the Lesser Antilles—small islands that stretch the length of the Caribbean Sea between Florida and South America. I still remember boarding my plane to return the U.S. after a summer of SCUBA diving, sailing, and hiking as the first raindrops of Hurricane Dean peppered my face.

Reflecting on my two—and only at that point—abroad experiences on the plane ride home, I came to an interesting realization. There were so many *Americans* abroad. In Costa Rica’s coastal region of Guanacaste, where I had travelled during my stay, I was told of how this area had been inhabited by Costa Ricans for six generations. However, it was now known locally as “Little America” as there were more foreigners living there than locals, most of whom had been priced out by a skyrocketing real estate boom. To my surprise—and even more so when I realized that this was not just exclusively in the areas with the

most foreigners—I found things that I did not expect to find. There were signs in *English*. There was McDonalds and Wal-Mart. People watched American-made films and television shows more often than their local programming. People cared about politics and education and the environment. There was crime, there was poverty, and there were birthday parties. This confounded my preconceived notion that the rest of the world was somehow *different* from my home.

Yet, there were differences. My host mother could not understand why our country had a military, as Costa Rica had abolished theirs in the 1950s. My host family was considered upper-middle class by Costa Rican standards; the father was an architect and the mother was a teacher, both with master's degrees, yet their combined yearly income in U.S. dollars was approximately \$12,000. My host-brother, despite being twenty-one at the time, made the four-hour bus ride home from university every single weekend to be with his family, and there was no such thing as “nightlife” in Costa Rica, as the evenings were family time, with the occasional long-time neighbor mixed in. People are the same everywhere and—at the same time—they are different.

My experience in the Caribbean only served to reinforce my view of this duality. For every Rasta I met, there was an American, a Canadian, or a European. For every French descendant of the original colonists, there was an Aussie, a Kiwi, or a Brit. Who were these people? And what were they doing here? This challenged my original belief that we each had our own country, and outside of that was everyone else. I had never lived outside of a 25-mile radius from where I was born, yet here were people who were living in places that were thousands of miles from their original homes, and I wanted to find out why. Growing up in Los Angeles, I witnessed people arriving by the thousands from all over the world to

start new lives in the United States, yet here were people who were doing the exact opposite—and by choice! Many had started businesses, built homes, and raised families in their adopted homes. Whenever I met one of these transplanted people, I would ask them why they had moved, and—while their answers were complex and varied—one element always came up: they were happy.

Thus, I started college (and fell into anthropology) with all of these relatively new ideas about culture in terms of similarities and differences banging around in my head. Wanting to learn more, I took every course I could about other cultures. I took courses on Micronesia and the Middle East and the Netherlands. I even took a course on the Caribbean and another on Latin America, the very regions I had traveled to myself, excited to learn more about what I had seen in an academic setting.

However, the picture presented in all of these places did not match the one that I had seen for myself. Where were the expats? Where was the pervasive influence of American culture? Where were the tourist, the hip-hop, and the technology? Much of the source material I have been presented with during my undergraduate career has been from the 1980s or earlier, when many of my professors did their fieldwork. While still valuable in some ways, oftentimes this information might as well have been from the 1800s. The forces of globalization and change that I had seen pouring into every crack of life abroad were rarely explored, if even mentioned at all. I do not mean to imply that I believe that the world is culturally homogenous, as observing the way that each culture has adapted and changed outside influences to fit into their own way of life is, in my opinion, one of the most fascinating aspects of traveling. Many people are appalled at the idea of going somewhere as “American” as McDonalds in another country, but I always tell people that if they want to

see some of the most interesting differences between cultures, go to a McDonalds and see what is different. Have you ever had mayonnaise on your French fries at a McDonalds in Costa Rica? A Spam McGriddle in Hawaii? Or a McItaly in Florence?

I soon came to realize that many anthropologists had grown up in a world where these things had not existed, and thus could not see them as I did—and even those that did notice these elements often chose to ignore them. To them, anthropology was—and traditionally had always been—about studying the “other,” and those elements that did not fit into that way of thinking were ignored in favor of those that were seen as more “authentic.” While with the best intentions, I often found these portrayals to be a gross misrepresentation and oversimplification of the current situation in the world, one that I felt actually helped perpetuate many of the traditional anthropological stereotypes of these exotic places as barbaric, primitive, and somehow uncultured.

I strongly believe that one can look at the elements of a foreign culture that came from one’s own society, and that this is neither an insult nor an ethnocentric view of the circumstances. Much has been said on the topics of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, and I have no wish to add to this convoluted debate beyond the admission that I do not pretend—nor *intend* for that matter—to be unbiased in my approach to anthropological research. While this philosophy might put fear in the heart of the traditional anthropologist, I would argue that this method neither diminishes nor invalidates my ideas, but in fact gives them the credibility of honesty. We all see the world through the lens of our own individual cultures, for that is what culture truly is—an individual trait. While overlapping elements may bind us together and cause people to identify with others as part of a larger group, no two people on earth have had exactly the same experiences and

therefore do not have the exact same worldview. Similarly, while cultural relativism is an admirable goal, the notion that it can be achieved in an absolute sense is naïve to a point that has no place in the effervescent field of anthropology. The ideas contained in this thesis are my own, encouraged by the thoughts of others far more intelligent than myself, and should be read as such. Anyone else who might have traveled to the exact same places, attended the same classes, or came from the same neighborhood would have written a completely different thesis—and this is in and of itself a testament to our innate inability to fully view life from any experience other than own.

Thus, my choice of topic—being particularly non-traditional in anthropology—caused some challenges in the writing of this thesis. I wished to study the *privileged*, the *educated*, and the *colonizer* instead of the colonized. I wanted to study the Caribbean dismissed by others as a distortion of the “real” Caribbean—the Caribbean of beach resorts, golf courses, and offshore banking. There is no “real” Caribbean, and influences from the past twenty years are no less “real” in the lives of the people who reside there than the hundreds of years of history that also play a role. I do not wish to present my view as being counter to the opinions of those who have already written on this region or topic, but merely suggest that their thoughts are incomplete without the perspective of this addition, one that is all too often ignored in the field I love so much.

As such, I had a particularly difficult time receiving funding from the anthropology department, and I suspect that my fieldwork proposal was perceived as something akin to a vacation—a view that only serves to add further credibility to the importance of studying these disregarded issues. As a result, I was relegated to vigorously pursuing my research through the avenue of technology that my generation knows best—the Internet. However,



no matter how much content is put on the Internet, even if every page of every book and every scene of every movie one day appears online, there is a unique completeness to in-person interactions that can never be replaced, mimicked, or faked, and thus it is the biggest shame of this project that fieldwork experience—beyond what I have personally seen through my own travels—is not a part of this project.

I hope you enjoy reading this thesis half as much as I enjoyed writing it.

## **Chapter 1 – James the Accountant**

### **A Typical Monday**

It is a typical Monday at 9 A.M., and James Fulton, age 37, of Riverside, California, is driving down the road to his office, where he works as an accountant. However, instead of the dry desert heat he would have felt if he were driving to work back in the United States, James feels warm, wet air as he rolls down his window. James' history, on the surface, gives no hints as to how he ended up leaving the United States. James grew up, went to college, majored in accounting, and got a job working as an accountant at Ernst & Young in California and later Chicago (e-mail to author, February 10, 2010). But, in one fundamental way, James is different. James now lives and works on Grand Cayman in the Cayman Islands. James is an expat—a person living outside his native country.

James is part of an ever-growing trend of young professionals who have chosen to pursue career opportunities outside of the U.S. James had had lots of friends back in his home state of California, and—like most of them—James grew up speaking only English and had perhaps left the country for a road trip to Canada or maybe Spring Break in Mexico or the Bahamas. However, one day, James decided to move to Bermuda, leaving his home behind and moving his life and his job to a new country (e-mail to author, February 10, 2010). After two years, James made the subsequent move to the Cayman Islands, and this is where he can be found today. James is still legally an American and occupationally an accountant. Yet, somehow, James is different. I contacted James via e-mail after finding his profile online and asked if he would be willing to participate in my thesis, to which he gladly agreed to help.

## **A Sense of Belonging**

Many islands in the Caribbean have a long and complicated history when it comes to expatriates. In the neighboring British Overseas Territory of the Turks and Caicos, this is best exemplified by the use of the term “Belonger” as an official status (Sankar 2007). While the usual term for someone with full national rights would be citizen, the word *Belonger* expresses a sentiment of inclusion and exclusion—one that is often seen in traditional expatriate destinations such as the British Caribbean and is increasingly becoming prevalent in other regions as well. Many countries are now only allowing expats to seek temporary work permits or permanent residency status, a step below the full rights and privileges of a citizen (Amit 2001: 575). This status often can include lack of political rights, such as the right to vote or run for office, as well as significant economic barriers of entry in terms of gaining employment, starting a business, or even owning land. While the variety and intensity of barriers imposed by a particular government varies, this is a key method with which Caribbean nations and dependencies are attempting to protect their native citizenry from potentially overwhelming expatriate competition.

