

W
A15022 398923

Caye Caulker

Economic Success in a Belizean Fishing Village

Anne Sutherland
=

HC
142
S87x
1986

Westview Press / Boulder and London

To Lois Hartley Sutherland
and Charles, Frankie and Benjamin Louis

Westview Special Studies in Social, Political, and Economic Development

This Westview softcover edition is printed on acid-free paper and bound in softcovers that carry the highest rating of the National Association of State Textbook Administrators, in consultation with the Association of American Publishers and the Book Manufacturers' Institute.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Copyright © 1986 by Anne Sutherland

Published in 1986 in the United States of America by Westview Press, Inc.; Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher; 5500 Central Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80301

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 86-50946
ISBN: 0-8133-7283-6

Composition for this book was provided by the author.
This book was produced without formal editing by the publisher.

Printed and bound in the United States of America



The paper used in this publication meets the requirements of the American National Standard for Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials Z39.48-1984.

Contents

List of Illustrations	xi
Preface	xiii

Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

Strategic importance of Belize and key features of the development of Caye Caulker in the Caribbean and Central American context	1
--	---

Chapter II: LOBSTER FISHING AND FISHERMEN

The fishing industry on Caye Caulker and the social implications of being a fisherman. The future of fishing	19
--	----

Chapter III: THE NORTHERN FISHERMEN COOPERATIVE SOCIETY (with Laurie Kroshus)

The history of the colonization of Caye Caulker, the formation of the Northern Fishermen Cooperative, and the current organization of the Co-op	43
---	----

Chapter IV: KINSHIP AND FAMILY STRUCTURE

The categories and groups of people on Caye Caulker, the formation of kin localities, domestic groups and patterns of conjugal relationships	69
--	----

Chapter V: DOMESTIC SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

The roles of men, women and children in the domestic group	87
--	----

Chapter VI: SOCIAL NETWORKS AND GROUPS
(with Laurie Kroshus)

The exchanges of goods and services between domestic groups in the kin locality. The forms of social organization beyond kin localities	107
---	-----

Chapter VII: TOURISM

The growth of the tourist industry and recent changes	129
---	-----

Chapter VIII: CONCLUSIONS 141

Bibliography	147
Index	151

Illustrations

TABLES

I. The Lobster Catch, 1981-83	37
II. Daily Tasks in Hotel Work for Sally Martin	97

FIGURES

I. Lobster Trap Setting Patterns	25
II. Locating a Lobster Territory	27
III. Relative Effectiveness of Organizations on Caye Caulker	126
IV. Model of Colonial Exploitation on Caye Caulker	142
V. Model of Cooperative Relationship between the Individual and the Kin Group	143
VI. Model of the Relationship of Producer, Co-op and International Buyer	144
VII. Model of Relationship of Islander to Tourist Business and Tourists	145

MAPS

1.	Political Map of Central America	2
2.	Belize (<u>Background Notes</u> , U.S. Dept. of State, Bureau of Public Affairs)	10
3.	Caye Caulker, Belize (by Stephen Frenkel)	12
4.	The Village of Caye Caulker (by Stephen Frenkel)	14
5.	Location of Businesses on Caye Caulker	74
6.	Family Localities	76

Preface

In the summer of 1972, to escape the unrelenting heat of Northern Belize where I was heading an anthropological expedition, I got into a sweaty cargo barge, inappropriately named 'The Mermaid', and chugged out to a small island called Caye Caulker that lies off the coast of Belize. As I stepped off the boat onto the back pier, mosquitoes landed on my arm in such numbers I could brush them off like bread crumbs on a table. I walked from the back pier past a shed where a generator alternately throbbed and clanked, on past the town garbage dump festering in a mangrove swamp, and entered a small village with two sand lanes of wooden plank houses on stilts. As I moved towards the windward side of the island, the warm Caribbean breeze became stronger, the numbers of mosquitoes thinned out, and I could see the waves breaking on the reef less than a mile out to sea. The sun beat on my head through a clear blue sky. The only sounds were those of the water lapping against piers poking out into the water, the soothing breeze rustling through the coconut fronds, and an occasional pelican splash landing in the water. People padded by silently with bare feet on soft sand, nodded disinterestedly, and went on about their business.

Caye Caulker felt like total isolation. Here was a fishing village whose only contact with the mainland of Belize was by boat, often a whole day's trip by sail or several hours twice a week on the Mermaid. There was no telephone on the island, hence no rapid way to contact the rest of the world. Visitors were obviously rare since there were no hotels. I spent the night on the veranda of

a vacant house, and in the morning I searched the island for a place to buy a meal. In sheer desperation, I found Annette, one of a handful of resident Americans on the island, who made me a cup of coffee and scrambled eggs in exchange for news from abroad.

She also told me the local behavioral rule of thumb. "Whatever you do, people won't interfere. They're very tolerant except when you try to tell them what to do." Later, I discovered what she meant. When Clayton Adams was robbed of an expensive skiff motor for the sixth time in one year, he decided he would have to store the motor under his house instead of leaving it on the boat. Even though he knew the identity of the thief for at least some of the robberies, he shrugged it off with the comment, "He probably needed the money more than I do." Reluctant to interfere with each other, they are tolerant of foreign visitors as well.

Since 1972, I have visited Caye Caulker regularly, but in 1982 I decided to take a serious interest in the island. Even in 1982 Caye Caulker was a village that to the naked eye appeared poor, isolated, and undeveloped. The houses, still square wooden plank structures on stilts, were peeling and weathered. Everyone walked around barefooted and wore faded well-worn clothing. There was now one telephone line (with many extensions). News from the outside as well as messages from relatives and friends in other parts of the country came over the single radio station, Radio Belize.

These appearances were and still are totally misleading. The peeling paint, the worn clothes and the bare feet, all reasonable results of the Caribbean trade winds and sandy lanes, belie the real conditions on Caye Caulker. In less than ten years Caye Caulker has become one of the wealthier communities in Central America. Furthermore, the wealth is distributed among all big island families, and the island's culture and social organization have emerged from sudden wealth without major upheaval. In spite of an influx of major consumer goods such as refrigerators, gas stoves, washing machines, fast skiffs, and big boat motors, major services such as electricity and plumbing, and contact with several hundred tourists a year from all continents, Caye Caulker looks nearly the same as it did on my first visit twelve years before.

What happened during the intervening years is a case study in success. It is the success of a group of fishermen who, through a locally organized and controlled

fishing co-operative, have turned their efforts into a lucrative fishing business. Their success is not merely financial, it is also cultural. The combination of cultural compatibility and economic development is a story worth telling.

This book is based on the research of a variety of people using diverse methods under many different conditions. It is a co-operative work in many ways. Over a span of twelve years, I have observed Caye Caulker, and Belize in general, on numerous visits. During this time, I led four field trips to the island of approximately one month duration, accompanied by undergraduate students from Macalester College in June 1983 (six students), January 1983 (ten students), January 1984 (ten students) and January 1985 (twenty-one students). All of these students wrote research papers as part of the larger project. In addition to my own participant observation during these field trips and the work of these students, I have benefited from the observations and stories of my mother, who lived on the island between 1973 and 1977 as a member of an island kin group through her marriage to an islander. In conversation and through her numerous letters she has added valuable information and insights to this project. The data for this book therefore comes from three sources: 1) my own participant observation over twelve years, 2) the participant observation of my mother living as another member of the community and 3) the student projects undertaken during four formal field trips. Among these students, the most valuable contribution has come from Laurie Kroshus who participated in two of the field trips and has worked with me closely in writing up the results. She is largely responsible for Chapter III on the social history of the Co-op. She has also contributed to sections of Chapters VI and VIII.

It is apparent that such diverse sources also contain diverse methods and kinds of data. There is the very personal information and viewpoint of my mother whose main interest was to understand her own new home and adapt to it as a participant of the culture. There is the field data of undergraduate research assistants, all of whom had previous training in ethnographic methods of participant observation and interviewing, following the James Spradley¹ approach. Finally there is my own field work, synthesis, and interpretation of all incoming data.

Although I have observed and interviewed the people of Caye Caulker and participated in their daily lives using traditional anthropological methods, I have also

tried as much as possible to adapt my field methods to the culture. My approach is to undertake field work in a way that is compatible with the people from whom I seek information. During field work with the Gypsies of California, for example, I found that direct questions were problematical to the Gypsies because they themselves rarely used the question-answer method to obtain reliable information. A direct question, among the Gypsies, generally provoked a misleading answer. On Caye Caulker, islanders learn information about each other by 'flapping around' or socializing informally. I have tried to gather information in much the same way. At the same time, I wanted to learn what the islanders think is important about themselves and to listen to the subjects that arouse their interest. Like Malinowski who wrote about the kula because the Trobrianders seemed to find it fascinating, I have written about topics such as fishing, kin groups, sexuality, tourism, and the fishing Co-operative, because these were the topics that emerged in conversation while flapping around. I am grateful to all the islanders, too numerous to mention individually, who have helped me in this endeavor.²

Furthermore, I am indebted to my colleagues Jack Weatherford, David McCurdy, Anna Meigs, and James Stewart for their encouragement and support. Jack Weatherford in particular has offered valuable advice in the preparation and focus of this manuscript. I am also grateful to James Gregory for his suggestions for improvement and his support for this work. His own work in Belize is a pioneering effort and has been very useful.

Many students contributed to this project. Among them I wish to thank Joy Barbre, Deborah Brady, Edward Booth, Matthew Cotton, Nick Edwards, Patricia Feely, Janet Fuller, Lisa Henderson, Sarah Hopkins, Ernest Lotito, Randi Lyders, Sally Mering, Betsy Rosen, Anne Schaefer, Eric Vacarella and Peter Woolen. Steven Frenkel was particularly helpful by mapping the households on the island.

Finally to Macalaster College I am grateful for allowing me to combine teaching and research through my ethnographic research interim course in Belize. To the Bush Foundation I am grateful for a faculty development grant that allowed me to make a field trip to Belize in 1982 to set up the interim research course. To Barbara Lankes, Charles Norman and Jackie Johnson I am grateful for their editorial help.

To Charles, Frankie, and Benjamin Louis I am grateful for their companionship and love during fieldwork with me and understanding while away.

Anne Sutherland

NOTES

¹Spradley, James Participant Observation, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980, and The Ethnographic Interview, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979.

²The names of the islanders have been changed except for historical figures or political figures.

