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Tourism, Agriculture, and Identity: Comparing Grenada and Dominica

Cover Page Footnote

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Tourism, Agriculture, and Identity: Comparing Grenada and Dominica

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between agriculture and tourism in the promotion of economic identity at the turn of the twentieth century and again at the turn of the twenty-first in the case of two Eastern Caribbean islands: Grenada and Dominica. From the beginnings of export-oriented agriculture in the Caribbean until recent decades, agriculture was the dominant economic activity in the islands. Consequently, the economic identity of these islands has also been tied to their agricultural produce. Initially the emphasis placed on sugarcane cultivation in the region gave rise to the idea of the collective “sugar islands,” but as sugar declined, many islands began the search for a new product that would provide an economic base and a sense of distinction from the others. Now, tourism provides an economic base for the islands, and creating a distinctive identity in the region has never been more important. This paper examines the divergent approaches in this process for the two islands. In the case of Grenada, the identity created during this early time period has been extraordinarily pervasive, despite a decline in agriculture and growth in tourism starting in the mid-1900s. For Dominica, boom-and-bust cycles in agriculture and the need to develop an alternative to mass tourism led the island to promote a new identity that conceals its agricultural past, despite the continued importance of agricultural industries.

Introduction

Tourism is a highly competitive industry, and nowhere is it more evident than in the Caribbean. As there is often little perceived difference between destinations in the region, the islands must create a sense of difference through the promotion of a unique identity. While such an identity will clearly be tied to an island’s tourism resources, its roots may go deeper. Previous research has shown that the ideas and imagery used in Caribbean tourism promotions have origins in the past (see, for example, Sheller, 2003 and 2004; Momsen, 2004 and 2005; Nelson, 2007 and 2011); however, these discussions have focused on imagery as a

reflection of prevailing Western cultural themes or preferences. The role of the island's broader economic identity must also be considered.

From the beginning of export-oriented agriculture in the Caribbean during the colonial period until recent decades, agriculture was the dominant economic activity in the islands. Consequently, the economic identity of the islands has been tied to their agricultural produce. Initially the emphasis placed on large-scale sugarcane cultivation in the region gave rise to the idea of the "sugar islands," but for many islands, the dominance of sugar was relatively short-lived. In the period of economic depression following the collapse of the sugar industry in the mid-nineteenth century, it was common for islands to search for a viable agricultural alternative. Once a product was successfully developed, it was upheld as a new symbol for the island's identity. This was done for internal purposes (i.e. uniting the population for the common goal of ensuring the industry's success and the island's prosperity) as well as external ones (i.e. creating a sense of distinction from other places and generating demand for the product).

The promotion of this identity externally served the additional function of providing an attraction for early tourists. These tourists were interested in cultivated landscape scenery and the tropical produce with which they were only familiar in processed form. This was particularly true when such tourists were already aware of an island's reputation – reputations such as the "spice island" or the "world's premier lime-producing country." Thus, tourism and agriculture have long been intertwined in the region. However, as the respective roles of these industries in the region's economy have changed, islands have taken different approaches to the identities they now put forth.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between agriculture and tourism in the promotion of economic identity at the turn of both the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries in the case of two eastern Caribbean islands: Grenada and Dominica (Figure 1). The paper highlights the role of agriculture in early tourism to these islands and particularly focuses on the emphasis placed on specific products in early tourism literature, such as travel narratives and travel guides. The paper then examines the divergent approaches taken by the two islands. For Grenada, the identity created during the early period has been extraordinarily pervasive, despite a significant decline in agriculture corresponding with the island's growth in tourism. For Dominica, boom-and-bust cycles in agriculture and the need to develop an alternative to mass tourism led the island to promote a new identity that conceals its agricultural past, despite the continued importance of agricultural industries.

Figure 1: Grenada and Dominica are small, volcanic islands located in the Eastern Caribbean.