It should be said that some Caribbean nations are taking the opposite approach and are allowing financially able and interested expats to buy their way into citizenship by means of a process called Economic Citizenship. This method has become prominent in island nations such as Dominica and St. Kitts and Nevis, and is unofficially available in many other places through bribes (Andrews 2005).

Many Caribbean nations—the Cayman Islands being one of the main exemplifiers of this trend—have come to depend on a steady supply of highly skilled, expat labor to

maintain and grow their economies. Even countries that do not have large financial centers like the Cayman Islands have come to depend on expats to service the growing tourism and real estate booms that can be seen throughout the Caribbean. As expats arrive in greater numbers, governments often seek to satisfy the expats' demands for infrastructure that is more similar to that of their home countries. Modern international airports are established, ports that can fit cruise ships are built, mosquito populations are eradicated, highways are built, post offices are made more efficient, et cetera. It is of particular note that governments that often have no expats in office and very few expats even voting undertakes all of these changes on expats' behalf and that the native population often does not share in these benefits.

Despite some legal barriers, expats are not by any means defenseless in protecting themselves from potential exploitation that might occur due to their lack of citizenship. In fact, these global citizens often purposely maintain their original citizenship because of the benefits inherent in doing so, and are more than willing to trade local rights and representation for economic benefits only available to someone with their unique transnational status. Often expats utilize the tax benefits on a case-by-case basis of both their home country and the Caribbean nation in which they reside, and assets are often diversified between the two (or more) economies. It is here that the colonial status of many Caribbean territories, including the Cayman Islands, often comes into play, as elements of law from the controlling nation, in this case the United Kingdom, can be utilized to certain advantages. In this sense, the Caribbean, often considered to be less developed than the countries from which most expats hail, is more advanced in its cohesion

of the advantages of a globalized economy and active participation in the process of globalization at the level of the individual.

Because of its unique station as an intersection of U.S., European, and local laws and ideas about the world, the Caribbean has become a training ground for global citizenship. James is a perfect example of this growing phenomenon. When asked whether he would recommend moving to the Caribbean to others, James replied that expats tend to be “people who want to see the rest of the world and experience everything that life has to offer. That is why there are not many Americans here. Most of them believe there isn’t anything better out there, so there is no reason to leave. I disagree” (e-mail to author, February 10, 2010). It is interesting that he identifies Americans as, in his experience, less likely to be expats. I was surprised to discover that—despite most of the expats I consulted for my thesis being Americans—there did seem to be a consensus that they were relative exceptions to the rule and that Europeans, as well as people from other northern industrial societies, were considered much more adept at embracing the concept of becoming an expatriate.

When asked whether he identified more with his country of origin or his new Caribbean home, James—without hesitation—stated that he considers himself to be an American. However, despite his strong self-identification as an American in terms of citizenship, he expressed equal identification with the Cayman Islands because of what James called “lifestyle” (e-mail to author, February 10, 2010). I decided to press James on what he thought was incorporated by the term “lifestyle”.

## **Trading in the Rat Race for a Better Vibe**

“Thirty-five hour work weeks, no taxes, beautiful weather, a five minute commute, and a general laid back lifestyle fit my personality more than the “work until you drop” mentality back home. I was living in Chicago driving two hours each way in a snowstorm to work twelve-hour days, leaving myself with no time to enjoy life. This island provided me with the opportunity to work less, make more, and enjoy my personal life” (e-mail to author, February 10, 2010).

James brings up many of the issues that have come up time and time again in my research on the motivations expatriates have for leaving their home countries. The “work until you drop” mentality that James refers to is commonly referred to as the “rate race”. While the term originally referred to any endless, self-defeating, or pointless pursuit, it has come to commonly be associated with the inability to strike a work-life balance in modern industrial society. Thus, the concept of “escaping the rat race” is a key goal expressed by many expats. Though many still work, they do so in less demanding environments, often with significantly increased quality of life.

Many may find it curious to hear James, a California native, claim that one of the key factors in his decision to move to the Caribbean was the weather, and in fact many expats I have come across do hail from cold climates such as England, Northern Europe, Canada, and the Midwestern and Northeastern United States. However, no matter where an expat is from and where they move to, weather is almost always brought up as one of the positive factors of the move. The Caribbean is especially desirable with its consistent year-round warm weather, beautiful beaches, and plethora of accessible outdoor activities. Many expats cite the fact that they now have time for a more active and healthy lifestyle as a key factor in their motivation for escaping the rat race.

However, this does not answer the fundamental question: why the Caribbean? While expats often have the option to move to a great number of destinations across the

world, I have found their relocation choice to be determined by a combination of three general factors. The first is a preconceived—and often largely romanticized—notion of the location. The second is almost always financial; the expat is almost always seeking some form of economic improvement. Finally, the last factor is uniquely personal, and—whether it is political, social, or even environmental—it can be most effectively described as “vibe”.

### **Yo ho... Yo ho...**

James’ reasons for choosing the Caribbean, and—more specifically in his case—Grand Cayman in the Cayman Islands clearly exemplifies the three factors that expats often use to determine their relocation site. When asked, James cited movies like “Cocktail”, where Tom Cruise serves as a bartender in Jamaica, as his initial image of the Caribbean (e-mail to author, February 10, 2010). Since 1916, when the movie *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* was filmed in the Bahamas (using then-groundbreaking, underwater-camera technology), the Caribbean has been a popular filming location for many blockbuster films. Throughout my research, expats would often cite well-known films such as various James Bond movies, *The Firm*, and—more recently—*The Pirates of the Caribbean* movies as having influenced their view of the Caribbean long before they had moved there. For many who had never been to the Caribbean, these movies were their only window to the region. I was somewhat surprised that almost every expat I consulted—despite many having now lived and traveled extensively in the region—still identified with such a movie as having had originally sparked their curiosity and caused them to dream of, as James put it, “crystal blue waters on white sand beaches” (email to author, February 10, 2010).

## **Money Talks**

The next aspect that I found interesting in talking to James was regarding his decision to relocate to the Cayman Islands in terms of the financial aspect. As a relatively expensive country that depends mostly on imports, I was curious what James felt the economic advantages were. James is still working, and thus had a different set of criteria than the many retired expats that move to the Caribbean. Additionally, James—unlike many expats looking to change careers—was looking for opportunities where he could continue his work as an accountant. For this reason, James focused on financial centers where he could more easily find employment. He considered the Caymans, the Channel Islands, and even Australia (e-mail to author, February 10, 2010). Another factor these locations had in common were that they spoke James' native language of English.

Language came up often as a point of concern for expats. Some viewed it as a barrier to employment or integration; while others viewed a different language as a challenge or even benefit; while still others found it no trouble because they already spoke the language, though—for the purposes of my research at least—always as a second language, as I was most interested in expats who had no previous ancestral connection to the place they would relocate to.

James found that the Cayman Islands fit the bill when it came to finding a job. However, a job, and the salary and benefits that come with it, cannot be viewed in a vacuum. Why would James leave his high paying job in the U.S. for what was essentially an equivalent job on Grand Cayman? James cited several reasons for this that are a good



representation of why a working expat might choose to leave the U.S. for another job market.

Taxes, taxes, and more taxes. This is by far the most cited reason why expats felt that they are economically better off than they had been in the U.S. The Cayman Islands are a particularly good example in that there is no income tax, virtually no property tax, and many other things that are taxed in the U.S. remain tax-free. The one main counterpoint to this phenomenon is that there is an import tax on all goods, making the cost of living on the expensive side, but more of this seems to come from the economic realities of living on a non-self-sustaining island, rather than having anything to do with a philosophical or political desire to tax residents. Not only does this lack of taxes mean that James makes more money than he did back in the U.S., but this seems to fulfill a deeply held personal belief among many expats with regards to keeping what they earn.

Now that he lives far away from his hometown friends and family, I asked James about the dynamics of his relationships in his new home. Because the Grand Cayman is a well-established expat destination, James confirmed that he is friends with many expats from the U.S., Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, among others. However, he was confident in adding that he interacts with people born in the Caribbean on a daily basis (e-mail to author, February 10, 2010). In the Cayman Islands, most of the people from the Caribbean are either native Caymanians or Jamaican, and many of James' coworkers are not expats. However, James did note an interesting phenomenon: "expats tend to group together by region" (e-mail to author, February 10, 2010). Because there is a relatively low number of Americans in the Cayman Islands compared to other expat groups,

James admits that most of his close friends are Canadian (e-mail to author, February 10, 2010).

As James pulls into his parking space at his office, he wonders where he will be three years from now, once his seven-year nonrenewable work permit has expired. His South African coworker has been telling him about the growing opportunities available in Hong Kong, but he has always wanted to live in Europe, and he knows someone who has connections in Monaco...