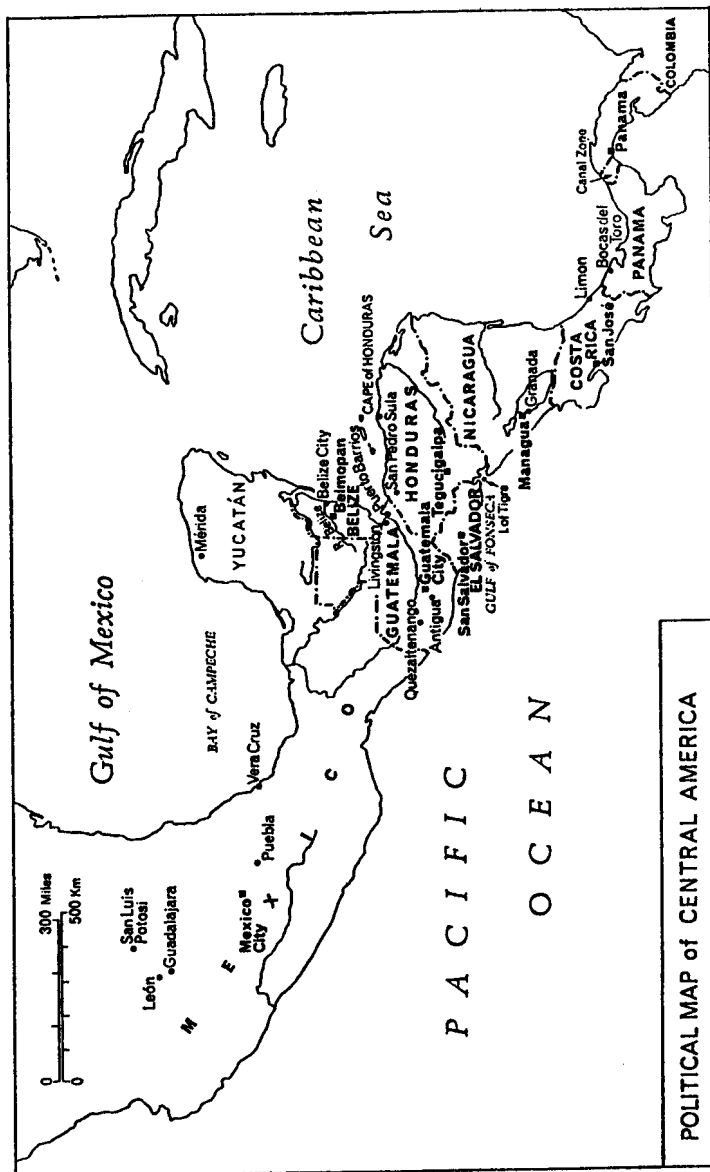
I

Introduction

Belize, a British colony until September, 1981, is a newly formed nation. As a relatively stable, democratic country in a politically volatile region, Belize now has great strategic importance to the United States. Located on the Central American mainland facing the Caribbean, Belize has physical and cultural ties to both regions (Map 1). Belize shares borders with Mexico and Guatemala and has long been involved in a still unresolved sovereignty dispute with Guatemala. Because of this dispute, British troops remain stationed in Belize today. The current political turmoil in Central America is also affecting Belize which has received a sudden increase in U.S. aid and a flow of refugees from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

The American government has targeted both the Caribbean basin and Central America as areas for major investment and political concern. U.S. policy in the region is to promote pro-American governments and discourage the creation of 'socialist' governments. The invasion of Grenada in 1983 and the political, economic and military involvement of the U.S. in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and with Nicaraguan contras are only the most recent indications in a long history of U.S. moves in the region. In the last year and a half, the U.S. consulate in Belize has increased its personnel from five to 37 people, and through AID programs, \$14 million is being invested in the country this year. The recent election of the UDP (United Democratic Party) after 30 years of PUP (People's United Party) government is viewed

Map 1



by American officials as a move to the 'right' that will create a favorable climate for American businesses in Belize¹. Furthermore, the U.S. considers Belize a stable, democratic country with a pro-American government.

Belize has serious economic problems. Agricultural production is insufficient to feed the population, and there is virtually no industry. When a colony, Belize exported a few raw materials such as mahogany, logwood, chicle and later sugar cane, and it has always imported most of its consumer goods, including, to this day, twenty-five percent of all food. In short, Belize is a poor and dependent underdeveloped country². Private U.S. business investments and economic assistance are suddenly increasing ostensibly to improve the economic situation in Belize and head off the development of a socialist form of government or political ties with Cuba.

This portrait of Belize raises a number of questions not only for the United States but for the Caribbean Basin as a whole. Given the situation of poverty and dependence, is there any alternative to the two regional choices of U.S. aid or socialism? If so, what are these alternatives? In such a position of dependency, why do some communities and regions achieve economic success while others remain poor? Although dependency is a sad political reality, it is clear that people in the third world are faced daily with a variety of circumstances and a range of strategies to deal with those circumstances. Within the wider structure of underdevelopment, there remains the more specific question of what particular people do in particular circumstances and how they perceive their choices within their social environment.

This study of Caye Caulker, a small fishing community situated on an island just off the coast of Belize, will answer these questions. It demonstrates how this community in the Central American/Caribbean region has succeeded economically without becoming dependent on foreign aid and without a socialist political philosophy. Caye Caulker is an example of small-scale local development. The people of Caye Caulker have developed highly effective institutions and strategies to deal with production and marketing. Though I believe that key features of the Caye Caulker approach to local development could be applied to other underdeveloped countries, this is not an economic study. It is a holistic anthropological approach to the economic and cultural reasons for the development of one particular island in the Caribbean. A holistic anthropological approach

emphasizes the connections between historical, cultural, and economic features without necessarily giving a priori importance to any one area of development. For this reason, above all, this study focuses on the specific case study rather than taking a comparative approach.

The development of Caye Caulker as an affluent enclave in a poor country can be attributed to several key features. First, a group of organized producers, lobster fisherman, deal directly with buyers from the international market who are competing with one another. The producers, acting together as a cooperative, negotiate as advantageous a price as demand allows without loss to middlemen and without the exploitative control of a monopolistic export company.

Second, the islanders have developed in ways that are compatible with their sociocultural institutions and values and draw on the strengths of those cultural features. Strong nuclear family ties combined with tolerance of individual differences, for example, encourage strong support networks of extended family members. Many of these institutions and ideals arise from general historical circumstances: a long history of colonial government, isolation from colonial political centers, and the relatively recent population of the island by refugees from the Caste Wars of Yucatan. Other institutions are responses to specific situations, such as economic exploitation by foreign companies. These historical and cultural circumstances have all helped to create a tradition of autonomy, individualism, and self-sufficiency.

Third, the islanders try to develop flexibility by balancing one area of endeavor with another. Within the range of available resources, the people have kept open as many options as possible. At the moment they supplement lobster production with tourism. They are fortunate to have rich lobster beds, but this environment is only lucrative to the islanders because they have kept control of production and markets. The pattern of local control in the fishing business is being repeated in the development of tourism.

The flexibility of the islanders' economic system can be linked to the flexibility of their sociocultural system. Both have a history of balancing a number of features. Located on the geographic and cultural boundary of the Latin American mainland and the Caribbean, the people of Caye Caulker have developed a combination of cultural features drawn from both areas. For example, they

combine Latin American patterns of household and family structure with Caribbean patterns of sexual mores and conjugal ties.

Arembepe: A Parallel Case

The significance of Caye Caulker as a success story can be highlighted by looking at the development of parallel cases - kin-based fishing villages that have had to deal with changing technology and marketing opportunities. Arembepe, a fishing community on the Northeast coast of Brazil, in a number of ways parallels the development of Caye Caulker. In certain important aspects, however, it provides an example of stark contrast in results.⁴

Arembepe was in the 1960's a place with an 'open economic hierarchy' where it was possible to rise from the very bottom to the very top through ambition, hard work and good business sense.⁵ Furthermore, there was very little that was collective, communal, governmental or even political in Arembepe.⁶ The people lived lives fairly free from outside interference.⁷ All of these characteristics are also found on Caye Caulker. Furthermore, like Caye Caulker, fishing in Arembepe replaced coconut plantations, became 'modernized', and was eventually supplemented with tourism which provided new economic opportunities.

Arembepe has had the benefit of an almost inexhaustible nearby market (the city of Salvador) for its fish and a favorable economic situation in that the price of fish rose faster than the inflation rate. This favorable economic situation contrasts to the inequitable and unfavorable economic situation on Caye Caulker in its pre-cooperative days when markets were far away and controlled by foreign (Canadian and American), companies who paid a very poor price for lobster and reaped a large profit. In this sense, pre-Co-operative Caye Caulker was more like most of the fishermen in the world who have limited access to marketing and limited control over the prices they received. For example, on Coqueiral, a Brazilian fishing village studied by Forman, the mayor and president of the local fishing guild conspired to block any increase in price the fishermen received, and with no market nearby, the fishermen were prohibited from marketing it themselves.⁸ Unlike Coqueiral, the situation in Arembepe was an attractive one for fishermen. The most desirable job within Arembepe was fishing. Within the

community, an egalitarian ethos was closely associated with kin-based levelling mechanisms so that no one became too wealthy in relation to anyone else. Due to its geographical position and isolation, Arembepe maintained autonomy from the political center of Brazil and was generally outside the Brazilian class structure. Everyone in Arembepe was lower class, but no patrons operated in Arembepe to bring people into the larger class structure. Gradually, during the seventies, marketing improved when roads were paved and motorized vehicles replaced the donkey and cart. The produce from Arembepe fishermen could reach the markets faster and in better condition and still meet the steady demand. Although the fishermen had no control of prices, the market situation was nonetheless favorable.

Like Caye Caulker, Arembepe is an egalitarian, kin-based society. Social gradations were present in Arembepe in the 1960's, but it was not a stratified society. The most important distinction within the community was that between captain-owners of boats and workers on the boats. This situation had changed by 1980 when, as in the rest of Brazil, the rich were getting richer and the poor much poorer. The form this change took in the fishing industry was the result of the fact that in real terms fishermen were catching fewer fish per days' labor than they had during the 1960's, while boat owners were getting ten times their previous profits. Social mobility between owner and worker also decreased. In 1980 it took 5,500 kilos of fish to buy a boat whereas in 1964 a man had only to sell 400 kilos of fish to acquire enough capital to buy a boat and become a boat owner rather than a worker on another man's boat. Kottak concludes, "As a result of their poverty and powerlessness, the people of Arembepe ... have been compelled by external forces to give up a large part of their previous autonomy, egalitarianism and peace of mind. Like a thousand other places, Arembepe has grown increasingly dependent on, and vulnerable to, a world political economy of which its inhabitants have little understanding and over which they have even less control."⁹

In this respect, Caye Caulker represents an exception to the "thousand other places". Regardless of the many parallels in development between Arembepe and Caye Caulker - the motorization of the fishing industry, the development of tourism as an alternative source of income, the combination of egalitarian ideals, entrepreneurial spirit and strong family ties, Caye Caulker has gone in a

different direction. The people of Caye Caulker organized politically, and they took control of production and marketing. In short, they achieved economic and political independence.