Context and Methodology

Although the original colonization plan for the Caribbean was to settle the islands with small farmers who would work their own land (Hart, 1998), the emphasis on sugarcane production for export favored large-scale plantation agriculture. By the eighteenth century, the colonies were being urged by their home governments to produce primarily sugar (Williams, 1970). By the latter half of the same century, small farmers were losing land to expanding sugar plantations, and other tropical products such as coffee, cocoa, and spices were rapidly being replaced. According to Ragatz (1963: 38), “Man, not Nature, bound the Caribbean planter to monoculture.” Over the course of the nineteenth century, though, a number of factors adversely affected the Caribbean sugar industry. The price of sugar began to fall while the cost of production rose, particularly after slavery was abolished. In addition, there was increased competition from other sugarcane producers as well as from subsidized beet sugar producers in Europe (Hart, 1998).

Other crops were grown at different times and on different islands, depending on the circumstances. Yet, there was no major agricultural industry in the Caribbean that could easily take the place of sugar as it declined. As a result, islands with less developed sugar industries experimented with other products to determine which were best suited to their particular conditions. Coffee, bananas, cocoa, nutmeg, cinnamon, ginger, and allspice were cultivated on islands throughout the region. While some stakeholders were interested in diversifying the agricultural industry, most islands continued to specialize in just one or two types of crops. This helped set the conditions that allowed an economic identity based on an agricultural product to become so important. However, it also continued to leave islands vulnerable to the problems associated with monoculture.

While tourism was not a major economic activity in this early time period, several factors allowed the Caribbean to come to be seen as a tourism destination. The end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 brought increased stability to the Caribbean (Hart, 1998). Shortly thereafter, steamships arrived in the region, which allowed new networks of tourism to develop throughout the remainder of the century (Sheller, 2003 and 2004). At the same time, aesthetic concepts that had gained popularity in Europe created a demand for new types of tourism experiences that could be had on these tropical islands. The Caribbean was therefore relatively easy to reach, and tourists could experience the exotic landscapes of the islands in some of the oldest colonies.

In addition, growth in the popular publishing industry allowed books to become more accessible and fill the demand of a reading public that was increasingly literate (Anderson, 1991). Travel writing became a popular genre with a potentially large audience (McEwan, 1996). These works, particularly narratives written by tourists for the tourist market, could be extremely influential in shaping what islands tourists chose to visit, what activities they participated in while they were there, and what expectations they had for their experiences. They were, in fact, a key representation of both tourism experiences and the region.

At the time, these firsthand accounts were considered to be authoritative works and were thus referenced in travel guides and regional geographies produced in the same time period. Although tourism at this time did not play a role in the formation of the islands' identities, it reinforced them nonetheless. For example, tourists expected to see the agricultural products that the islands were known for, and when they wrote about their experiences, they contributed to the same expectations in future tourists. The form of travel writing has changed over time, but the legacy of this early travel writing continues to be seen in modern tourism promotions through both the ideas and imagery used (Nelson, 2007).

This study was born from a combination of the author's extensive historical research of tourism in the islands of the former British West Indies and

research on the same islands' contemporary tourism promotions. From this research, the author became interested in the case of two islands in the Eastern Caribbean – Grenada and Dominica – that are fundamentally similar in nature and began with similar constraints to economic development in their agricultural industries. Yet, by the turn of the twentieth century, the islands began to take divergent approaches to development that has been reflected in their promotion of an economic identity.

This study utilized a combination of primary and secondary sources to construct the evolution of the islands' economic development to explain and compare these patterns of identity that play a crucial role in their tourism industries today. In particular, the research focused on two key time periods that represented important times of change in the islands' economic patterns: at the turn of the twentieth century and again at the turn of the twenty-first. Thus, primary sources were drawn from both historical and modern travel literature.