## **Chapter 2 – The Caribbean: A Colonial Legacy**

*“Finally, in one word, their Ambition and Avarice, then which the heart of Man never entertained greater, and the vast Wealth of those Regions; the Humility and Patience of the Inhabitants (which made their approach to these Lands more facil and easie) did much promote the business” (De Las Casas 1552).*

### **The Caribbean**

Colonialism. There are not many words that hold the same amount of universal stigma—so much so that it has become difficult to study the topic objectively. However, I will attempt to offer an interpretation devoid of the blurred lens that often accompanies hatred of a general term by examining specific aspects of colonialism which—for better or worse—can still be seen in today’s society. The Caribbean has had perhaps one of the most complicated histories with colonialism—to the point where it is impossible to discuss one without the other. Their identities are—and will always remain—inexorably interlinked. As famed scholar in the study of the Caribbean region Franklin W. Knight sees it: “ever since the entry of man into the Caribbean region, there have been two contradictory patterns at work. One trend has been toward homogeneity, the other toward diversity” (1978: xiii). There may be no other equally diverse region in the world. The Caribbean is not only a stew of English, French, Dutch, Spanish, Flemish, African, and indigenous cultural elements but also includes influences from Asia, South America, North America, Africa, Europe, et cetera ad infinitum. It is at once on the fringes of global society—and our minds—and at its very center. Through the Caribbean, a world can be seen that is harmony and chaos, peace and war, love and hate. There is even dispute as to which areas should be included as a part of the “real” Caribbean. For the purposes of this project, any landmass

that touches the geological Caribbean Sea may be considered as part of the region, though economic, political, and social elements are far more important than geography in considering the factors of a shared identity in the Caribbean—a deep colonial history chief among them.

## **The First Age of Colonialism**

“They willingly traded everything they had. But they seemed to me a people very short of everything’ – Christopher Columbus, Friday, October 12, 1492” (Knight 1978: 3).

The Caribbean has always had a tradition of sharing, and Christopher Columbus’ first impression is still true today in many ways. However, this trait also served to facilitate the devastation—albeit one that was likely inevitable regardless—of an entire society. At the first meeting between Europeans and the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean—as in much of the Americas—the Europeans had vastly superior technology, especially in the realm of military armaments. This is not to say that the peoples of the Americas did not have significant advancements of their own, or that they were in some way a “lesser” people, but merely that the Europeans had the distinct military advantage due to their technological superiority and could thus establish themselves with a minimum number of soldiers—something that was essential due to the Caribbean’s lack of proximity to mainland Europe (and reinforcements). While minor skirmishes had erupted from time to time between the various tribes, the peoples of the Caribbean simply had neither the unification nor the experience in large-scale warfare to prohibit such an invasion of their territories. Even if they had had the means to resist for a time, it is unlikely that they would have, since the intentions of the Europeans were not fully recognized or understood until it

was far too late. In a matter of years, the native population of the Caribbean was reduced to a fraction of its original size. While it is debatable exactly how much native influence remained into the following centuries and today, it is clear that the degree was significantly lessened by the events of colonialism.

## **Microcosm Society**

One of the main reasons the native peoples of the Caribbean were disallowed a place in the new colonial order was due to the fact that the express purpose of this new society was to form a microcosm of European society in the Caribbean, and a native population simply did not fit into this view of the clean slate needed to recreate a modern Europe. As Knight so eloquently relates, the original European colonists “yearned for facsimile representations of what they thought they left behind” (1978: 41). Down to the last brick, article of clothing, and item of food, the colonists attempted to recreate what was—in their minds—the representation of the highest point of culture and sophistication in an emerging global society. Despite the obvious modifications that geography, climate, and nature demanded of the colonists, a stubborn resistance remained to do anything that could be seen as lacking a certain authenticity from mainland Europe.

“In this way, the colonies could become viable, semi-autonomous communities and attractive recipients for what was then commonly considered an increasingly superfluous European population” (Knight 1978: 52).

This “superfluous population” saw their lives in reference to the cultural center that was their homeland. In this way, they attempted to fit a way of life to an environment that was categorically unfit to receive it—the classic attempt to get the square peg to fit through the round hole. However, mankind is at its most resourceful when it comes to reputation,

and thus the colonies slowly beat back the elements of nature that would have stopped them and established what—with the exception of the humidity (which did not stop people from wearing the same fashions as were popular at the time in Europe) and crystal-blue Caribbean waters—could have easily been mistaken for Europe. In fact, many colonists came to prefer the warm climate of the Caribbean to the harsh winters of Europe. Nevertheless, these settlers never ceased to identify with the culture of their home countries, and resisted adaptation to a Caribbean lifestyle in every way possible to the point that it never truly became their home. Most colonists, if they could afford it, returned to their countries of origin to take advantage of the educational institutions there, and one's education was often not considered “complete” without initiation into the culture of the metropolis.

“Small in number, diverse in background, varied in original culture, this group possessed the economic and political power within the society and exercised an inordinate influence on local culture. The Caribbean, after all, served the purposes of Europe and the Europeans” (Knight 1978: 124).

## **Slavery**

The Caribbean was one of the first regions in the new world to experience the institution of slavery and the plantation society. As the native population—which had initially been used as a labor force—continued to dwindle, European landowners in the Caribbean saw it as essential to import a new labor force that could work to help meet the explosion of demand that was occurring in Europe for the products produced in the Caribbean. Africa became the most common source of slave labor in the Caribbean, and today there remains a predominantly Afro-Caribbean population on many of the islands. The immense demand in Europe for sugar and other cash crops led to an exploitation

society, one that—as in the United States—was oftentimes so cruel that its ramifications are still being dealt with today.

## **The Modern Caribbean**

“Without even counting cruise ship passengers, 14 million visitors descended on the Caribbean islands in 1995. Over the course of a year, they vastly outnumber the native inhabitants. Some 600,000 came to Sint Maarten, 13 square miles with a population of 32,000; 400,000 went to the Cayman Islands, home to 36,000.” (Rogozinski 1999: 351).

Always at the center and yet always on the fringe, the Caribbean is at once both the epicenter and the tailwind of this new force: globalization—the crux of which will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. Regardless, the telecommunications revolution that has taken place in the last twenty years has done more to change the face of the Caribbean than all of the wars, turmoil, and political revolutions of the last century. The proliferation of offshore banking has also contributed vastly to both the image and reality of Caribbean society. It is ironic that it is the contrast between the Caribbean’s perceived “remoteness” and the contrary nature of its actual proximity and accessibility to the United States and other industrialized nations that has helped mark it as a desirable location for global finance, tourism, and real estate. To see the Caribbean only as an extension of a colonial legacy of slavery would be to misrepresent it as an incomplete thought—a region stuck in the historical past. The Caribbean is a region alive with both a distinctly varied cultural history and a tumultuous global modernity. However, regardless of lessons from the past, history tends to repeat itself, and a new wave of peoples has been coming to the Caribbean in ever-increasing numbers, searching for sun—each with his or her own image of what they might find and create in this new land of opportunity.

## **Chapter 3 – Bob the Real Estate Developer**

*“The Caribbean’s allure comes in part from the idea that it is a place where one can escape from the wider world. A photograph of a perfect beach suggests that time has stood still. History has not swept through the place with buildings or roads or even people. The beach will remain unchanged, the photograph suggests. It beckons with an invocation of timelessness”(Broneman 2007: 1).*

### **Up and Coming**

Many expat destinations around the world have been developed and occupied to the point where real estate prices and other costs-of-living now rival—or in some cases even exceed—those in the U.S. Because of this, some international pioneers continue to search for a new frontier—one that they believe will become the next staging ground for the expansion of the expat community. One such trailblazer is an American named Bob Michaels. Bob is the real estate developer behind one of the largest and most successful developments in the emerging expat destination of Nicaragua. Nicaragua has been termed “the next Costa Rica” by the international real estate community, and expats are eyeing the country with excitement. I found Bob through his company’s website and decided to recruit him for participation in my thesis. Because it is in his best interest to convince people to become expats, I was curious to see what kind of marketing strategies he was using to effectively drive the relocation phenomenon. I was also interested in Bob’s own expat experience, as he practices what he preaches. Bob’s family, which includes his wife and two young daughters, moved to Nicaragua with him in 2002 (e-mail to author, December 31, 2009). His daughters now attend a German school where there are only about fifty non-Nicaraguan students out of one thousand. Thus, Bob reports that he and his family interact with Nicaraguans on a daily basis, that many of their close friends are locals,



and that they are “immersed in the local society and culture” (e-mail to author, December 31, 2009). Bob ended up being an incredible resource in terms of the political, legal, economic, and psychological aspects involved in becoming an expat, and his expertise on expats as a virtual community is significant. He provided me with statistical surveys with data on expats as well as with several sources describing the complex differences in economic infrastructure between developing nations such as Nicaragua and countries such as the United States.

Nearly every expat destination seems to go through a familiar cycle. A place is initially “discovered”, and a few entrepreneurial expats move there to take advantage of the budding opportunities in the region to serve the impending influx of expats to follow. Next, these expats report home—through both marketing and personal communication—as to the immense benefits of moving to their choice location. As a result, the incoming trickle of expats turns first to a steady river, and eventually into a flooding torrent, as people rush to claim the available land in limited prime locations for an affordable price. Finally, the prices in a region level off—at least in terms of real estate—at near U.S. levels. The flood reduces itself back to a trickle as a few more risk-averse latecomers—usually with somewhat higher economic means—continue to wander in. Then, the cycle renews itself somewhere else, as Bob—or people like him—find new locations in which to recreate the cycle again. This adventurous expat is the type of person who is achieving the highest economic reward from the expat phenomenon, as they are constantly getting in ahead of the curve and then capitalizing on those that follow them.