The Caribbean-Central American Region

Although the scholarly literature of both the Caribbean and Latin America is extensive and well-developed, there are very few major studies of Belize in any of the disciplines of the social sciences. Even in the popular press, Belize is unknown. Because it is a newly independent country, most people have not heard of Belize until reminded that it was formerly British Honduras.¹⁰ In a preface to one of the few major published studies of Belize, Colonialism and Underdevelopment: Processes of Political Economic Change in British Honduras, by Norman Ashcraft, Lambros Comitas remarks,

Because of its location, history, economy and the heterogeneity of its population, British Honduras has long been a rich but unused laboratory for the study of a variety of social science problems. Geographic isolation from the Antilles and the mainstream of West Indian research, and the physical difficulties of travel within the territory are factors which help to explain the paucity of systematic study of a territory which will soon achieve independence. The limited number of publications on British Honduras tends to be concentrated in archeology, particularly Mayan prehistory, on narrowly focused treatments of specific political and social institutions, on the legal issues surrounding boundary disputes with Guatemala and Honduras, and, not unexpectedly, on lumbering, the historically dominant economic activity of the territory . . . almost nothing of full size in social and cultural anthropology, economics, political science, and allied disciplines has yet appeared in print.¹¹

According to Comitas, Belize has been neglected because it is part of the mainland of Central America, but as a former British colony, it is culturally, ethnically,

and politically more similar to the British West Indies. This has resulted in isolation from mainstream West Indian research while remaining a cultural and linguistic anomaly to Latin America. The very reason for neglect, cultural ambiguity, is also a reason for interest. Belize, in general, presents an unusual cultural situation worthy of study for a number of reasons.

First, Belize represents an exception to virtually every pattern found in the rest of the Caribbean. In recent comparative studies of the Caribbean region,¹² Belize is dismissed as an 'exception' to the 'main elements' of Caribbean history and economy, colonial mercantilism and a slavery based plantation system of rigid color-class hierarchies. Yet Belize also is regarded as a Caribbean nation with a Creole (African and European) culture, among other cultures, and has at least some of the same developmental features of colonialism found in other Caribbean societies. Detailed studies of what this exception means for any particular situation are still lacking.

Second, because the region is a political backwater, a variety of cultural groups have flourished in the absence of a strong central government. Caye Caulker, for example, has a history of ignoring power hierarchies outside its boundaries and guarding zealously its local independence. Within this context of political autonomy, Caye Caulker has also developed a society with relatively little social hierarchy. The fishermen's cooperative, with its egalitarian membership and local control of production and distribution, is a reflection of the society within which it developed.

Third, the region presents cultural features that are an unusual combination of Latin American and Caribbean patterns. On Caye Caulker, for example, Latin American types of household and family structure prevail. Great importance is given to relationships with cognatic kin who perform important economic and social functions. Households are based on a conjugal relationship and are composed mainly of nuclear families. The importance of cognatic kin and the prevalence of nuclear family households contrast with the Caribbean family which characteristically centers around the relationship of a mother and children and does not typically contain a nuclear family. On the other hand, on Caye Caulker the rules and practices concerning sexual mores, conjugal ties, and personal values are more characteristic of the Caribbean rather than Latin America practices.

Belize

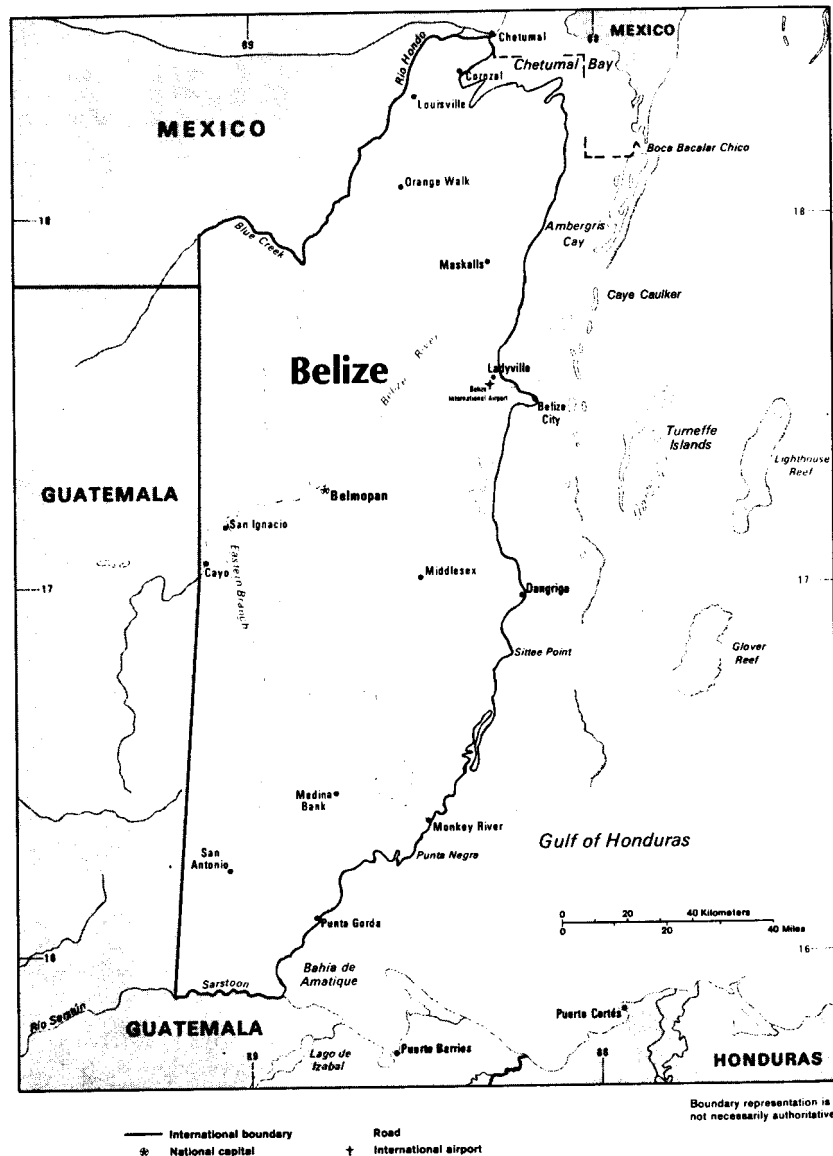
Belize is a small nation that is both Central American and Caribbean.¹³ Bounded on the north and west by Mexico and on the south and west by Guatemala, its entire eastern boundary stretches along the Caribbean coast. With a total of only 8,867 square miles, Belize is the second smallest country on the American continent, approximately 174 miles long and 68 miles wide.

The Belizean mainland can be roughly divided into two geographical areas (Map 2). The northern half of the country is a fertile plain on a bed of limestone with a low swampy coastline. Belize City itself is only 18 inches above sea level. This northern section was settled earliest and developed primarily because of the navigable rivers which provided the transportation necessary for the logwood and lumber trades that flourished during the period of settlement. In the southern half of the country, the land rises rapidly from the low coastal plain to the Maya Mountains which peak some twenty miles inland. The Mayas, a very old chain of quartzite and granite peaks, run roughly north-south and have few minerals and generally poor soil. For these reasons and the lack of transportation, the southern section developed much later than the northern region.

Ten to fifteen miles offshore lies a coral ridge which extends the entire length of the coastline. Small coral islands along this ridge, known as cayes, make up 212 square miles. There are three types of cayes in this chain. Wet cayes are submerged at least part of the time and can support only mangrove swamps. A second type, equally uninhabitable, is the bare outcroppings of coral. The third type are the sandy islands with coconut palms and lush tropical undergrowth. The largest and best known of the inhabitable cayes are in the northern part of the chain of islands. Caye Caulker is one, along with Ambergris Caye, St. George's Caye, and Caye Chapel.

Outside of this chain of cayes is another coral ridge just a few miles seaward, the barrier reef. It is the second largest barrier reef in the world and stretches 190 miles in the crystal clear water along the coast. This massive wall of coral, broken only by a few channels, shelters the sandy islands from erosion by waves. While much of the Great Barrier Reef of Australia is dead, the Belizean reef is alive and relatively unpolluted. Coral polyps still grow in large colonies that provide

Map 2



protection for numerous fish. Lobster and edible fish such as snapper, grouper, jack, and grunt feed in and around the reef. Rays, sharks and porpoises are also seen inside the reef. Beyond the reef is 'the blue' where the seabed drops from 15 feet through a series of plateaus to 4,000 feet. In the blue there are numerous larger game fish such as mackerel, kingfish, wahoo, tuna, sailfish, marlin, and barracuda.

Climate

The climate in Belize is subtropical with distinct wet and dry seasons. The dry season generally lasts from February to May and the wet season from June to January. The amount of precipitation varies considerably from North to South. Corozal in the north receives about 40 to 50 inches of rain per year while Punta Gorda in the south receives an average of 160 inches. Temperatures range from 50° to 95°F. in Belize City with an average yearly temperature of 80°. Trade winds off the Caribbean temper the humidity, which averages about 83%.

During the year, the easy flow of established weather patterns may be interrupted by one of several calamities. Belize is situated in the Hurricane Belt and has often been hit hard. Hurricanes have ravaged the coastal cities twenty-one times since 1787. Belize City itself was destroyed by hurricanes so many times that the government finally decided to move the capital 50 miles inland to Belmopan. Though the most severe damage is often restricted to a narrow swath of the hurricane's storm track, high winds, heavy rain and rough seas effect a much larger area.

During the winter months, December through February, severe storms called 'northers' sweep down from North America across the Gulf of Mexico, bringing with them rain and strong winds. These storms only last for a few days, but they interrupt fishing activity and influence mass movements of fish and lobster. Fishermen report an increase in their catch just before the arrival of a storm. These storms supply most of the drinking water and ground water on the cays.

A third weather occurrence is the 'mauger' season. Usually occurring during August, the mauger season is an extremely dry, calm period when trade winds drop off for a week or more. In the hot stillness, insects become ferocious. Life on the cayes virtually halts until this period passes and the winds return. People close

CAYE CAULKER BELIZE 1983

-  Mangrove
-  One Dot Equals One Building
-  Undeveloped Land
-  Developed Land



Caribbean Sea

17°45' N

The Cut

Caye Caulker Village

0 1/4 1/2 3/4 1
miles

88° 2' W

Base: Air Photo cae 3-139 USAF 1944 sf

themselves in their houses and venture out only when it is absolutely necessary, flapping towels around their heads at the clouds of mosquitoes as they run.