For the historical component of this paper, the research drew upon several earlier studies that incorporated published travel narrative, travel guide, regional geography, and newspaper sources pertaining to the islands' agricultural industries and tourism to the islands and spanning the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For this paper, the parameters of the study narrowed the sources to include those that discussed the islands under investigation and those produced during the target time period (approximately ten years before and after 1900). As a result, twenty individual historical sources were included in analysis (Table 1). These sources included ten newspaper articles published in the *Dominica Guardian*, five travel narratives written by British travelers to the West Indies, three travel guides for British travelers, and two regional geographies.

Table 1: Primary sources

Newspaper Articles – The Dominica Guardian:

July 19, 1899, "Dominica"
 January 3, 1900, "The Dominica Agricultural Society"
 January 24, 1900, "Forging Our Way"
 February 21, 1900, "The Administrator's Trip Round the Island"
 February 21, 1900, "The Agricultural Show"
 October 24, 1900, "Planting in Dominica"
 January 16, 1901, "The West Indian Agricultural Conference"
 February 20, 1901, "The Agricultural Show"
 February 19, 1902, "The Agricultural Show"
 January 3, 1903, "The Lime Industry"

Travel Narratives:

- 1887, *The English in the West Indies or the Bow of Ulysses* by James A. Froude
1895, *Cruise of the H.M.S. Cleopatra, 1892-1895* by William Tait
1897, *Glimpses of Life in Bermuda and the Tropics* by Margaret Newton
1905, *Back to Sunny Seas* by Frank T. Bullen
1908, *The Cradle of the Deep: An Account of a Voyage to the West Indies* by Frederick Treves

Travel Guides:

- 1889, *The Lesser Antilles. A Guide for Settlers in the British West Indies, and Tourists' Companion* by Owen T. Bulkeley
1889, *The West Indies* by Charles W. Eves
1910, *The Pocket Guide to the West Indies*, 2nd Edition by Algernon E. Aspinall

Regional Geographies:

- 1901, *Central and South America, Volume II: Central America and the West Indies* by A.H. Keane
1912, *The West Indies, Illustrated, Including the Isthmus of Panama and Bermuda, Historical and Descriptive Commercial and Industrial Facts, Figures & Resources* by Allister Macmillan

Promotional Literature:

- 2002, "Caribbean Vacation Planner", print brochure produced by the Caribbean Tourism Organization
2002, "Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique: The Spice of the Caribbean", print brochure produced by the Grenada Board of Tourism
2003, "Destination Dominica", print brochure produced by the Dominica Hotel and Tourism Association
2012, "Discover Dominica, the Nature Island", official destination website of the Discover Dominica Authority at <http://www.dominica.dm/>
2012, "Dominica Vacations & Holidays", destination webpage produced by the Caribbean Tourism Organization at <http://www.caribbeantravel.com/dominica/>
2012, "Grenada Vacations", destination webpage produced by the Caribbean Tourism Organization at <http://www.caribbeantravel.com/grenada/>
2012, "Rhythms of Spice", official destination website of the Grenada Board of Tourism at <http://www.grenadagrenadines.com>

For the contemporary component of this paper, the research drew upon earlier studies of modern tourism promotions, including the islands' official tourism websites, web pages on the Caribbean Tourism Organization's (CTO) destination website, and print promotional brochures and magazines. Again, the scope of information was narrowed to that which specifically pertained to the islands under consideration in this paper. This included both destination websites and web pages on the CTO site, both islands' print brochure and magazine, and the CTO's print magazine.

These primary sources were examined through content analysis. Content analysis is a frequently used methodology in various studies of tourism that examine topics such as the images and themes in promotional materials for destinations around the world (for just a few examples, see Hopkins, 1998; Jenkins, 2003; Choi et al., 2007; Nelson, 2011), the content of companies' tour offerings (Seguí-Llinás and Capellà-Cervera, 2006; Turner, 2011), official tourism policies (Whitford and Ruhanen, 2010), and media representations of tourists (Peel and Steel, 2007). This methodology has both quantitative and qualitative functions for analyzing secondary sources to identify, measure, and evaluate key themes or concepts in a multi-stage, even iterative, process (Weber, 1990; Bos and Tarnai, 1999; Krippendorff, 2004). It is a grounded theory approach in which the sources are considered without an *a priori* hypothesis; thus, results and conclusions are derived from the data itself.