## **Home Away from Home**

“The Baby Boomer consumer wants what they remember having as children, walkable, human-scale communities where they saw their neighbors regularly and enjoyed a pleasant conversation on a front porch. They are loath to give up, however, today’s conveniences associated with modern residential and suburban product” ([Redacted] Development Ltd. 2009).

This quote is taken directly from the Executive Summary of Bob’s Development Company and reveals some key points that are often brought up in the conversation about expats. Foremost is the concept of the Baby Boomer generation. This generation is seen as not only being a disproportionately large population group, but also as having cumulatively amassed an immense amount of wealth. Bob’s company seeks to capitalize on the nostalgia factor with regards to many of these Baby Boomers, and his developments are built to play on certain stereotypical components of traditional American communities. Developers like Bob believe that marketing a product that gives expats “a sense of the familiar to their environment” ([Redacted] Development Ltd. 2009) is the key to creating a financially successful expat development.

It became clear through my conversations with a wide range of expats that they are—in general—willing to go without some of the familiar comforts of their countries of origin. However, while the dividing line varied widely, nearly all of them expressed a limit to the things they were willing to compromise on when it came to adapting to their new environments. Bob recognizes this as a key element in attracting expats to his developments. Bob’s promotional material mentions countless times the amenities, services, and infrastructure that will be available in Nicaragua at a fraction of the cost they would be in the U.S. The development features a beach club, bar, restaurant, 18-hole golf course, tennis courts, marina, spa, shopping, and equestrian center ([Redacted] Development Ltd. 2009). In addition, the houses and condos themselves increase the

feeling of familiarity for expats with elements such as flat-screen TVs, granite countertops, dishwashers, washing machines, swimming pools, and countless other features. However, these artificial changes are relatively small in comparison to the massive infrastructure modifications that are undertaken to meet the demands of such a concentrated expat development. Roads are paved, bridges are built, power lines are installed, and sidewalks are put in. In addition, underground utilities are installed for electric, water, and sewer systems, and fiber-optic telecommunication is put in. Additionally, it is becoming increasingly common to find familiar consumer products in foreign countries, partly as a result of already established expats, and so a newly arriving expat is able to find many of the items he or she is used to from home.

All of these elements combine to create an environment that is far more reminiscent of the expats' home countries than of the host country—in this case Nicaragua. While certain local elements are somewhat visible, such as the incorporation of locally influenced architecture, as well as maintenance of acres of natural forest and miles of beaches, it is indisputable that this development—and the countless others like it—is clearly geared to attract Americans and other potential expats, and that—with only very rare exceptions—native citizens will not be buying property in these developments. While these projects often are out of the price range of all but the most wealthy locals, beachfront homes at such a low relative price are a significant draw for those expats looking to retire, but find the prices in their home country too high to afford. With all of the familiar services and infrastructure in place—at least in the immediate vicinity of one's Nicaraguan residence—retirees can feel right at home. This, coupled with the added buying power of the expat's home currency—which can often lead to the attainability of previously unaffordable

luxuries such as a housekeeper or gardener—makes one of Bob’s developments a hard opportunity to pass up for potential expats, especially in the face of rising costs in many expats’ home countries.

## **Snowbirds**

With the increasing number of international airports that can accommodate large aircraft, more destinations are becoming easily accessible from popular expat home countries in North America and Europe. Governments and corporations alike are investing in highways, railroads, and other transportation in order to facilitate the mass influx of tourists and expats to their destinations of choice. Airlines have also joined the fray and have begun to offer more frequent and direct flights to locations that previously had sparse coverage. This has allowed more people to split their time between their country of origin and their foreign retreat. Whereas in the past moving abroad was a vast undertaking, expats today with enough economic means essentially do not have to choose where they want to live. In a few hours you can be in a completely different country, and many parts of the Caribbean are even in the same time zone as much of the U.S., thus adding to the ease of traveling back and forth. Because of this, many expats are now actually continuing to maintain a home in their country of origin and spend varying amounts of time back home visiting friends and relatives. The term “snowbird” stems from the fact that these expats often visit their home countries during times when the weather is warmer, and subsequently fly away before the snow arrives. Bob’s development—and many others like it—takes advantage of this increasing trend by offering onsite rental and property

management services in order to provide for those who are not at their Nicaraguan residence full time.

## **A Multiple Country Strategy**

One interesting element of Bob's development company is that it not only has property in Nicaragua, but it also maintains developments in Belize, Costa Rica, Panama and Argentina. It would seem that focusing on a particular country or region would be more efficient from a business standpoint, but Bob explains that the diversification "serves the Boomer consumer's demand for location, climate, and amenity choice" ([Redacted] Development Ltd. 2009). In terms of building expat communities, Bob focuses more on the shared origins of the people who will populate his developments and less on the countries in which they reside. While each country has its own elements that influence the development's architectural style and amenities, there are more similarities than differences between projects.

Bob is fulfilling the supply for a rapidly increasing demand for expat developments in countries with cheaper costs-of-living, and once the Nicaraguan development is fully completed, Bob will likely decide to scout a new region for the possibility of yet another new development.

## **Chapter 4 – A Global Idea**

*“It takes only the merest acquaintance with the facts of the modern world to note that it is now an interactive system in a sense that is strikingly new” (Appadurai 1996: 27).*

### **Imagined Communities**

It is much easier to define a community that can be seen on a map. Whether it is a neighborhood, city, or country—physical borders bound communities in readily visible ways. But there is another aspect that bids communities together that is just as—if not more—important than lines on a map: imagination.

*“It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson 1983: 6).*

As long as there is a group of people who identify as part of whole, a community exists. Extended relatives, religious orders, and even computer game enthusiasts all have the ability to form and maintain a shared identity as part of a larger group. Expatriates are, in this sense of the definition, a community—one that is formed through a set of perceived shared experiences and means of identification.

### **Ticket to Anywhere**

*“The contours of citizenship are represented by the passport—the regulatory instrument of residence, travel, and belonging” (Ong 1999: 120).*

While it may seem counterintuitive at first glance, the expat clings to his or her passport as a symbol of his or her status as part of the expat community. While a passport usually ties people to their country of origin—a concept categorically opposed to that of

being an expat—it is the way in which expats utilize their passport that signifies them as unique. Many expats—even after many years abroad—are loath to give up the passport of their country of origin, as oftentimes there are legal benefits for maintaining that citizenship. While the goal of many immigrants is to obtain the citizenship status of one's new country to be able to receive full rights and protections, expats often see their original citizenship as more valuable. Additionally, many expats are proud of their ability to maintain multiple passports and citizenships in various nations, and to take advantage of the benefits of each nation while avoiding the downsides. It is now possible—and increasingly common in the expat community—to pay taxes in one country, invest in another, and own real estate in yet another. *Economic* citizenship is far more important in the expat community than is any allegiance to one's country of origin for moral or sentimental reasons. Citizenship is less of a personal identity and more of an *asset*—one that can be leveraged for personal gain.

## **Why Not Immigrant?**

There are several key elements that bind the expat community together, despite the fact that it is spread across virtually the entire world. The first is that expatriates choose to self-identify as “expats” instead of immigrants, despite the definitional similarities of these two terms. The difference is in expats ability to assert their status as not only having the means to move successfully between countries but also in their ability to remain mobile in a global economy. Unlike immigrants who attempt to attain economic capital and then convert that into cultural and social capital in order to be accepted in their new society,

expats are already entering the scene with economic capital and also are oftentimes not viewing it as necessary to convert their economic capital into social or cultural capital.

“Location, then, is a form of intertwined economic/cultural capital...Education, degrees, property, and green cards, more than wealth itself, are the cultural capital sought [by immigrants] as the steps toward being accepted by the host society” (Ong 1999: 92-96).

Whereas immigrants often start their new lives in unpopular locations and work to one-day move to a more desirable area, expats most often start out in the most sought-after location available. The contrast here is subtle: the expatriate, by using economic capital to keep the focus on his or her country of origin, inherently chooses to reject the notion of assimilation and the potential for upward mobility that the immigrant seeks.

## **Newsflash**

“Electronic media give a new twist to the environment within which the modern and the global often appear as flip sides of the same coin” (Appadurai 1996: 3).

It would be hard to dispute that a person’s worldview is directly impacted, at least in some degree, by the news. And not only the news gotten from television or newspapers but also the news that is received from friends, family, and the conversations we overhear. These sources of information are how people are able to process what is going on around them, and also have a profound impact on who is perceived as part of one’s community. Expats masterfully use a network of sources to acquire their news in order to stay connected with both their countries of origin as well as with other expats. In fact, it can be said that an expat is always at the very least simultaneously part of three distinct communities: the local, the original, and the expatriate.