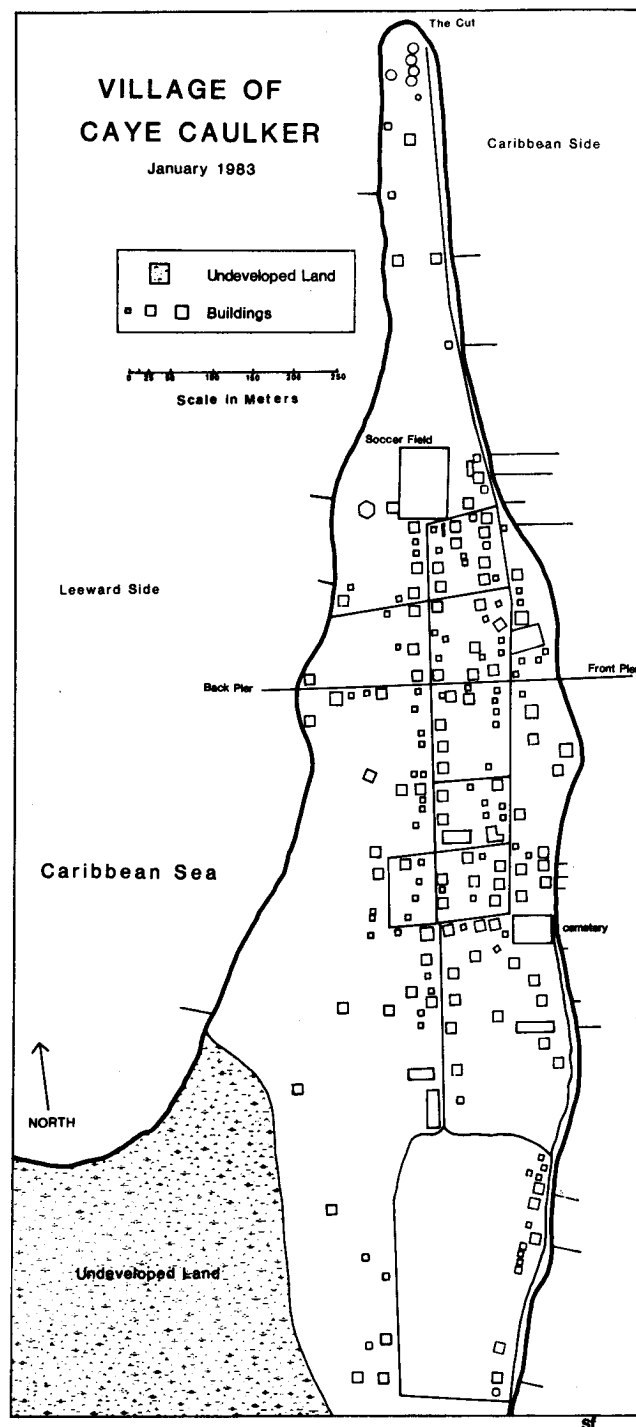
Caye Caulker

Caye Caulker is an island situated 21 miles northeast of Belize City, 11 miles south of Ambergris Caye and one mile west of the barrier reef (Map 2). The only access to the island is by boat. Periodically, attempts to build an airstrip on the island take place, but it has never been completed. Both San Pedro and Caye Chapel have functioning airstrips. Until recently, The Mermaid made regular trips with cargo and passengers about three times a week, and the Coca Cola Company now has a regular supply run. For passengers, the main transportation is provided by islanders who run skiffs to and from Belize City. "Hershey," for example, goes to Belize City every day with about 12 passengers and charges U.S. \$6.00 each way. During the height of the tourist season, from December to February, several boats run each day.

The island is four miles long, but the inhabited part includes an area less than a mile long, from the 'cut' at the northern end to the school building in the south. A few foreigners have built houses southwest of the school in a swampy area known as 'Marcialtown', but few islanders live at that end of the island. North of the cut is uninhabitable and consists mainly of mangrove swamps (Map 3).

The village consists of two main sand roads running north to south, cut by a number of cross roads. There is a main front pier in the middle of the village facing the reef and a main back pier where large boats dock. Located at the back pier are the Coca Cola and Belikan beer offices, the marina and cold rooms of the cooperative, and the generators for electricity on the island (Map 4).

The only cement public buildings are the police station, the community center, and the school. There are two policemen, a nurse, and several school teachers. The policemen and nurse are always nonislanders appointed by the government. The teachers are usually island women who have obtained their teacher's certificate in Belize City. The school, which operates on the British system, goes from Infant school through Standard Six. For a secondary education, young people from the island must go to a 'college' in Belize City.



Houses on the island are wooden frame structures with aluminum sheet roofing. Most houses are built high on posts to catch the sea breeze. Some of these houses have enclosed the open part under the house to make rooms for tourists or extra living space. These were the first hotels on the island. The aluminum roofs have gutters to catch the rain and channel it into a tank by the side of the house. Most houses also have wells. Well water is drinkable because the island is on a limestone escarpment, but it is mainly used for washing because of the slightly saline taste. In the dry season, rainwater becomes scarce.

Caye Caulker is a sandy island that will not support agricultural production. Coconut trees grow in abundance and papaya, lime, breadfruit, banana, plantain and coco fruit trees also thrive. In addition, herbs such as oregano and apozote can be grown. Flowering trees such as the hibiscus, geiger, and flamboyant, and tropical vegetation such as crotons, succulents, spider lilies, bougainvillea, and periwinkle are plentiful. The sand is cleared of weeds and vines with a machete, but they grow back very quickly.

Pelicans and frigate birds hunt along the coast for fish. Lizards, boa constrictors, and crabs (both hermit crabs and rock crabs) are native to the island. The insect population, locally referred to as 'flies,' is extremely vigorous due to the proximity of mangrove swamps. During the rainy season, from May to September, sand flies and mosquitoes are 'fierce,' as the islanders say, and all work may come to a halt on a bad day. Malaria and dengue fever cases have been known to occur.

Population and Language

According to Eduardo Lemos, a Justice of the Peace on Caye Caulker, a 1980 census reported 413 residents. There are approximately 100 houses and 175 children in school. People on Caye Caulker are ethnically designated as 'Spanish' and are of Yucatecan Mestizo descent. There has also been some intermarriage with Creoles, a mixture of African and European peoples. Because of the constant exposure to sun, people are dark-skinned with hair that is bleached blond at the ends.

There are three languages in general use on the island. English, the official language of Belize, is taught in school and is spoken by virtually all islanders. They also speak English Creole and Spanish. Most people

can use all three languages with complete ease. A few of the older people still are most comfortable in Spanish.

NOTES

1. Interview with Charles Jenkins, AID, American Consulate, Belize City.
2. For example, see Malcolm Cross (1978), Norman Ashcraft (1973), and Edmund Gordon (1981).
3. An example of a parallel study of a small Caribbean island is Island Adrift by Wout van den Bor (1981). Many of the same conditions exist--isolation from a political center, fishing and tourism, a lack of community solidarity, etc., but the result has been stagnation and poverty.
4. Kottak, Conrad Phillip, Assault on Paradise. Social Change in a Brazilian Village, New York, Random House, 1983.
5. Ibid, p. 81.
6. Ibid, p. 60.
7. Ibid, p. 78
8. Forman, Shepard, The Raft Fishermen. Tradition and Change in the Brazilian Peasant Economy, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970.
9. Kottak, p. 3.
10. A recent history of Belize was even titled Formerly British Honduras (Setzekorn, William, 1975). For more recent histories of Belize, see Bolland, O. Nigel The Formation of a Colonial Society, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977; Kerns, Virginia, Women and the Ancestors, Univ. of Illinois Press, 1983.
11. Ashcraft (1973), page v.

12. See, for example, Gordon K. Lewis (1983) and Malcolm Cross (1979).

13. The following information on the geography and climate of Belize (pages 6-9) comes from Setzekorn, William (1975), pages 3, 69-72.

II

Lobster Fishing and Fishermen

On Caye Caulker, fishing is the mode of production that most affects the political economy and development of the community. Fishing is both individualistic (at the level of production) and collaborative (at the level of marketing). Thus it fosters and is supported by individual entrepreneurship and a network of social ties. The nature of fishing on Caye Caulker, the forms it takes, and the social relationships developed around it, provide the underpinnings of its most successful feature: the formation of the fishermen's Co-operative that emerges from the struggle with foreign monopolies.

Fishing is the major source of income and work for men. Being a fisherman is a source of self-esteem as well as a means of obtaining independence as an adult man who can support a wife and children. In addition, there is an intangible aspect to fishing that is both aesthetic and emotional. Many men enjoy fishing and appear to experience genuine pleasure when bringing in a good catch. Most men on Caye Caulker are fishermen; they derive personal satisfaction as well as prestige from being good fishermen.

Basically there are four kinds of fishing on Caye Caulker: lobster traps, diving, line fishing, and fish traps.¹ Each type of fishing requires a different technical knowledge of equipment and a slightly different knowledge of marine life. Those who work with lobster traps must know where to set traps, how to build, weight, and season the traps as well as haul, clean, and mark traps. Divers must know where to find lobster at the reef

and how to use a hook or spear. Line fishing and fish traps require knowledge of where and when schools of fish are found and when the fish are running; typically these decisions are determined by seasons and phases of the moon. In addition, fishermen need to know the use of lines and, for fish traps, how to construct and maintain a trap. Most of the older fishermen have all of these skills. Some of the younger ones possess only some of them. For example, a young man may be a good diver but may not have the experience or resources (credit for traps and a territory) to work his own lobster traps. Many learn the skills by working with relatives or by working for large operations that go far from Caye Caulker to areas such as the Turneffe Islands or Half Moon Caye. Line fishing also seems to be most prevalent among older men, but it is not as commercially profitable as lobster and has not been passed on to many younger men. At the present time, fish trap production is not very common around Caye Caulker, probably because of the greater profits possible with lobster. Fishermen from Sarteneja, on the other hand, work mainly with fish traps that they construct at the leeward side of the caye, in the Bay of Chetumal, and along the northern coast of Ambergris Caye.

In all cases, regardless of the method of production, membership in the locally organized Northern Fishermen Cooperative is essential for fishing to be really profitable. The co-op provides market and handling facilities, an immediate cash payment and a rebate at the end of the fishing season, and credit for supplies during the year. The Northern Fishermen Co-op gives the best price for lobster and fish available in the whole country. Because of this advantage, several fishermen from the Carbená Co-op in San Pedro and the entire Sarteneja Cooperative have joined the Northern Fishermen Cooperative. Profit from fishing is a direct result of the inception of the co-op, and is a major factor in the prestige that men can now derive from fishing. As one man put it,

A few years ago people (in Belize) looked down on fishermen - until they started to make money. Now (fishermen) can sit with the bank manager. The old attitude is still around, but kids who come from the city and fish with their relatives to make spending money often make more than some people in Belize City make in a year.

Fishing, as a mode of production, is consistent with the Caye Caulker ideals of individualism and independence. In fact, it has been argued that independence is a 'psychoculturally adaptive characteristic of small-scale fishermen' and that in fishing communities organizations fail that do not take into account this psychological characteristic.² In fishing, as it is practiced on Caye Caulker, men work alone or as partners with one or two other men, often relatives. Individual men have control of their own production, which depends on their knowledge of the sea and of fishing technology as well as the support of their families. Most men do not have to work for others to make a living. Those who do work for others, to learn the trade or because they do not have the advantages of family support, are often paid according to a share of the catch. Larger fishing operations do form a hierarchy of employer (owner of the boat and materials) and workers, but even then all of these men work side by side, engaged in the same work.