As in previous studies, this study involved multiple stages. The first stage took place prior to the conceptualization of this topic. Specifically, historical travel narrative sources were accumulated for the purpose of a different project. Initially, this material was reviewed, categorized by themes, and subsequently coded. In particular, the Caribbean islands' agricultural industries as the most significant economic activity of the time was identified as one of the key themes. This theme was further refined by agricultural product and by the perceived success or failure of the product. While this was not the primary focus of the study at the time, it became a topic of interest for further investigation. The original data set was refined based on this theme, and a second, more targeted search, for source materials was conducted. The materials were again reviewed, categorized, coded, and compared, with particular attention given to the changes that took place over time. Likewise, a previous investigation of contemporary Caribbean promotions was revisited and refined to focus specifically on the images, slogans, and descriptions of the two islands under consideration in this study. The categorization of this data yielded different themes for the destinations based on their specific economic identity.

As a research methodology, content analysis has limitations. For example, the process of coding relies on human interpretation and judgment and therefore

may reflect the researcher's biases. However, as with any methodology, the researcher should strive for critical reflexivity.

Economic Identity

The literature on national identities explores the concept of identity as crucial in bringing people together with a sense of belonging and a common history or traditions (Crane, 1998). This collective identity provides a powerful tool for understanding one's place in the world. The conceptualization of similarities within the group helps define its character, and the realization of this shared character helps distinguish it from other groups (Smith, 1991). Internal functions of identity often relate to the socialization of members or the mobilization of members for particular goals (Smith, 1991; Bond et al., 2003). For example, Wyatt (2005) examines the case of India in which the national economy was used as a way of "animating" national identity. External functions of identity may be political or economic in nature and pertain to the image or reputation of the nation as reflected to external audiences (Smith, 1991; Bond et al., 2003). Wyatt (2005) also cites India as being promoted as an international "brand" for foreign investors and visitors. Likewise, Huang and Santos (2011, 13) argue that national identity becomes a part of tourism branding to highlight what is significant and/or unique about a particular destination that makes it "worthy of a visit".

Identities are not static; they are composed of different elements involved in an ongoing process of interaction in which the nation is constructed and re-constructed (Crane, 1998; Bond et al., 2003). While emphasis is typically placed on cultural or political components, national identities are also composed of historical, territorial, and/or economic components (Smith, 1991; Crane, 1998 and 1999; Bond et al., 2003). Although national identity can never be reduced to just one component (Smith, 1991), Crane (1999) and Bond et al. (2003) argue that the economic component of identity has frequently been neglected – despite its importance. Economic agents contribute to the process of identity construction and re-construction through their approaches to national economic issues. They also utilize the characteristics of that identity to achieve economic objectives (Bond et al., 2003). For example, Moberg (1997) examines the relationship between identity and agriculture in Belize. This study identifies the efforts of government representations and commercial agents to promote bananas as the export crop that would be the catalyst for economic development.

In the case of the Caribbean, agriculture has long played a key role in identity. As the dominant economic activity, agriculture has contributed to the formation of identity, and at the same time, the islands' agricultural character has been used as a symbol to promote further growth in these industries.

Additionally, as this identity was promoted abroad, it became an integral part of tourists' expectations when they visited the region. However, when tourism became the dominant economic activity, the dynamics of identity, particularly in terms of its external promotion, changed.

In a recent edited volume, Frew and White (2011: 1) bring together a collection of topics for the purpose of exploring what they describe as the "largely overlooked" relationship between tourism and national identity. Much of the existing literature on this relationship has focused on recently formed or liberated nations, such as the post-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (e.g. Light, 2001; Hall, 2004; Smith and Puczkó, 2011). As Gilmore (2002) argues, these young nations are in the process of nation building and have the opportunity to create and promote an identity to external audiences. However, in addition to these cases of political restructuring, there is also a distinct need to examine issues of identity when a nation experiences significant economic restructuring, such as experienced in the Caribbean. For example, Cornwell and Stoddard (2007) examine the use of the identity associated with agricultural heritage for the purpose of tourism in the Caribbean.