While expats receive their local information from a combination of personal interactions and local resources, they access the rest of their news in other ways. For news from one's country of origin, expats most often rely on the same news sources as they did at home—albeit most likely in online format as opposed to paper—and many expats I spoke to reported reading the newspaper from their country or locality of origin at least as often as their local news, if not more (e-mail to author, February 10, 2010). This, combined with regular correspondence from family and friends, gives expats the ability to stay almost as connected to their community of origin as ever. Because many expats share the same countries of origin, this news can also serve as a supplement to the third type of news source that expats use: expat news.

Expatriate news has become an immensely important business in recent years. There are blogs, TV and radio shows, newsletters, newspapers, and more. But there is one thing these sources all have in common: the Internet. Expats get this portion of their news almost exclusively online, and thus it serves to bind them together in a way that is both simultaneous and interactive. The simultaneity of the news that expats receive is essential in their sense of community in that it enables them to experience and respond to events as a group. In addition, the interactivity of the Internet allows expats to instantly share photos, feedback, and advice to others in their community. In fact, it is possible that expats—due to their technological aptitude, networking abilities, and mobility—interact more with fellow community members than do those living within a traditional nation-state.

## **Ex-Patriot**

While an expatriate is by definition simply one who lives outside of his or her native country, many of the expats I consulted—in addition to those in the source material—seemed to suggest a rejection of the notion of the nation-state, or at least patriotism, as a defining quality of their identity. While true for some, I do not mean to imply that expats as a whole hate or even dislike their country of origin; however, many expats do have a marked disdain for “the near-pathological character of nationalism” (Anderson: 1983: 141). While it did vary by individual, I got a real sense that expats defined their nationality in a highly fluid sense, and that “transnational mobility and maneuvers mean that there is a new mode of constructing identity” (Ong 1999: 18). I also noticed a trend that the longer a person had been an expat, the more flexible their concept of their national identity became.

“Although citizenship is conventionally thought of as based on political rights and participation within a sovereign state, globalization has made economic calculation a major element in diasporan subjects’ choice of citizenship” (Ong 1999: 112).

Despite the variations in citizenship rights, residency laws, countries of origin, and local environments, expatriates universally hold on to the one portion of their identity that is, ironically, intransigent: expatriate.

## **Detachment**

“In their quest to accumulate capital and social prestige in the global arena, [expats] emphasize, and are regulated by, practices favoring flexibility, mobility, and repositioning in relation to markets, governments, and cultural regimes” (Ong 1999: 6).

There is a freedom in the ability to identify with a community that is both immune to and uncontainable within the boundaries of a traditional nation-state. Expats are able to detach themselves from the guilt associated with being a member of an imperialist power—assuaging oneself of the perceived encumbrance of dirty politics, rampant

religiosity, corrupt capitalism, or any number of other ailments that one might find particularly irksome about their society of origin. Expats almost never—even in countries with few language and culture barriers—achieve the same level of sociopolitical awareness and involvement that they once had in their country of origin. By remaining somewhat detached from one’s new location and maintaining strong ties to one’s country of origin through news media and other inherently negative sources, expats are able to constantly reaffirm their decision to move abroad. The longer an expat lives in a given country, the harder the ailments of that society are to ignore, but by remaining an expat first and citizen second (if at all), expatriates are often able to remain uninhibited by the social responsibility of engaging in debate and action toward the betterment of their local society. And, due to their mobility, expats can always move again.

## **Time Machine**

Expats tend to be obsessed with time. Time is money. Time flies when you’re having fun. Island time. One of the biggest reasons expats become expats is so that they can regain possession of what they perceive to be their most valuable asset—time. But they are also obsessed with time in a different sense. No matter where an expat is from and regardless of where he or she has relocated, expats virtually all attribute their new location as being similar in some way to a bygone era of their country of origin. This is not surprising, as globalization has spread the concept of different locations on earth existing at different “times”—usually with a Eurocentric view of what the base time is. Many expat destinations, often third-world or developing nations, are seen as “earlier” in their development and therefore more analogous to a certain past date in a fully industrialized

nation. However, these perceptions of past decades are largely based on recreations of the past by corporations seeking to capitalize on nostalgia by focusing only on the positive attributes of previous generations.

“Americans themselves are hardly in the present anymore as they stumble into the mega-technologies of the twenty-first century garbed in the film-noir scenarios of sixties’ chills, fifties’ diners, forties’ clothing, thirties’ houses, twenties’ dances, and so on ad infinitum. As far as the United States is concerned, one might suggest that the issue is... a social *imaginaire* built largely around reruns” (Appadurai 1996: 30).

This conjures up varying images of a black-and-white “Leave It To Beaver” episode with everyone always smiling—a place where there is no crime and everyone knows everyone else’s name. This uncomfortably one-sided view of the “good-old days” is often transferred to the dialogue surrounding the way many emerging nations are viewed. They are seen as having the “family values of the fifties” or the “laid back attitude of the sixties” as if they somehow exist in an alternate-time universe. Expats often seek to recreate these stereotypes upon their arrival to their new country of residence, even if their vision is far from the reality of the situation at hand. This is a task that can be variably difficult depending on the location and an expat’s particular resources. There seems to be a shared belief that there is something wrong with the *present*. While literally going back in time may be impossible, expats have found a way to cheat the laws of physics and move to a place that—from their perspective—incorporates the elements of a simpler, preferable time.

## **Virtual Neighborhoods**

What exactly is a *community*? The most obvious definition is a group of people living together in one place. While many expats do tend to live in concentrated areas with

other expats—or even set up zones specifically for expats—this is but a part of the multi-regional community that is the focus of this research. There are alternative, commonly accepted definitions to the term *community*—such as groups sharing a particular characteristic in common or those feeling a fellowship with others due to common attitudes, interests, or goals—but there is a traditional perception that these communities are in some way *less of a community* than their physical counterparts. I wish to attempt to challenge this conception and argue that what Appadurai terms “virtual neighborhoods” can be as legitimate in terms of communal interactivity and connectivity as their “real” counterparts.

“These new forms of electronically mediated communication are... no longer bounded by territory, passports, taxes, elections, and other conventional political diacritics” (Appadurai 1996: 195).

Legal citizenship to a particular country is replaced by self-identification as part of a transnational community of expats, and passports are replaced by access to the Internet. These artificial communities share, teach, support, and enjoy. These communities do not partake in bitter politics, war, or tax—and thus they are a desirable alternative to prospective members. It would be an oversimplification to say that an identity derived from a virtual community is mutually exclusive from a more traditional identification, especially because “these virtual neighborhoods are able to mobilize ideas, opinions, moneys, and social linkages that often directly flow back into lived neighborhoods (Appadurai 1996: 195). Expats form their identities through an interweaving of their (often multiple) traditional identities with their identification with the virtual expat community—one that is no less important, and certainly not mutually exclusive of, their physical community.

## **Chapter 5 – Suburbia**

### **The United States of Suburbia**

Most people, if asked to describe the United States, would likely talk about the famous cities of America—Chicago, New York, San Francisco—or else the great agrarian tradition of rural America. However, this image of the U.S. does not reflect recent reality and is largely outdated. As of 1970, more people have lived in suburbs than either cities or rural areas, and as of 1990 there are more suburbanites than all other groups combined (Jurca 2001:160). For better or worse, America is a suburban nation. It is not my intention to judge the merits of this trend, but pointing out this fact is necessary for the purposes of discussing the ways in which the expat movement relates to suburbia. Is expatriacy merely an extension of the movement toward suburban living? This is the pertinent question that will be discussed in detail in this chapter. However, the comparison of expats to suburbanites begs the question—what is the significance of suburbs in the first place?

“Considered as a kind of heterotopic ‘mirror’ to mainstream American culture, the suburb instead emerges as a place that reflects both an idealized image of middle-class life and specific cultural anxieties about the very elements of society that threaten this image. Indeed, the notion of suburbia as an America heterotopia suggests long-held utopian and dystopian views of suburban life to be really two sides of the same coin, evidence of our culture’s uneasy relationship to a landscape that mirrors both the fantasies and the phobias of the culture at large” (Beuka 2004:7–8).

This quote is from Robert Beuka’s book entitled *SuburbiaNation*, which covers in detail the increased trend toward suburban living in America. The concept of the suburban home representing the utopian ideal of the “American Dream” has become a symbolic image of American society, one that ironically began in the cities themselves. By its very

definition suburbia is sub-*urban*, an extension of the urban landscape, and one that is dependant on a city to even exist.

However, even this longstanding view has recently become obsolete, as, “by the mid-1990s, suburb-to-suburb commutes accounted for up to 40 percent of total commutes in the United States, while the once-traditional suburb-to-city commute accounted for only 20 percent of all such trips” (Beuka 2004:239). With increased technology, industry has become decentralized, allowing more and more people to both live and work in the suburbs. Communities that emulate suburbs are also increasingly being built without an adjacent city, demonstrating the ability of this type of suburban society to survive in areas that by definition technically are no longer suburbs. Many suburbs have grown so large that many people who live in cities actually commute to work in the suburbs, thereby challenging the notion that suburbs are always solely dependent on their adjacent city.