Fishing is also compatible with family organization and loyalty. Men inherit lobster territories and acquire the knowledge they need from older male relatives, usually a father or uncle. Both knowledge and resources are thus passed on through families, and men from successful fishing families have advantages over others. The most expensive pieces of equipment are a skiff with a motor and lobster traps. These may be provided by a man's family or purchased with loans from the co-op. Because lobster territories near Caye Caulker are in the hands of islanders, lobster trap fishing is the most difficult to begin without family help. It is also the most profitable of all the forms of fishing.

Although some measure of control of resources is affected by the observance of a lobster season, all forms of fishing resemble a 'robber economy.' The sea contains a resource that is available to any individual who is willing to work it and can learn the skills necessary to make a living at it. Until that resource is depleted, every man is an entrepreneur who has access to the major economic resource of the island.

Access to the resources needed to get started as a lobster fisherman - a territory, boat, motor, traps and membership in the co-op are not equally available to everyone on the island. Men who learn a skill from a father or uncle, who become members of the co-op early in life by demonstrating their ability as a fisherman, and

who inherit a good lobster territory have definite advantages and become wealthier than other men. These advantages do not create an elite with the absolute control of economic resources such as occurs in a plantation system where land is a limited resource under the absolute control of certain families and individuals. Fishing knowledge and new lobster territories, farther afield, are available to the industrious and enterprising fisherman. However, they do create status and economic differences among islanders, and between islanders and other Belizeans.

The Lobster

The Caribbean or spiny lobster (Panulirus argus) inhabits warm waters, has spines rather than claws for defense, and is part of the crayfish family. In taste and appearance it is much like the Northern American lobster (Homarus americanus) and is considered a gourmet treat by American and European diners who pay a high price for it.

Caye Caulker fishermen use two methods for harvesting lobster (or 'bugs' as they are sometimes called): diving and setting traps. Lobsters travel and feed at night and look for dark caves to hide in during the day. For this reason, the many crevices in the coral formations of the reef provide an ideal hiding place for lobster and an excellent hunting ground for a diver who knows where to look. The lobsters' daytime search for a safe, dark place is also put to use by the men who set traps. The traps, or 'pots' as they are sometimes called, are trapezoid-shaped slatted wood crates, approximately three and a half feet long and one and a half feet high. The trap has a hole with a wooden funnel at one end that the lobster can enter but cannot leave. Because the lobster is looking for a hiding place by day, fishermen do not put bait in the traps. In addition to traps, some men use large metal drums. These drums are pinched together at the top to prevent the lobster from escaping. Several holes punched along the sides and bottom allow water and sand to drain out so that when the fisherman pulls them up, they are not too heavy.

Lobster Trap Fishing

The most profitable fishing on Caye Caulker is done with lobster traps. Lobster traps produce a much higher yield over time and are less labor intensive than diving for lobster. However, the use of lobster traps requires a capital outlay to buy materials for traps, and the acquisition of a lobster territory. Since lobster territories are limited, islanders who belong to one of the island families usually begin by working with a relative and eventually establish a territory near that relative. Furthermore, a man may be able to get started in a territory with a small number of traps obtained through financial help from his family. When he produces enough to become a member of the co-op, he can increase the number of traps by using his credit with the co-op. Thus, islanders have a number of advantages over non-islanders in becoming lobster fishermen and men from families with good lobster territories have an advantage over men from families without territories.

Every year the fishermen set their traps in the same general area. Each fisherman has his own territory. These territories are not officially mapped and there are no recorded boundaries. Although it is difficult to know the location of every single territory, each man knows the location and boundaries of territories in the general vicinity of his own. The location of territories is fairly public knowledge, but the exact location of an individual man's traps is a carefully guarded secret.

Some territories are better than others, and a prized territory is one that 'fishes good' year after year. Territories vary in size depending on the amount of traps a man has and on whether he has been able to expand his holding. There are several ways to obtain a territory. The most common way is for a boy to inherit one from his father or another close relative, such as an uncle or cousin. For example, one man has had his territory for over twenty-five years. He obtained it from his cousin with whom he worked as a boy. After his cousin retired, it became his own, and he now works it alone. Another young man has a territory that originally belonged to his father. When he was fourteen, he set 15 to 20 of his own traps near his father's traps. A year later his father retired and gave him his territory. He now works this territory with his younger brother.

Acquiring a territory other than through inheritance from a relative is very difficult. Occasionally a man may

work with a nonrelative who has an established territory. He may then have an opportunity to take over when the man retires, or to start his own territory alongside his partner's. It is possible to expand the size of a territory in the same way. The strategy is to add a few extra traps each season on the outer edge of the territory and thus to ease slowly into new areas.

Still another way a fisherman may obtain a territory involves setting a few traps on the edge of a friend's territory. By adding a few more traps every season, a fisherman may secure a particular area. But a fisherman who attempts to set traps in an unclaimed area quickly discovers that all the workable locations close to Caye Caulker have been taken. Though it is possible to fish far from the Caye, islanders claim that the extra time and transportation costs make such ventures unprofitable. Finally, a fisherman can buy a territory from another islander who has no heirs or is willing to sell for some other reason. The difficulties of acquiring a territory are a contributing factor to the frequent theft that takes place from lobster traps.

Setting Traps

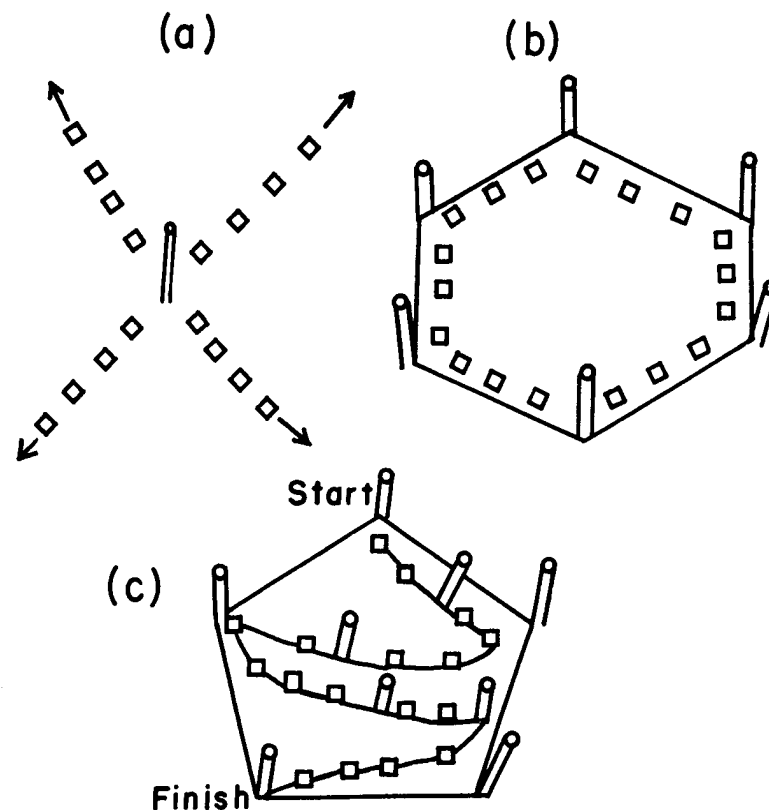
Within his territory each fisherman must decide exactly where to place his traps. Traps are never placed at or very near the reef because the water is so rough it would smash the traps on the rocks. Traps must be set far enough from the reef to avoid damage and loss.

The seabed surrounding Caye Caulker contains excellent lobster fishing but some areas fish better than others. There are certain clues that indicate a good fishing spot. For example, on the border between a grassy area and a 'white spot' (sandy areas clear of vegetation), banks form under the grass. Lobster are attracted to this area because it provides a dark spot to hide. Another good spot is where lobster come in from the 'blue' (the open sea), at breaks in the reef. Traps closest to breaks in the reef get more lobster than ones farther away. Fishermen set traps in the same areas every year unless they happen to 'fish bad' one year. If a fisherman sees an area he thinks might be good, he will set ten to twenty-five traps there to try it out. He never sets all the traps in one area but tries to scatter them around the best spots. An area that has proven itself will have the most traps. Traps are generally placed no closer than one hundred yards apart.

Figure I. Lobster Trap Setting Patterns

(by Eric Vacarella)

Diagrams a and b are earlier methods of setting traps. Both are located using the island land mark system explained in Figure II. Individual traps are located by their relative position to the marker poles. Such "straight line" methods have now been abandoned by many fishermen because these patterns are too easy for thieves to locate. This third locating method (diagram c) uses a more random zigzag pattern at the same time using poles, not "sea marks as the primary location aids.



The established fishermen on Caye Caulker generally have between 150 and 500 traps and have to know the location of every one. In Florida, fishermen rope their traps together and mark them with a buoy. But the water around Caye Caulker is so shallow that if they were marked with a buoy, they would be too easily stolen. The fishermen employ several strategies to remember where their traps are and at the same time keep them hidden from others. First of all, they always set and check the traps in a given order. Second, they set the traps so that they form a pattern, often a zigzag pattern, which must be committed to memory. Each fisherman creates his own individual pattern which he keeps secret (See Figure I). In addition to the pattern, there are other memory aids. Traps can be located by establishing two points or landmarks which are used to triangulate the position of a given trap or group of traps. One point, called the running mark, is marked by a stick placed in the sand, jutting out of the water, or may be the leeward edge of a grass strip in the water or of a specific 'white spot.' The second, called the stop mark, may be the tip of an island, or a prominent tree or bush on an island. The fisherman approaches a spot using the running mark and lines it up with the stop mark using his boat as the third point in the triangle (See Figure II). Another strategy is to set traps along the edge of a white spot or a grassy spot and follow its curve.

Before setting new traps or returning them to the water at the start of a new season, they are put in a pen in the water near the shore to 'season' them. After this treatment, they are taken out, scrubbed, and are ready to set. They are then weighted with small chunks of coral or rocks so that they will not easily tip over or shift position. Where the current is strong, more rocks have to be put in than in calmer areas. The rocks are spread evenly inside the trap to insure stability. Then the trap is gently lowered into the water and watched to make sure that it remains upright on its descent to the bottom. In murky areas, a white polystyrene float is attached to the trap so that it floats about three feet beneath the surface. This makes it easier to spot the trap under the water.