Agricultural Identities

Although Grenada and Dominica are mountainous volcanic islands in the Eastern Caribbean, both were developed for agriculture. Coffee was the first commercial crop grown on each island. French settlers established coffee plantations on Grenada; however, when the island changed hands in the late eighteenth century, British immigrants converted these estates to sugar (Ragatz, 1965). Coffee also served as Dominica's initial major export crop. As late as the 1820s, visits to coffee plantations played a role in tourists' itineraries on Dominica. The sight of the trees at these plantations served as a source of interest among tourists and figured prominently into travel writers' landscape descriptions. For example, upon visiting Dominica in 1825, Henry Nelson Coleridge (1862: 137) wrote that "mountains of irregular heights and shapes, most of which are clothed up to their cloudy canopies with rich parterres of green coffee, [that] perfumes the whole atmosphere even to some distance over the sea." However, a blight in the early nineteenth century virtually wiped out cultivation. Rather than rebuild the industry, many producers made the switch to sugar at this time (McQuillan, 1998).

Despite the rugged character of these islands, sugar became the dominant export. By the middle of the century, travel writers were remarking on the appearance of sugarcane fields (e.g. Baird, 1850) and the workings of sugar mills (e.g. Rolph, 1841). However, while other islands like Barbados were able to continue producing at high levels even after the industry fell into decline, sugar

production was quickly abandoned on Grenada and Dominica. Shortly thereafter, travel writers began to remark on the product's conspicuous absence from these islands. On Grenada, John Greville (1869: 141) noted, "Various tracts of country appear to be abandoned, and are returning to a forest state," while Charles Eves (1889: 208) wrote, "sugar has practically disappeared from its list of productions... A fine sugar island, therefore, in regard to this specific article of production, has gone entirely out of cultivation." In 1887, English historian James Froude (1909: 140) wrote about the "ruins" of Dominica's mills.

Despite the noted decline of sugar, the idea that the islands were ultimately agricultural in nature persisted. Froude (1909: 142) asserted that Dominica could be "the garden of the world." Eves (1889: 247) noted that "scores of thousands of acres are awaiting the hand of the cultivator." During this time period, the islands undertook a concerted effort to experiment with alternative products. Potential crops included various fruits such as bananas, mangos, pineapples, oranges and limes, as well as coffee, cocoa, almonds, nutmegs, and other spices. These crops were already grown on a small scale and identified as having the potential to become the islands' next major exports. By the turn of the twentieth century, two of these products rose to predominance on Grenada and Dominica and came to fill the void in the islands' economy – and economic identity – left by sugar. These products were nutmegs for Grenada and limes for Dominica.

In the late nineteenth century, travel writers acknowledged that cocoa and spices were being increasingly cultivated on Grenada and becoming the island's principal products (Eves, 1889; Tait, 1895; Keane, 1901). By the beginning of the twentieth century, A.H. Keane (1901: 410), author of the regional geography *Central and South America* that encompassed the Caribbean, noted that Grenada was claiming to be "The Spice Island of the West." Subsequent writers picked up on this and repeated it in their own works. In the popular West Indian guidebook, Algernon Aspinall (1910: 155) referenced this distinction. He wrote that the nutmeg industry was principally identified with Grenada, where the product was "so considerable in quantity and so excellent in quality that the island is often called the 'Spice Island of the West'." Furthermore, he encouraged his guidebook readers and future tourists to tour a spice estate as part of their activities if they had the opportunity to visit the island (Aspinall, 1910).

Also during this period, Dominica saw a reintroduction of coffee as well as increases in both cocoa and lime production (Tait, 1895; Keane, 1901) – although Eves (1889: 247) asserted that all of these products "could be more extensively cultivated." By the turn of the twentieth century, though, limes had surpassed all other crops to become the island's dominant export. Travel writers began to reference the "famous" Dominica limes and note that even much of the well-known Montserrat lime juice actually came from Dominica (Newton, 1897).