## **Nostalgia, Florida**

The rise of suburban communities has not by any means been an unplanned phenomenon. Gated communities, master-planned developments, and other types of insular subdivisions have been carefully designed to meet the demand of the unprecedented number of suburbanites. One of the most extreme examples of this trend, Celebration, Florida, was built by Disney Corporation to embody the ideal suburban community. While this particular project is relatively extreme, it can serve as an important example with which to highlight the elements planned communities attempt to incorporate to attract residents.

“A promotional video for Celebration describes the town as a place of “innocence,” of “caramel apples and cotton candy, secret forts and Fourth of July parades. Of spaghetti dinners and school bake sales, lollipops and fireflies in a jar.” Trading on patriotic images of a bygone America and on the innocence of youth, Celebration proposes to create, out of thin air, a sense of place and “tradition” that will unite the community that comes to live there. At the same time, rigid control of landscape design by the Disney Corporation suggests the extent to which Celebration’s image of community and proposed “sense of place” will spring from Disney’s own micromanagement of the environment. As journalist Russ Rymer notes, it seems that in Celebration, the Disney Corporation is attempting to foster a sense of community through ‘curb heights, window dimensions, sidewalk placement, and a thousand other design elements’” (Beuka 2004:9—10).

Disney has, in Celebration, perfected a method of recreating nostalgia for the mythical “innocence” that many believe must have at one time existed in American culture. Many other creators of suburban communities, although not usually to this extent, have attempted to tap into these emotions in order to drive buyers to their developments. The sophistication of these neighborhoods is astounding, as many have private security, golf courses, country clubs, parks, maintained landscapes, along with a whole host of regulations relating to everything from parking to noise to mailbox color—all aimed at the goal of creating the “perfect” place to live.

### **“Another Shitty Day in Paradise”**

So reads a popular bumper sticker, one that might appear on a car that sits in the driveway of a suburban home. This expression exemplifies the feelings of self-criticism that have come to be intertwined with life in the suburbs. Despite the fact that many suburbanites are far more fortunate than most of the country and certainly more than most of the world, many residents of these communities are still able to find reasons to feel sorry for themselves—a long commute, high taxes, the lack of proximity of the nearest Whole



Foods. In *White Diaspora*, Catherine Jurca discusses the ability of the American suburb “ to convert the rights and privileges of living there into spiritual, cultural, and political problems of displacement, in which being white and middle class is imagined to have as much or more to do with subjugation as with social dominance” (Jurca 2001:4). Even its own inhabitants commonly see the suburbs as lacking culture, and many feel that they have no choice but to live in the suburbs. They must live close enough to the city in order to maintain their connection to “culture” and urban attractions, and yet far enough away to avoid the perceived negative aspects of cities—namely crime, congestion and bad schools. This perception, coupled with images of every house in the suburbs looking essentially the same, every restaurant and grocery store being part of a chain, and the people being predominantly white, effectively strips suburbanites of the ability to establish a legitimate cultural identity.

### **Have One’s Cake and Eat It Too**

Expats are masters at having their cake and eating it too. Expats desire the safety and security of suburbs without giving up the exciting cultural aspects of city life. They want a gate that controls who gets in, without limiting their own ability to “get out.” Much of the original idealization of the American suburb is gone, and people are even starting to move back into the cities and rebel against what they perceive to be the suburban non-culture. Living in suburbia, once a symbol of success and “making it” is now a further extension of the rat race lifestyle, and has become so common that it hardly remains a status symbol in and of itself. So many people live in the suburbs that they have begun to embody the very reasons that caused the flight from cities in the first place. Traffic, tall

buildings, high real estate prices, crime, and, for some, the increased presence of minority groups, are driving people further and further from the traditional “center”. Expats, many of whom hail from the suburbs, are leaving their homes behind for a new base in a foreign country.

These new houses often have many of the same elements of nostalgia and security that drew them to the suburbs initially, but enable their owners to live closer to another culture and retain their sense of individuality. It might seem at first contradictory that moving to another country, especially one in which most of the other residents are inherently less well off and of a different culture, but many suburbanites are used to feeling “white”. Despite the fact that they may rarely interact with people who are different from them, suburban dwellers are well versed—through the media, popular movies and TV shows, and brief excursions into “the city”—in their role as insular members of society. Most suburbanites are familiar with the analogy that where they live can be seen in terms of a “bubble”, somehow separate from the world that is “real” and is going on around them without their knowledge. As a result, ex-suburbanite expats might find their newly adopted country of residence to be an improvement over their previous position, as they can be seen by fellow expats and non-expats alike as “cultured” and “adventurous”, while still maintaining the safety and security that comes from increased buying power.

## **Expatriate Nation**

One of the most important, if not the most important, factors that expats take into consideration when searching for a new home is safety. For many of the same reasons—some real, some a result of paranoia—that people moved to the suburbs, expats choose

their site of relocation with great care. Traditionally popular expat destinations—mostly current and former British colonies—are also often the safest, not only in terms of overall crime, but also in terms of crimes against expats and tourists. This sense of security, especially one of not being “targeted”, is an important consideration for many expats. Expats do not only worry about themselves, but they also worry about their belongings, and countries with the most property protections are often favored among expats. In these “safe” countries, expats often feel comfortable enough to live more “on their own,” while in countries that have been traditionally perceived as being “less safe” for expats, expatriate communities are the more popular option. The establishment of an insular community that is mostly, if not exclusively, for expats, helps to guarantee, at least in the minds of its residents, both the safety of themselves and their property.

“Wharton complained that “the whole of [American] life” had been reduced to the material artifacts of the good life” (Jurca 2001:3). Implicit in this statement is the fact that artifacts can be moved, and American life, having been converted into such a state, can thus now be transported out of America. It is common for expats to bring a large number of personal items, up to the entire contents of their previous household, to their new country of residence. They often bring with them staples of American life, items that would almost never be found in the homes of anyone born in their country of relocation. These items are often ones that expats uncompromisingly “cannot live without” in their new environments.

In his book entitled “Richistan: A Journey Through the American Wealth Boom and the Lives of the New Rich,” Robert Frank posits the concept of the virtual nation of “Richistan”, which consists of the ever growing group of millionaires in the U.S. In

discussing the methods these people use to differentiate themselves from the non-rich, Frank—attending a yachting convention—notes:

“They had built a self-contained world unto themselves, complete with their own health-care system... travel network... separate economy... and language... The rich weren’t just getting richer; they were becoming financial foreigners, creating their own country within a country, their own society within a society, and their economy within an economy. They were creating Richistan” (Frank 2008:3–4).

Though many expats, including those surveyed for this project, would not be considered “rich” by some American standards, their financial and legal awareness gives them more in common with Frank’s “rich”.

So, why move from Suburbia Nation to Expat Nation? One reason is that, while expats may be well off enough to become expats, they are often not wealthy enough to live the same quality lifestyle if they were to stay in their country of origin. Many expats are commercially successful, “yet behind their newfound success lies a nagging sense of insecurity. Lower Richistanis may have more money than 95 percent of Americans, but they’re becoming poorer relative to their fellow Richistanis” (Frank 2008:9). Most expats fall into the category Frank terms as “Lower Richistan”—those with a net worth of 1 to 10 million dollars. This group constantly compares itself to those in Middle Richistan, those with 10 to 100 million dollars, but are unable to match their buying power.

“A study by PNC Advisors, a wealth-management firm, shows a surprising pattern among Richistanis when they’re asked how much money would make them secure. They almost always answer that the amount they need to feel secure is *twice* their current level of net worth or income” (Frank 2008:50).

In order to gain the lifestyle they perceive to be associated with this next highest “rich” tier, Lower Richistanis have the option to move to a country where their buying power is increased, thus effectively multiplying their net worth. Despite the fact that

“Richistan” and “SuburbiaNation” are just two authors’ constructed ideas to talk about certain groups of people, the existence of this type of community is very real in its impact, and can no longer be said to be limited to the physical borders of the United States.

## **Chapter 6 – Case Studies: Four Expat Women**

### **The Entrepreneurial Spirit**

The United States was once the land of opportunity, but many do not feel that way anymore. Barriers to owning land, starting businesses, and innovating products are causing many people to take their homes, businesses, ideas, and even themselves overseas. I interviewed four women whose lives have changed considerably—and if you ask them, for the better—since they became expatriates in the Caribbean. One was a homemaker who is now owner of one of the most successful real estate practices in Belize, as well as the founder the national real estate association. Another is a woman who is able to make more money than she ever made in England or the U.S., while getting to pursue her love of SCUBA diving every morning in warm, crystal-blue water. A third runs one of the most innovative radio shows for the expatriate community in Belize, and the final woman is one who gave up her career as an attorney mid-career to become what she had always wanted to be: a photographer. These entrepreneurial women represent the new frontier of those who are moving out of their countries of origin to seek their fortunes elsewhere. None of there accomplishments would have been possible in the U.S., a market oversaturated with millions of people vying for limited spots in a few select professions. There is a sense that most of the good land is taken, most of the good jobs next to impossible to get, and most of the good ideas already thought of. For expats, relocating gives them the ability to slow down the pace of their life, while giving them the ability to innovate and create things in what is essentially a vacuum of certain services that are coming into increasingly high demand due, in part, to the demands of the expat community itself.