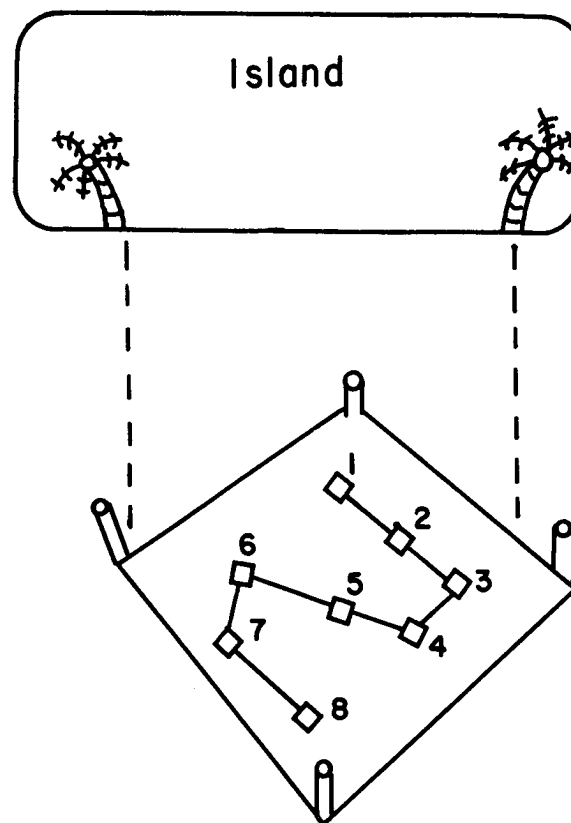
Hauling Traps

Fishermen check their traps by sections every three to seven days. They will check an area often if 'the

Figure II. Locating a Lobster Territory

(by Eric Vacarella)

Territory is defined by a series of poles and is located relative to pre-determined island landmarks. Within the territory traps are located by the use of "sea marks" and their positions relative to the boundary poles.



lobster are running good' or less frequently if they are not hauling in many lobster.

Some men work alone, others with a partner. In a partnership, usually the older man owns the territory and the second man or boy is a younger relative or friend. One man runs the motor and hauls the traps while the other stands on the bow of the skiff and looks for the traps. A partner also helps remove the lobster from the traps and throw them into an empty trap on board their skiff.

After arriving at the area where the traps are located, the first step is to line up the landmarks in order to find the traps. One common problem is that sometimes the sticks a man has put in the water have been broken off by passing boats, especially sugar barges. If this has happened, the fisherman must circle around to locate the remains of the stick. When he finds it he will put in a new stick or pole to serve as a temporary marker. Occasionally he may not be able to locate the broken stick, but since he knows the general location he can often calculate where his traps are without it.

After lining up the markers, the fisherman goes to the first trap in the pattern. Finding the first trap is often difficult as traps do not always stay in one place. A light wind, a current, or an animal such as a porpoise may move a trap. Also if a thief has pulled a trap, it probably has not been reset in the right spot. So a fisherman may have to circle around an area to spot the first trap, at the same time keeping in mind wind patterns and current directions.

Calm and sunny weather is best for hauling traps because they are easier to spot. When a trap is found, the fisherman has to decide whether to pull it or not. The water is generally clear enough to see it sitting on the bottom. When a trap sits in the water for several days, the wood is covered by a thin layer of silt, making it whitish in appearance. When lobster are in the trap, they crawl along the inside searching for an escape and remove the white silt. If the trap is white, no lobster are inside and as long as it is properly set, the fisherman will leave it. If it is tipped over, no matter what color it is, he will pull it and set it again. If the trap is black, he knows that lobster are inside.

Pulling a trap requires great upper body strength and is hard work. When pulling traps, some men wear a support to prevent hernias. One fisherman claims that if a trap is full of lobster it weighs less, or seems to weigh less because it 'gives you courage to pull it up.'

A trap is pulled with a 25-foot long pole that has a metal hook on the end. Keeping his back straight and his knees bent, the fisherman pulls the heavy trap. When it reaches the surface, he grabs it with one hand, using the other to set the pole on board. He must use both hands to lift it onto a special board nailed on the rim of the boat. It is then placed on a small canvas on the floor of the boat. The canvas helps collect debris and keeps the skiff cleaner. Once the trap is on board, the fisherman removes the lid and grabs the lobster by the antennae, tossing it into a container (usually an empty pot). Undersize lobster (less than four ounces) are thrown back into the water because they cannot be sold to the co-op.

A small piece of canvas is placed over the container with lobster to protect them from the sunlight that will otherwise cause them to spoil quickly. Mud and growth are brushed off the trap, the rocks are distributed evenly, and it is reset in the same spot. To do this the fisherman must know exactly how far he has drifted and motor back to the right spot. Finally, the canvas on the floor is rinsed in the water and any debris in the bottom of the skiff is wiped up, and the fisherman can motor to the next trap.

There are a few variations from this procedure when hauling a metal drum. When a drum is spotted, the fisherman first checks to see if any antennae are sticking out of the entrance. To do this, he uses a glass bottomed box that allows him to see the drum very clearly. These boxes were used by divers before masks were introduced to the island. Because drums are very heavy, most fisherman haul a drum only if they see antennae. A drum is pulled using the same technique as for a trap except that the drum must be drained while it rests on the rim of the boat. If the bottom of the drum is rusted, it will be repaired on the spot by inserting a bottom taken from another drum into the old drum and pounding it into place. Some fishermen do not replace a rusted bottom but will dive to a damaged drum instead of pulling it. One fisherman said he finds a drum lighter when it is full of lobster because there is less room for water. Drums are more expensive than traps, but they are said to fish better. Since they are expensive and fish well, they are stolen quite frequently.

Stealing

All informants agreed that stealing from traps is one of the most serious problems facing those who pull traps for a living. According to one fisherman, the problem is more serious every year, and an indication of the escalation of stealing is that the thieves are becoming more blatant. One young fisherman commented: "Out of 325 fishermen in the co-op, I only know 50 who are honest. Even my friends steal from traps. But I never get mad when someone steals from my traps. I just check the traps more often, and I try to vary the times I go out so people don't know when I'll be there." Those who steal are mainly younger men who have only a few traps (15 to 20) of their own or do not own any. When the quantity of lobster begins to drop off in December, some other men who may not be doing very well may also start hauling other men's traps. One fisherman stated that he no longer hauls traps and returned to line fishing because of the problem of stealing. Another turned to running his hotel and retired from fishing because the stealing made him so angry.

Those who steal know the location of each person's territory and are familiar with a man's schedule for hauling traps. They obtain this information through inquiry and observation. They may ask about how well a particular man is doing and when he checks the different areas of his territory. For these reasons, most fishermen are loathe to talk about their catches or their schedules. To ensure a good catch, a thief will haul another man's traps the day before the owner plans to haul. The fishermen are aware of this strategy, and many avoid a strict schedule in an effort to foil such attempts.

Although they are hesitant to give names, islanders generally know the identity of the thieves. For example, it is suspicious when a man hauls traps and brings in lobster but is never seen building traps. Or a man who has only a few traps and yet leaves to haul them every day will be suspected of hauling more than his own traps. Occasionally a person is actually seen pulling someone else's traps.

There are several ways that a man can know if someone has stolen from his traps. When a trap sits in the water, the wood is covered with silt. If a diver removes the lid of a trap and does not replace it in the exact position as before, clean areas on the trap will be exposed. Second, if a man hauls a trap that is black but

contains no lobster, he can be fairly sure that someone got to this trap before he did. Sometimes a fisherman will tack a loose lid to a trap and if he finds the nail missing, he suspects that he has been robbed.

Stealing from traps is a very sensitive topic, and people are reluctant to talk openly about it. Although many argue that stealing will one day lead to fights, ramming the thief's boat, and eventually a shooting, there seems to be a discrepancy between what people say will happen and what actually does happen. All are agreed that taking a thief to court is a waste of time.

Hernando, a successful fisherman with 150 traps, has come across the same person stealing from his traps on three different occasions. The first time, Hernando informed the thief that the traps were his, told him to leave, and said that he did not want to see him there again. The second time Hernando encountered the thief, he became angry and gave a serious warning. The third time he became incensed, threatening to knock the thief in the water, and to push his skiff away so that it would look like a drowning accident. Although islanders talk of cases where a thief's boat has been rammed, it is not clear that this has actually happened. No stealing-related shooting has ever taken place on Caye Caulker. In fact, some of the men take a fairly resigned attitude toward theft, and claim that stealing is simply part of lobster fishing and there is not much that can be done about it. One man reported:

Sometimes people tell me when they see someone pulling my traps. But I tell them that since I did not see it happen, I'm not going to do anything about it. It doesn't bother me very much. I don't think it's worth killing anyone over this.

There are other ways that islanders use to discourage trap thieves. Often the Co-op will refuse to lend money to a 'known thief.' Islanders also refuse to participate in any kind of reciprocity with a thief. Thieves may be denied the normal courtesies and reciprocal favors. One day several men, one of whom is a 'known thief,' were sitting around together. The thief asked one of the men for a hit off a joint that was being passed around, and he was refused. The men began to ask the thief why he hauls traps every day when he only owns ten or fifteen traps. The thief laughed uneasily and asked for a

cigarette but was told that he would get nothing. An open confrontation and expressions of disapproval such as this are very unusual on Caye Caulker.

Diving for Lobster

Since hauling traps is more profitable than diving, most of the fishermen who dive for their lobster are younger men or non-islanders who either cannot afford to buy traps or have been unable to acquire a territory. The men on Caye Caulker dive mostly inside the reef, although occasionally they will go out to the "blue", beyond the reef. The lobster are said to be larger and more plentiful outside the reef, but so are the sharks.

Equipment is simple and inexpensive. Divers use a mask, fins, and sometimes a snorkel, but they do not use Scuba gear. Snorkeling gear was introduced to the island about 15 years ago by foreigners. Sometimes the diver will also wear a shirt to keep warm while diving. Three different instruments are used to capture lobster. Some divers use the Hawaiian sling or a spear gun. While these are very accurate, they are expensive and will damage the meat unless the lobster is shot in the head. Also, spears can easily be lost and the points can be broken. The traditional, most commonly used instrument is a hook stick, which is about three feet long and has a large metal hook attached to the end with wire. The advantages of the hook stick are that it is cheap and easy to make. It is also more simple to use since it does not need to be reloaded. In addition, it puts only a very small hole in the lobster without visibly damaging the meat.

Lobster are found in the crevices of coral heads on the ocean bottom. To look for lobster the diver brings his face within inches of a crevice in the coral rock. The whole lobster is usually not visible because the lobster likes to remain hidden, but the antennae are easy to spot. In order to keep himself under the water or to maintain his position in a heavy current, the diver grabs onto the coral with his bare hands. He must watch for sea urchins, stinging corals, moray eels, and sharks.

Sleeping nurse sharks are often found under the very rocks that lobster prefer. Although they are not supposed to be a threat to man, most divers try to keep a respectful distance, especially if the sharks are larger than five feet. All divers who hook lobster or spear fish face sharks who in their search for food are attracted to the dying animal. One man remarked: "I share the water

with the sharks. We are both hunters. I won't dive if I see sharks around, but if I dive and sharks appear I'll just relax and try not to draw their attention. If anything happens, well, that's life. I don't stop diving because of sharks." Sharks can be seen on virtually every diving trip.

There are three strategies for diving for lobster. Sometimes a group of men go to an area far away and spend a few weeks at a fishing camp. Men also dive regularly in small groups in the general vicinity of the caye. Finally, some men take tourists to the reef and collect lobster and fish while the tourists are snorkeling.