A British company with significant business interests on Dominica, L. Rose and Company, Ltd., became known for their Lime Juice Cordial (Honeychurch, 1995). In just over a decade, Allister Macmillan (1912: 391) wrote that the lime industry had “tided the island over its most evil days and laid the foundation of its present prosperity, Dominica now ranking first in the world as a lime-producing country.” As with the case of Grenada, Aspinall (1910: 239) asserted that permission could be “readily obtained” to visit the island’s lime estates.

It should be noted that there was a certain amount of tension between preferences for cultivated and uncultivated landscapes among these early tourists. Sheller (2003) argues that eighteenth century European representations of Caribbean landscapes focused primarily on the beauty of cultivated landscapes in which nature was neat, ordered, and civilized. In contrast, nineteenth century ideas based on Romanticism gave preference to wild, untamed, and uncultivated scenes. For example, adding value judgment to the quote regarding the state of cultivation on Grenada provided above, Greville (1869: 141) wrote, “Before many years are past and gone it may be conjectured that Grenada will again be a beautiful wilderness.” Despite this new emphasis, however, Sheller (2003) notes that travelers’ depictions of cultivation continued to play an important role in narrative descriptions of the islands visited. This is, in part, due to the longstanding agricultural character of the islands and the assertion of distinct identities based on specific agricultural products. In this regard, cultivation was more than a sight to see; it was an expectation to be fulfilled and a crucial component in understanding the places visited.

Tourism Identities

While tourism has had a long presence in the region, its economic impact was small. Significant growth in Caribbean tourism, leading to modern conventional mass tourism, took place in the mid-twentieth century (Duval 2004). Between 1970 and 2000, stay-over arrivals in the region grew faster than the global rate (Momsen, 1998 and 2005). Among the islands with periods of high tourism growth, Grenada’s rate was over 15 percent between 1961 and 1967 (Duval, 2004). These high tourism growth rates, combined with average declines in agricultural production between 10 and 20 percent (Conway, 2004), allowed tourism to become the leading economic activity for many Caribbean countries by the turn of the twenty-first century. Nonetheless, agricultural production persists. Momsen (2005: 209) characterizes this as a dual economy “in which plantation crops remain the leading regional product while the internationalized tourism sector has become the leading foreign exchange earner.”

The specialized agriculture developed on Grenada by the turn of the twentieth century proved highly successful. By World War II, nutmeg and cocoa

accounted for 90 percent of Grenada's export value (Brierley, 1998). However, as with the rest of the region, Grenada experienced declining agricultural production in the second half of the century. Between 1987 and 1991, the export value of nutmegs fell by as much as 76 percent (Woodfield, 1998). At the same time, tourism had been growing. This growth was interrupted by the United States invasion in 1983, but the industry rebounded in the following years with increases up to 299 percent (Sharkey and Momsen, 1995). Grenada began an aggressive marketing campaign and placed greater emphasis on its tourism sector (Woodfield, 1998).

The pervasiveness of the agricultural industry gave strength to the identity established nearly a century before as the "Isle of Spice." This identity, which had previously served both internal and external functions, was appropriated by the tourism industry to fulfill the external objective of creating a sense of distinction from other, similar destinations in the region. Official Board of Tourism publications and website prominently identify Grenada as "The Spice of the Caribbean." The illustration of a ripe nutmeg serves as the tourist board's logo and also appears in many tour company logos. Various slogans have encouraged potential tourists to "spice up your life" (GBT, 2002) and highlighted the island's "rhythms of spice" (GBT, 2012).