## **Mary Rosenthal**

“Think of your ancestors leaving Europe and Asia to sail across the oceans to America because they heard it was the land of opportunity. They left for many reasons and faced many obstacles in doing so. Think of the chances they took and the unknowns they faced. Think of their descendants loading up the Conestoga wagons to head into western America because they heard land was cheap or free (the Homestead Act) for the average person. Now think of yourself in today's world contemplating moving to a country which is more affordable, where your dollar can stretch much further --- and where the purchase of a home and land is feasible” (e-mail to author, January 3, 2010).

Mary Rosenthal is an expat who exemplifies many of the core principles of the expat community. A homemaker in the U.S., she is now the owner of one of the most successful real estate agencies in Belize. Having originally travelled to Belize to do some volunteer work, Mary decided to stay and pursue what she saw as the immense opportunities of a country just emerging onto the international stage (e-mail to author, January 3, 2010). Mary helped establish the association for real estate professions in Belize in order to regulate the industry and make it more professional. She appreciated the fact that there were less restrictions and less competition than there was in the U.S. Now she encourages people to ask themselves:

“Why are U.S. citizens headed out the other way - and making their way to live abroad? Is there something we don't know or is it the grass is always greener syndrome? It certainly makes one pause to think, contemplate and speculate” (e-mail to author, January 3, 2010).

## **Jane Goodwin**

Jane Goodwin, originally from England, has settled on what might be—on the surface—the most unlikely of locations: the Honduran island of Roatan. Having first been brought to the island due to her love of SCUBA diving, Jane is now a leading real estate agent on the island and also is the sales manager for one of Roatan's premier new

development communities (e-mail to author, December 28, 2009). She also writes about her experiences in several real estate and expat publications. She is a U.S. citizen, having lived in Colorado for a number of years, but identifies more with her Honduran status. She notes that when she travels back to the U.S., she “can blend right back in, but it feels different, more complicated and people have no time for each other” (e-mail to author, December 28, 2009). This reverse culture-shock is a common element among expats, who have the ability to blend back into their previous lifestyle, but find that they have adjusted to the slower pace of their adopted countries. Besides the favorable climate, Jane cited her desire to live a simpler lifestyle and “get away from the land of frivolous law suits, high taxes, and oppression” (e-mail to author, December 28, 2009). These three factors—the litigiousness of American society, excessive taxation, and overbearing government regulation of personal lives—are among the most cited by expats. Jane recognized that there are certainly frustrations living on a Caribbean island,” but contends that “they are more easily averted and can be dealt with in a personal manner” (e-mail to author, December 28, 2009). This element of the “personal” contrasts directly with the impersonal nature that many expats note experiencing in their home countries. Jane also notes that the affordability of Roatan was a positive factor in her considerations. Jane, having been an expat for over twelve years, wished to offer some advice for others looking to make a move to a foreign country:

“When someone relocates to a different country, it is not their purpose to change the culture and expect people to do things differently—if your gardener would rather cut the grass with a machete than a lawn mower...let him” (e-mail to author, December 28, 2009).

**Carla Herringshaw**



It would never have been possible in her hometown or Reseda, California, for Belizean expat Carla Herringshaw to be a writer, publisher, talk show host, and tour guide. Carla is the talk show host of the most widely listened to expat radio show in Belize and is the author of a popular retirement guide for expats. Despite the fact that she maintains her U.S. citizenship, Carla says she feels more excited about the future of Belize than that of the U.S. (e-mail to author, January 4, 2010). When asked what her motivations were for leaving the U.S., Carla listed that she wanted to “get out of the U.S. rat race, live in a place with a cleaner environment and slower pace of life, and raise [her] son in a safer place” (e-mail to author, January 4, 2010). It is interesting to note that despite being a less developed country, Belize—and many other expat destinations—are considered both cleaner and safer than the U.S. and other leading industrialized nations. When asked if the fact that Belize is the only English-speaking country in Central America factored into her decision to live there, Carla admitted that it had, but highlighted the fact that “just because people speak English doesn’t mean they think like us Americans” (e-mail to author, January 4, 2010). A common theme among expats seems to be that of “simplicity”—de-cluttering one’s life in order to achieve greater happiness. When asked if she would recommend becoming an expat to others, Carla voiced her affirmation:

“It’s a wonderful simple life that focuses more on people than things. You can really connect with people and are not insulated like you are in the U.S. People live out of doors for the most part and talk to everyone” (e-mail to author, January 4, 2010).

## **Courtney Mulwood**

Courtney Mulwood left her high-paying job as a successful attorney at a large firm in Boston for a life as a photographer on the island of Providenciales in the Turks & Caicos.

Despite her career prospects, Courtney decided she wanted to increase her “quality of life” and “get out of the hassle and congestion” of a big city (e-mail to author, January 17, 2010). She decided to pursue her lifelong dream of becoming a photographer and is now owns a very successful photography company that does business all over the Caribbean. She points to the fact that Providenciales is still a developing island—fairly uninhabited and underdeveloped compared to other similar islands such as the Caymans—as a positive attribute in her decision to settle there. It might seem contradictory at first that making a career switch from attorney to photographer would yield greater quality of life but Courtney decided to measure this in terms leisure time, weather, lack of overcrowding, and the ability to live comfortably on the income from her dream profession. The distinct factors that expats use to measure quality of life are often in direct contradiction to the factors most often used in their home countries, thus catalyzing their desire to move.

## **Children and Education**

One of the assumptions I had before starting this project was that most of the expats I consulted would have waited to move abroad until their children were out of the house and off to college. I could not have been more wrong. While many expats were so-called “empty-nesters” with grown children, a growing number made their big moves while their children were still in school. Some even had very young children or even had more children subsequent to their move. Expats educate their children in a variety of ways. Some home school their children; others go to local schools, while others still go to private international schools or bilingual academies. There is in fact a bevy of options in even some of the most remote expat destinations, many of which have educational opportunities

that rival, and even surpass, those in the U.S. Many expats are disgruntled with the failing U.S. education system and have chosen to educate their children in a foreign country. Because these children will be native English speakers, and often still retain their U.S. citizenship, it will be easy—an in fact they will be at an advantage in the admissions process due to their unique status—for them to attend universities in the U.S. if they so choose. Many expats reported the values and worldview that their children obtained while living abroad as one of the most significant benefits of living abroad. Safety and security were not nearly as much a concern as I had anticipated—nor was their children’s ability to “fit in”. Overall, approximately half of the expats I consulted had children living with them at one time or another while they lived abroad, and all felt as if the experience had had a positive effect on their children.

## **Chapter 7 – Escaping the Rat Race**

*“The trouble with the rat race is that even if you win, you’re still a rat.”*  
– Lily Tomlin (*People*, Dec. 26, 1977)

### **The Rat Race**

It is important to define the rat race in order to understand how to escape it, and—more importantly—why many expats feel it is something that needs to be escaped in the first place. The rat race is analogous to excessive work, especially when no meaningful purpose is achieved. It is closely associated with the image of rats that are unable to escape a closed maze, yet endlessly continue to run around in it, looking for a nonexistent exit. In its simplest form, the rat race contrasts with the idea of an early retirement—winning the lottery and never having to work again. However, many expats instead see the rat race as being diametrically opposed to the idea of a “work-life balance”. According to a new study by researchers from Harvard and McGill University, the U.S. is the worst of all developed countries in terms of policies that encourage a work-life balance (Associated Press, 2007). When asked exactly what constituted “too much” work, many of the expats I interviewed reported working anywhere between fifty and eighty hours per week in the U.S., and none reported working more than forty in the Caribbean. In addition, nearly all the expats I talked to are now self-employed, whereas almost none of them were in the U.S.—a fact that many greatly attributed to the success of their escape from the rat race.

### **Why?**

Expats often cite the fact that they are constantly asked why they chose to leave their home country (vonKleist 2010). What exactly do expats feel they are escaping? I have received a bevy of varying responses to this question, but some of the most common ones reveal a great deal about the perception many expats have of their home countries. First, expats often tend to—even when they are themselves part of it—reject what they perceive as increased corporatism. Many lament the increase in franchises, chain restaurants, and megastores as a largely unstoppable, negative aspect of modern-day industrial society. Another common criticism is the national—and even to a large extent international—homogenization of popular culture and media at the expense of any sense of regional identity. A common thought among expats seems to be that “one could be blindfolded and dropped in almost any city in the U.S. and there would be little to distinguish one place from another” (vonKleist 2010).

A second motivation for escape is politics. Many expats note becoming disillusioned with the political scene of their home country and are discouraged by the sentiment that the rest of the world often looks upon their country as a negative force (vonKleist 2010). Other examples expats mention include the loss of civil liberties, corruption, moral decay, and the declining education system. More recently, many expats remarked that increased military involvement and economic disaster—two factors that many felt were a direct reflection of the declining state of their countries of origin—contributed to their decision to search for a new home abroad. There are so many reasons expats have as to why they left their home country that they have largely begun to respond to inquiries on the subject with the simple answer: “Why not?” (vonKleist 2010).