1. Camping: Once in a while, men get together and dive in camps. They leave the island for one to three weeks and set up camp on a faraway caye. A camp is made up of a small group of men who dive from early in the morning until late in the afternoon. They take turns cooking, each one being responsible for cooking for a day. They take an absolute minimum of supplies avoiding even a change of clothing, and live on fish for the most part. Most men on Caye Caulker have at one time worked in camps. They often recall these experiences with nostalgia. In other parts of coastal Belize, such as San Pedro and Placencia diving in camps is more common than on Caye Caulker.

2. Daily group dives: Men will also go out in small groups for the day and dive in the general vicinity of the caye. Some of these groups meet regularly and others are formed on a more ad hoc basis. They leave between 6:30 and 7:30 in the morning and stay out until early afternoon. Some groups will drop each man at a certain distance from the boat where he will collect lobster which he places on a float and drags along with him as he works his way to the boat. At other times they may anchor the boat in one spot and work that area before moving on to another area. Jim Moreno dives regularly with his younger brother. They employ a 'rock to rock' method. They dive coral rocks that are isolated from other rocks. Their premise is that rocks which stand alone will contain a higher concentration of lobster since it is the only available shelter in the area. They try to choose rocks that are near a channel where lobster come in from the blue. Often one man runs the boat while the other dives. When they spot a rock they want to dive, one man will jump in the water and scout the rock. If there are only a couple of lobster, he will collect them by himself and return to the boat. If there are many

lobster, the diver will signal to the other who then drops anchor and also dives the rock. The main disadvantage to this method is that a great deal more fuel is burned than if they were to drop anchor immediately and dive a large area before moving on.

3. Diving and Tourism: Some men dive when they take tourists to the reef. These men are generally young, ranging from 15 to 30 years old. For the price of U.S. \$3.00 per person, they will take a group of tourists to the reef for about three hours. They anchor the boat, and while the tourists swim around, they dive for lobster. After exhausting the area, they will move to a different spot. To work in this way, these men must have some way to attract tourists. Some have a sign posted on their house, such as 'Contact Sandy for Reef Trips Here.' Men also depend on having a trademark to attract tourists. Sandy has the reputation of partying with the tourists and is friendly with them. Robby's trademark is his sailboat which some tourists prefer to the motorized boats or skiffs. One man said that he always tries to be friendly with the tourists, and furthermore he intends to buy cushioned seats and a canopy for the boat since he knows tourists like that kind of luxury.

When tourists first arrive on the island, they are often approached and offered a trip to the reef. Sometimes tourists choose to go out with the owner of their hotel or someone the owner has recommended, usually a relative. Occasionally there are more aggressive techniques. A man might ask tourists several times if they are interested in going to the reef, and some stand at the corner of a street and ask every tourist that goes by. A minimum number of tourists are required before a man will take a group out. Tourists who express an interest in going to the reef are often told that they are responsible for finding more tourists.

A man who has a skiff and a motor can make a living taking tourists to the reef in combination with diving. But a man who does not own a skiff must borrow one, and this gives him a handicap. First of all, he must split the money he takes in with the owner of the boat. The owner generally takes a minimum of U.S.\$7.50. Therefore, a man who does not own his boat must take larger groups of tourists in order to realize any profit. He is also dependent on the availability of a boat to borrow.

The Lobster Season

The lobster season begins July 15 and ends March 15. Catching lobster between March and July is illegal and punishable by fine. During the off season, the men who haul traps can build new traps and repair old ones. Wood for building traps is available on credit at the co-op. Just before the season opens, traps are put out in the water. Since no lobster can be sold until the first day of the season, traps cannot be put out too early. Some men store lobster in pens in the water, but this is risky because they can become very thin or 'mauger' if kept there too long. Others 'tail' the lobster and pack them in iceboxes, hidden deep in the mangrove swamps. These iceboxes are carefully guarded twenty-four hours a day.

At the beginning of the season, men check their traps frequently, often every other day, but by December the lobster catch begins to slack off. If catches diminish, fishermen start bringing in traps in December to clean and store them by their houses rather than leave them in the water where they will deteriorate.

When lobster are sold to the Co-op, the men receive a first payment, based on the weight of the lobster tails. On March 15 the men receive their 'second payment,' the co-op rebate, in a lump sum. This sudden influx of cash usually results in a drinking spree and a flurry of building activity. At this time families invest in building hotels, new houses at the cut for their grown children, and new skiffs. In June the co-op has its annual meeting featuring a big dance with a Reggae band and free food and drink for everyone on the island. At the annual meeting, new officers are elected, the annual report is presented to all shareholders, government officials give speeches on the current state of the fishing industry, and prizes are awarded to the most productive fishermen in four categories: lobster, scale fish, conch, and rock crab. Representatives from international companies wanting to purchase next year's lobster catch arrive with briefcases and business suits that present a stark contrast to the barefoot fishermen. Sealed bids are presented and opened. For the last few years, Red Lobster Inns of America has purchased the entire lobster catch for Caye Caulker. One year, however, a French restaurant chain was the successful bidder.

The Future of Lobster Fishing

In 1982 so many lobster were produced on Caye Caulker that the boat from Belize City had to come out each morning to take the daily catch to the processing plant. This (1982) was a record season with a 127% increase over the 1981 catch. The lobster catch rose from 121,175 pounds in 1981 to 275,275 pounds in 1982, while the price jumped from \$15.04 to \$18.13 Belize per pound, an increase of over 20 percent. The co-op's net profit was \$368,068, an increase of 236 percent from the previous year.³ It marked an incredible boom for Caye Caulker, and turned the islanders into some of the most affluent of Belizeans. At the Northern Fishermen Co-ops' annual meeting in June 1982, Mark Huesner was awarded a prize for bringing in the most lobster, 7,000 pounds, for an income of over U.S.\$63,000. Anyone who took fishing seriously made more than U.S. \$20,000 during the season.

The dramatic increase in production was due primarily to the 'Red Tide', which affected the coastal waters of Belize during August and September in 1980. This natural phenomenon is a result of a dense concentration of small plantlike organisms that create patches of toxic discolored water when they start to multiply in large numbers. While the toxin does not directly affect the lobster, it killed off many of the fish that feed on young lobster. Consequently, the lobster population exploded.⁴

In January 1983, islanders generally agreed that production was not up to the levels of the previous year. As nature slowly returned to equilibrium, the lobster population declined to previous levels. People hoped that any increase in fishing income would result from higher prices rather than increased production, but such was not the case. In 1983 the price of lobster dropped over 9 percent (see Table I). However, in 1984 and 1985 lobster production was up again, and the fishermen did well.

There are concerns on Caye Caulker that if fishermen were to continue increasing their production they would 'fish out' the waters around the caye. The establishment of a July 15 to March 15 lobster season is part of a government effort to prevent overfishing. Many islanders speculate about the apparent decrease in number of lobster at San Pedro on nearby Ambergris Caye. Lobster fishing has been severely reduced there, and the village of San Pedro generally has invested its future in tourism. But others do not agree that the lobster is really in danger.

Table I. The Lobster Catch, 1981-1983

Year	No. of Members of Co-op	Total Catch in Pounds	Price per lb.* (Belize dollar)	Total Net Profit of Co-op
1981	200	121,175	\$ 15.04	\$109,282.98
1982	235	275,275	\$ 18.13	\$368,068.74
1983	292	207,088	\$ 16.49	\$155,470.14
1984	337	274,132	\$ 17.72	\$224,768.40

Data from The Northern Fishermen Cooperative Annual Reports, 1982, 1983, 1984

* \$ 1.00 Belize is equivalent to \$.50 U.S.

One man commented: "There are two populations of lobster, one which moves in a cyclical pattern and another that lives in the Belize waters and doesn't move. The lobster that lives here is being fished out, but the cyclical population still remains strong."

There is a possibility that the increase in numbers of lobster fishermen, attracted by the high profits possible from lobster, may lead to overfishing. Overfishing is reported to have occurred in the North Atlantic, in the Bahamas,⁵ and around Florida and other islands of the Caribbean. The waters surrounding Caye Caulker behind the barrier reef are fished intensely. As these areas are now saturated with traps, enterprising lobster fishermen are looking into the possibility of lobster fishing outside the reef. Because this area has never been fished intensely, no one knows how many lobster are there. Laying and maintaining traps outside the reef involves much greater risks to man and traps. Currents are very strong and the water is deep; therefore, traps are more likely to be lost, and heavier, more expensive equipment is needed for this venture to be successful. One young fisherman is experimenting with strong traps set in water 50 feet deep outside the reef. The trap has a buoy 3 feet from the surface so it can be spotted, is larger than the traditional trap, and has two openings. He maintains that these traps already are catching a significantly greater number of lobster than inside the reef.

On Caye Caulker, people believe that anything in the sea belongs to any man who can obtain it. The idea of conserving lobster stock is only just beginning to take hold on Caye Caulker and other fishing islands. The imposition of a lobster season, the prohibition on taking berried lobsters (females with eggs), and a minimum size (4 oz. tail) for legal sale all represent attempts to protect the lobster breeding stock. Several common practices on Caye Caulker indicate that these rules are being ignored. Although undersized tails cannot be sold to the co-op, they are regularly served up in local restaurants. Fishermen sometimes scrape the eggs off a berried lobster before taking it to the co-op to sell. Finally, although the season begins officially on July 15, some fishermen set their traps and store lobsters in pens or in iceboxes, in order to bring in a large catch the first day of the season.

Besides overfishing, there are other threats to the future of lobster production. Traps lost during a storm

or pulled by a thief and not reset in such a way that the owner can find them continue to catch lobster. These lobster perish in the trap until it finally disintegrates, usually in a couple of years. In addition, lobster are highly sensitive to oil. Ships flush oil out of their tanks as they go up and down the coast of Belize, and this has an effect on the lobster population.

Obviously, existing regulations must be enforced for any lobster conservation program to be successful. On San Pedro enforcement of conservation laws is stepping up. In the spring of 1984, a restaurant was fined \$500.00 for serving lobster out of season, and the police were reportedly watching boats at the reef with binoculars to spot any lobster being brought aboard. Enforcement of the legal size limit and of the season would go a long way towards improving the lobster breeding stock. One measure that Belize may have to consider in the future is to raise the legal size of the lobster to 4 1/4 ounces so that each lobster is ensured the chance to breed once before being caught. Most lobster are caught at the beginning of their maturity, which results in the loss of almost an entire generation each year. Raising the legal size would initially reduce the year's catch drastically but would ensure a greater future for lobster fishing.