Because the Caribbean is often perceived as having a one-dimensional tourism industry with interchangeable destinations based on sun, sea and sand, the CTO has sought to promote differentiation between the islands. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the organization's print magazine, the *Caribbean Vacation Planner* (2002: 47), promoted Grenada as "a destination that excites the senses. Nicknamed 'The Isle of Spice,' Grenada is one of the most prolific producers of nutmeg in the Western Hemisphere. In fact, there are more spices in Grenada per square mile than any other place in the world." Although Hurricane Ivan had a devastating impact on the nutmeg industry in 2004, the idea has persisted. Today, *Caribbean Travel* (2012), the organization's destination website, notes that the island is "famed for forests fragrant with cinnamon, allspice, cocoa and nutmeg".

Indeed, agriculture and tourism continue to be intertwined. The spice identity continues to form an expectation in the mind of tourists that may be fulfilled through guided tours that visit spice estates and nutmeg processing stations. Yet, the identity is no longer restricted to the role of referent to agriculture. The connotations of spice play upon ideas of sensuality and exoticness, qualities presumably outside the realm of tourists' daily lives and obtained only at this Caribbean destination (Nelson, 2005).

In contrast, Dominica's lime industry that had been fashioned as the "savior" of the island encountered serious difficulties by the 1920s. A disease outbreak occurred in 1922 that affected most of the island's estates, a succession

of hurricanes in 1926, 1928 and 1930 destroyed the trees, and competition increased from other producers (McQuillan, 1998). Businesses dependent on the lime industry, such as L. Rose and Co., abandoned the island and moved their operations to other British colonies, such as those in Africa (Honeychurch, 2005). Consequently, planters were forced to undertake yet another search for a new agricultural commodity that would sustain the island. Ultimately bananas became the island's major agricultural export in the mid-twentieth century; however, this industry also shortly experienced problems. During this period, tourism development was viewed as a potential economic alternative. As seen throughout the region, Dominica sought to develop a mass tourism industry. Unlike many of the other islands, though, Dominica lacked white sand beaches and a well-developed infrastructure to support the type of mass tourism that was developing elsewhere. As a result, Dominica looked to alternative forms of tourism, particularly nature and eco-tourism (Sharkey and Momsen, 1995; Weaver, 2004).

Unable to compete with other Caribbean destinations for sun, sea and sand tourists, Dominica capitalized on its rugged, mountainous, forested landscape. Promoters sought to attract new types of tourists looking for a more adventurous vacation or an alternative to the characteristics common on other islands (France, 1998). As such, a new identity for the island was fashioned. Dominica's Tourist Office publications and Discover Dominica, the island's official tourism website, have clearly identified and aggressively promoted Dominica as "The Nature Island." Today, the Discover Dominica (2012) homepage reads:

I am beauty unspoilt. Culture preserved. I am a diver's dream and hiker's paradise. I am the trailhead to adventure and discovery, unlike any other Caribbean destination. I am volcanic peaks, boiling waters and underwater champagne springs. Sparkling waterfalls, rushing streams and rainforest canopies. I am celebrations of music, art and flowers. I am nature's island. I am Dominica. Are You?

The imagery supports this idea of unspoiled beauty with scenes of lush, green mountain forests and waterfalls cascading down cliffs amidst the trees. Indeed, Dominica's logo depicts a face set against a green mountain with a waterfall.

Again, these ideas and images are reiterated in the regional literature to promote a sense of differentiation between the islands. The *Caribbean Vacation Planner* claimed: "Dominica is a unique Caribbean destination that offers vacationers a first-hand experience with nature" (CTO 2002: 45). In addition to descriptions of the island's natural beauty, *Caribbean Travel* (2012) now emphasizes the international recognition it has received for its environment (i.e. Morne Trois Pitons National Park, the Eastern Caribbean's first UNESCO World

Heritage Site) and environmental policies (i.e. its status as the first nation to be Green Globe-certified for sustainable development).