## Why Not?

*Escape from America Magazine*, an online newsletter with nearly 400,000 subscribers, seeks to provide a resource to this growing group of expats who wish to—as the name of the publication suggests—escape the U.S. Coupled with the many reasons why expats desire to leave the U.S. and other northern industrial nations is the rapidly decreasing downsides of moving abroad. Expat destinations commonly have services available at only a fraction of the cost they would be in the U.S. For example “a full time live-in maid costs \$150 a month” (Manville 2009). A decade ago, there were significant barriers to living abroad; many countries lacked infrastructure such as telecommunications and transportation; governments were corrupt, safety was a huge issue, and property rights were often not guaranteed. In just the last few years, many up-and-coming nations have become prime expat destinations because they have eliminated many of these deterrents. Now, high-speed Internet is readily available almost anywhere in the world, along with satellite TV, modern appliances, and equal—or even sometimes superior—medical services. In addition, many countries that were traditionally thought to be dangerous now have lower violent crime rates than the U.S. Employment opportunities for expats abroad have also risen due to the increase in demand for services in tourism, real estate, and other industries related to the increase in foreigners. Many countries—and increasingly expat communities themselves—are creating new schools, entertainment venues, and other amenities that were not available in the past. With many of the traditional barriers for expatriates no longer in existence, it is no surprise that the trend of escaping is—and likely will continue to be—on the rise.

## **Case Study: James Post**

James Post recently wrote an article in *Caribbean Property Magazine* that is a good example of the transition many expats strive to make in their mission to escape the rat race and achieve a work-life balance. James, a high-tech electronics industry executive from the Netherlands, often traveled on business; so often, in fact, that one day—having just returned from one such trip—his youngest son remarked, “What’s Daddy doing here?” (Post 2009). James realized at this point that his work-life balance was so asymmetrical that he needed make a drastic change. Today, James runs a small, sustainable resort on the Caribbean island of Grenada, and, in his article, he delineates some of the contrasts between his former life and his newfound home. Instead of the “cold, impersonal environment” of the Netherlands and the many other nations he previously traveled to on business, James explains that in Grenada “people always greet one another and when they ask how you are they really mean it” (Post 2009). He also cites less racial discrimination, lower violent crime rates, and fewer hard drugs as central positive factors of living in the Caribbean. In general, he extols the abundant elements of nature, the unspoiled beaches, and the unpolluted waters of Grenada. James traded in his suit and tie, and countless hours commuting on airplanes, for life as an expat in order to spend more time with his family so that his son would never again be surprised that he was home.

## **Investment Property**

The rat race most often refers to people’s jobs—the number of hours worked, inflexible schedule, and long commute. However, the other large component of the feeling of being trapped in the rat race is the weight of one’s “stuff”, which predominantly consists

of one's house and the items within it. Many expats allude to having felt held hostage by their possessions, and that their feeling of being trapped within the rat race was a direct result of the money needed to maintain their lifestyle and the property that went with it (Kumpf 2009). Many people hold the view that their home, cars, and all of the other things they own are assets. However, these are static assets that can only earn the owner income when sold. Thus, these are not true assets in that they do not give the owner an additional stream of revenue. In fact, these "assets" can often hold the owner back from traveling, choosing a more fulfilling career, or working fewer hours.

Many expats see the real estate investment opportunities abroad as a way to turn their homes into true assets. Because real estate is often a fraction of the cost as it would be in the U.S., many expats buy multiple units to rent out to tourists. Others, like James, live and work at resorts to earn income (Post 2009). Many expats only use their Caribbean homes for part of the year and rent out their homes for the remainder of the year. Even those who do not do any of these income-producing activities stand to gain a much greater increase on the value of their property than would be possible in the U.S. Expats use their properties to increase their ability to escape the rat race, often using real estate investment income to supplement or completely replace their need for a salary. This allows expats to work far less hours per week while still maintain a consistent income stream throughout the year.

## **Anti-Ageism**

The U.S., like most industrialized nations, is aging. The large Baby boomer generation is starting to retire, and their cumulative wealth has become the driving force of



our modern economic society. However, many Baby boomers are struggling with issues regarding the recession, loss of social security, skyrocketing healthcare costs, and other difficulties. As a result of these pressures, many are not able to retire, and are continuing to work into their sixties and seventies. This, however, creates several problems: there is less room for younger professionals to move up in the workplace, a huge stress is placed on society in terms of being able to support this top-heavy population, and the normal wealth transfer to the next generation becomes stagnant as people live longer and in many cases outlive their personal resources. Ageism is becoming an increasingly problematic issue in the United States and around the world. More and more older people—compounded by the recent economic downturn—are being forced out of their jobs, having their retirement benefits cut, and generally finding it more difficult to live comfortably in society. Many seek the solace of retirement that they had once expected to enjoy at this point in their life.

In her article entitled “Living Your Dream While Finding a New Life”, Jan Hull, a retired schoolteacher from the UK, details her exploits with her husband as they resettle in the Turks and Caicos Islands after the age of fifty. Jan explains her view that “ageism does not exist here in Turks and Caicos,” revealing that both her and her husband, also a former teacher, were able to find jobs outside of the field of education and essentially start new careers (Hull 2008). Many older expats see this mentality as being a vast improvement from the way that they are often treated in their home country’s work culture, and often feel pride that they are considered—and in fact are—assets to companies catering to their demographic. Jan is now a realtor who specializes in helping expats find properties in the Turks and Caicos.

## **Technology as a Lifeline**

The expat movement, as it exists today, would not be possible without certain recent advances in technology. In my view, the advent of the Internet, and its subsequent proliferation throughout the world, has been more of a catalyst for the increasing number of expats than any other factor. Expatriacy is not a new phenomenon; people have been moving around the world for hundreds of years to find new lives abroad. However, never before has one been able to do so while still maintaining such regular ties to one's country of origin. News, television shows, sports, family goings-on, and more can all be enjoyed virtually instantaneously and in almost the same capacity as one would in one's country of origin. The ability to live abroad—yet stay connected—is a huge advantage that expats today are increasingly taking advantage of. In addition, travel to exotic destinations has become increasingly easier with faster planes that can fly longer routes, as well as a greater multitude of international airports. Many expats cite e-mail as the number one thing that they could not go without in their adopted homes. Aside from personal use, the Internet is increasingly being used by expats in their businesses. Expats can manage their investments from a computer as easily as they could have from their home country, and in fact often have access to sophisticated financial services that cater specifically to the expat community. Many expats have set up businesses that rely on the Internet to bring in clients such as resorts, hotels, Bed and Breakfasts, tour companies, real estate companies, etc. Some expats I interviewed also use the Internet to maintain blogs and newsletters, along with photo, video, or radio web resources. E-mail has become the lingua franca of the expatriate community, enabling it to transcend physical boundaries—allowing expats to

escape the rat race, while maintaining contact with their home country, with the touch of button.

## **Conclusion**

Anthropology is changing. There is more multi-cited research being done than ever. More and more scholars are studying elites, corporations, and suburbs. I find this to be an encouraging trend, as I strongly believe that as much—if not more—can be learned by studying situations that are “closer” to the anthropologist. In two weeks, I am flying direct from Los Angeles to Tel Aviv, Israel. The trip will only take fourteen hours, and again I will be transported into another culture, one with history, conflict—and Kosher McDonalds. It is my hope for the future of anthropology that it will become more relevant than ever—and more challenging—as the lines between the local and the global are blurred beyond recognition. Professor Shryock said freshman year in Anthro 101 that “the job of anthropologists is to make more anthropologists,” and even though I do not plan to pursue graduate studies in anthropology, training in this field has changed how I will perceive the world for the rest of my life. Anthropology majors become doctors and lawyers and business executives, but this does not mean they have to stop being anthropologists.

This has been a tumultuous journey. I began reading and research in the fall of my junior year—an entire year earlier than most students—because I knew that I not only wanted to study abroad during my second semester that year, but also that I wanted to graduate a semester early the following year. Thus, that was my penultimate semester at the University of Michigan. While it may seem logical that I would have studied abroad in the region on which I was conducting my thesis, I chose to take advantage of one of the university’s most well established programs by studying abroad at the Villa Corsi-Salviati in Sesto Fiorentino, Italy, just outside of Florence. This experience proved unexpectedly relevant to my thesis, as I could not help but noticing all of the expats living in Italy and

nearly everywhere else I traveled in Europe. I still remember standing outside of a vineyard, looking out at the many villas that dotted the hilltops of Tuscany, and asking the vintner if he knew who owned all of them. As he followed my gaze, he let out a long sigh and answered me in English:

“Well, all of these used to be owned by the families that descended from the aristocracy of Florence and Siena, but I think now that one is owned by Sting, the musician, and most of the rest are rented out by the week for about \$10,000 to tourists from America and the UK.”

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my thesis advisors Professor Erik Mueggler—who always approached my project with the healthy skepticism, yet sincere open-mindedness, that allowed me to challenge my ever-changing ideas—and Professor Andrew Shryock, the same professor who inspired me to step down this path on my first day of college, for always understanding the ideas I was attempting to convey, even when the words to express them were not there. Without you, this project would not have been possible.

To good health and happy travels,

Ryan Shumacher

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