Certainly natural scenery had always played a role in landscape descriptions of Dominica. However, the “nature” promoted in the present identity is a wild, undisturbed, and uncultivated nature, which lies in contrast with Coleridge’s (1862: 137) description of the mountains “clothed up to their cloudy canopies” with coffee trees on a plantation. Furthermore, this new identity for tourism masks the role that agriculture continues to play as not only a significant income generator for the island but also as an important source of employment. Moreover, this identity fulfills few internal functions but is oriented entirely around the external purpose of promoting a unique brand to foreign tourists.

Discussion and Conclusion

National identities are complex concepts composed of various elements in an ongoing process of negotiation. The national identities of Grenada and Dominica certainly involve far more characteristics than what has been discussed here; their economic identities are simply one part of the larger national identities. However, economic identities play a crucial role because, particularly in the small island context, other social and political variables are often contingent upon economic success or failure. For example, at a critical period in Dominica’s lime industry, an article in the island’s newspaper stated, “the fact is an indisputable one that the country falls if the lime industry fails, and in like manner it rises with the progress of the industry. Let us hope it will rise” (What are the Prospects?, 1923: 2).

As the dominant economic activity, agriculture shaped each island’s economic identity that served both internal and external functions. As these identities connected the island with their products, brand recognition began to play a role in creating tourists’ expectations and influencing their experiences. When the agricultural industries on the islands slipped into decline at the same time tourism was growing, the economic identities were reoriented. Rather than creating a sense of commonality or purpose for the population, these identities were focused on creating a sense of distinction among other, similar destinations in the Caribbean. Grenada played upon their longstanding agricultural identity as the “Isle of Spice” in which they maintained the literal meanings but also added new connotations to create the idea of an exotic experience. In contrast, Dominica erased its earlier agricultural identity to reinforce its new identity as the “Nature Island” with connotations of one of the last remaining places on earth that has remained largely undisturbed by humans.

Despite the differences seen in these two approaches, both islands have been successful in the promotion of their identities in tourism. Many islands in

the Eastern Caribbean have sought to capitalize on the general attractiveness and popularity of the Caribbean destination region (e.g. St. Vincent and the Grenadines as “the Caribbean you’re looking for”, Barbados as “the authentic Caribbean”, or Montserrat as “a Caribbean treasure”). However, these slogans fall short of creating a vivid, memorable identity utilizing distinct, place-based characteristics that clearly associates the island with an experience to be had.

For example, Grenada has the characteristics of a popular Caribbean destination with the beautiful white sand beach at Grand Anse, the colorful town at St. George’s Harbor, and more. Yet, it is the experience of the spice plantations that sets it apart from the other destinations (Figure 2). This has long been, and will continue to be, an important part of Grenada’s heritage and character, although these agricultural industries are no longer as significant to the island’s economy as they have been in the past.

Figure 2: Nutmegs drying in the sun at a Grenada spice plantation.

The spectacle of Dominica’s rugged environment supports the idea of the “nature island”, even if it is not truly a virgin wilderness untouched by human activities. Yet, it could be argued that it was unnecessary for the island to minimize its agricultural heritage. In fact, it is recognized that nature tourism and heritage tourism are not incompatible products. For example, *Caribbean Travel*

(2012) notes that, “Nature-oriented visitors appreciate Dominica’s rich culture and history”. As such, the potential exists to better incorporate agricultural heritage into (e.g. tours of banana plantations or redevelopment of the L. Rose and Co. lime juice factory in Soufriere, Figure 3) – and thereby expand – the island’s tourism offer.

Figure 3: The ruins, and potential heritage tourism resource, of the L. Rose and Co. lime juice factory in Soufriere, Dominica.

With this foundation, there are substantial opportunities for future research. For example, the next stage of the project will go beyond the identity that is promoted to potential tourists to examine the circumstances of agriculturally based heritage tourism on the two islands. In particular, this qualitative fieldwork will involve an analysis of the tours and activities available to tourists at each destination, interviews with local tourism stakeholders (e.g. tour operators and guides), and exit surveys of tourists. This data will be used to determine how agriculture is effectively used to create a unique tourism experience on Grenada and identify areas in which it could be better incorporated into the tourism experience on Dominica.

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