Deep Sea Fishing

The Belizean government wants to encourage the development of a deep sea fishing industry, to exploit the rich and virgin territory outside the reef. The Belize Fishermen Cooperative Society, with the help of the United Nations CARE program, has undertaken several test programs for deep-sea fishing. In addition, they have attempted to develop new markets for scale fish. At the present, Jamaica is still the best scale fish market used by the Northern Fishermen Cooperative. At the opening address of the annual meeting of the co-op in 1983, Mr. Francis Gegg, a Belizean businessman, urged fishermen to consider diversifying into facets of the fishing industry beyond the shallow seabed. He stressed that current fishing areas are limited, seasonal, and overfished and do not allow for real growth and expansion. He pointed out that the bumper crop of the 1983 season was not the result of improved techniques but of an explosion in the lobster population, and suggested that the profits from 1983 be invested in deep-sea fishing equipment. However, because current fishing practices are relatively easy, bring in a

good income, and involve little investment, the incentive to diversify is lacking.

Furthermore, deep-sea fishing does not appeal to most Caye Caulker fishermen for several reasons. First, it requires a cash investment in very expensive equipment, primarily a deep-sea fishing vessel with winch and pulley mechanisms for hauling lines and nets and sonar devices for finding schools of fish. Second, it requires a different approach to fishing. Fishermen on Caye Caulker like to fish close to home to return each day to the island, they traditionally work individually or in partnerships, and they keep a schedule that is relaxed and unpressured. If they are unable to check their traps one day, they can always do so the next. Deep-sea fishing with crews and equipment that must be in constant use would require a kind of commercial approach to fishing that has not yet developed on Caye Caulker.

Rather than develop the risky and more taxing deep sea fishing, most Caye Caulker fishermen are choosing to develop the burgeoning tourist industry. The tourist trade can provide an additional income that does not require great capital investment and can be adapted to family organization and the social values of the island far more readily than deep-sea fishing. An examination of the structure of families and the nature of family relationships, domestic groups, and support networks will demonstrate the ways that fishing and tourism are being combined to produce an economy that is compatible with island social organization.

NOTES

1. See Craig, 1966, Chapters VI and VIII for a description of line fishing, use of fish nets, fish traps (also called trampas or heart weirs), and the fishing of loggerhead turtles, conch and crab.
2. Acheson, James, Anthropology of Fishing, Annual Review of Anthropology, 1981, 10:285.
3. The Northern Fishermen Cooperative Annual Report, 1982.
4. "A Tapered Catch" The New Belize, July 1982, pages 4-6.
5. Dippel, John "Looking for the Last Maine Lobster" Oceans, 13 Jan 1980, pp. 61-63, and personal communication, Edward Booth.



The Northern Fishermen Cooperative Society

The islanders of Caye Caulker have access to some of the best fishing grounds in the Caribbean, particularly for lobster. They have exploited these resources in ways that are compatible with their particular social forms. At the same time they have developed strategies that have significantly improved their economic situation. A major strategy was the formation of the very successful Northern Fishermen Cooperative Society, Ltd. The aim of this chapter¹ is to describe these economic and social developments from the first settlement to the formation of the co-op.

In several ways, the historical development of Caye Caulker parallels the history of Belize, producing some of the same cultural patterns in both settings. First, like the rest of the Honduras Bay Settlement, the island was essentially uninhabited until one hundred years ago and therefore has had no long-established traditions. Further, when it was settled finally by Mestizo refugees from the Caste Wars of Yucatan in the 1870's, it developed in relative isolation from the mainland without significant 'official' colonial interest just as British Honduras developed in relative isolation from the British Caribbean. Distance from the colonial power on the mainland and the absence of ruling families with control of land contributed to the strong sense of independence and autonomy among the islanders to this day.

On Caye Caulker, unlike the mainland of Belize, the primary economic force has been fishing. The Mestizo

enterprise, often act as vehicles for social change. The Mayan Cooperative and later the Mopan Cooperative of San Antonio, he maintains, did much to develop the economic and political aspirations of younger members of the community and had an important positive impact on education, economic development and political participation.⁴

Churches

Religion arrived on Caye Caulker with the first Mestizo settlers who brought their Catholic faith with them from Yucatan. The first church was built in the 1880's. It was used occasionally when priests from Belize City came out to the island to perform services, but there were no regular weekly services. Everyone on the island was at least nominally Catholic, but without a priest or much organization, religious beliefs persisted primarily on a personal level. Only within the last two decades have priests begun coming out to the island from Belize City on a regular weekly basis to conduct Sunday workshop services. In 1982 a cement block church was constructed, and in 1983-84 six lay ministers were ordained from among the islanders, after ten months of study. These lay ministers are now qualified to lead worship services. Each oversees a specific part of church activities, such as Sunday School or building maintenance. However, church members do not recognize in them the same religious authority and knowledge the priest has, and services conducted by the priest are much better attended than those led by the lay ministers.

The Catholic Church had been the only religious body on the island for nearly a century when protestant missionaries began arriving one by one about twenty years ago. Initially they had little impact; however, about five years ago, Vito was 'saved', and the Assemblies of God church gained a foothold on Caye Caulker. According to his sister, Vito had been leading a "life of sin" in Belize City, when he was witnessed to by a man from the Assemblies of God church.

He got saved. He accepted the truth of the gospel and accepted Jesus Christ as his personal saviour. He made a bargain in his heart to start a church on the island where he had been born. He wanted to help the people of Caye Caulker.

Soon a pair of missionaries began making trips out to Caye Caulker from Belize City to witness and preach. The Assemblies of God church slowly gained members on the island. In the first year it took in ten members. Recently that increased to eighteen, in comparison to the more than 350 members of the Catholic Church. The church drew mainly from Vito's relatives - his mother, his sister and her husband, several members of the Martin kin group, and a few women who are unrelated to either of the groups.

In 1982, they constructed a cement block church and hired their first minister, a Guatemalan. The church is extremely active, with services Sunday morning and almost every week night. The members participate enthusiastically in the services, and the minister also encourages them to take time to visit their neighbors and witness to them. However, this conflicts so strongly with the Caye Caulker rule of non-interference that he has thus far been unsuccessful in this endeavor.

Although it is small, the Assemblies of God church has brought some significant changes on the island. Because it believes in active conversion rather than non-interference and because by church standards virtually all non-converted islanders are sinners, there is a clash of values between the converted and unconverted. For example, the church takes a strong stand against drinking and adultery. According to several men and their wives, their conversion has improved their family lives because the men spend more time at home and do not drink. However, it has also divided families. For example, if only one spouse converts, inevitably a tension between husband and wife results. In several cases conversion has also strained or caused severed relations between kin and between friends. In some cases, this has resulted in a break in the traditional kinship support networks. Many Catholics feel somewhat threatened or betrayed by the converts, while members of the Assemblies of God church feel some anger towards the Catholic church, as they believe that a 'personal relationship with Jesus Christ' is not possible within the Catholic doctrine. Further, they strongly disapprove of many of the actions of some members of the Catholic church, for instance, drinking or carrying on visiting relationships. Some Assemblies of God members have severed relations with friends or relatives whose actions they believe are immoral. The Assemblies of God church is the only force that has been able to erode wider family support networks on Caye

Caulker, an indication of the depth of its current strength. A woman whose family converted after her daughter was healed at a prayer session aptly described the dilemma of conversion:

We all got saved . . . It was like a bomb dropped on the Catholic church. They even called a priest from the United States to convince us to come back. Our best friends turned their backs on us. I remember on my birthday, standing looking out my window with tears streaming down my face because all my friends left me. But I had found a new friend - Jesus.

Service Organizations

Other locally organized groups have been much less successful. Though they may be locally organized, the islanders generally see little need for such groups. For example, the Caye Caulker chapter of the Lion's Club, a service organization which contributed the swings for the local park, appears and disappears quickly. Concern that one person may be benefiting more than others from the group's activities leads to its dissolution, until someone decides to try to reorganize and revitalize it.

There is also a Youth Group on the island, which is fairly inactive. Raphael Lenos explained, "We used to clean the beaches, all around the island. By the time we finished, we'd have to start over again. But we can't co-operate any more to get it done, so we don't do it anymore." The group's activities are currently limited to planning occasional dances or parties.

A couple of islanders have made several attempts to start a hotel or tourist association to set uniform prices in the tourist industry. But local business owners "couldn't co-operate. Because they have their own money now, they don't need others."

Part of the failure of these groups can be attributed to the low priority islanders assign to service to the community in comparison with loyalty to family. Moreover islanders see little need for cleaned beaches or business associations. In some cases islanders are also suspicious that some individuals may use the organization to better their own positions at the expense of others or to gain some measure of authority over others.

Village Council

Forms of government imposed by the national government are not particularly effective either, unless they have a specific task at hand which islanders support. For instance, the Village Council generally has little to do and does not have a great deal of authority, though it may be activated by natural disasters or other problems which occur sporadically. Its responsibilities include keeping public property (the community center, cemetery, police station, and park) in good repair, representing the Belizean government on Caye Caulker, and collecting land taxes, which remain on Caye Caulker as operating funds for the Village Council. Other taxes and license fees are paid directly to the government in Belize City. Most people have few dealings with the Village Council, and when problems do arise they are more likely to view Louis Sylvestre, their elected representative to the Belizean National Assembly as the more legitimate liaison with the national government.

Elections for the Village Council are held every two years, and people can serve as many terms as they continue to be elected. By their own choice, they are not paid, although the government thinks they should receive a percentage of tax money collected. Actually, there is usually so little interest in the Village Council that Eduardo Lenos once served for several years without being re-elected, because no one else wanted to be on it. No one ran or came to the meetings. Louis Sylvestre organizes the election meeting. After seven to ten people are nominated, a vote is taken and the top seven vote-getters are elected. They decide among themselves who will hold the various positions, ranging from chairman to 'wise owl', who reports any illegal businesses or other problems to the board. For example, if tourists are charging people to go to the reef or setting up a business on the island, then the 'wise owl' brings this to the attention of the Village Council.

The Village Council is required to hold a general meeting every year to report their activities and expenditures to the public, though they are not necessarily prompt in doing this. They may have one or two other public meetings during the year if specific problems come up, for instance, if taxes are not up-to-date or some kind of disaster strikes. However, most of

the Village Council meetings are closed, and the secretary's notes are not available for islanders to read.

Land Committee

The five-year Land Committee is an extension of the Village Council. Its objective is more concrete. It was created for the purpose of parcelling out the land at the Cut. It is responsible for screening and selecting applicants and distributing the land through a lottery system. Once this task has been completed, the committee will probably be dissolved.

Justice of the Peace

The office of Justice of the Peace is an unpaid legal office. The individual JP is appointed by the Belizean government and is always an islander. A Justice of the Peace is responsible for seeing that 'law and order are kept on the island', signing legal papers, and performing marriage ceremonies. There are two Justices of the Peace on Caye Caulker, Eduardo Lenos and Luciano Martin. Eduardo has been a Justice of the Peace since 1974, when he received an unexpected letter informing him that he would be appointed Justice of the Peace if he would accept the position. He once tried to resign the post, but the government strongly discouraged him from doing so.

Neither the Village Council nor the Justices have a great deal of authority. Islanders prefer to abide by their unwritten code of non-interference with individuals' rights rather than formalized laws and methods of enforcement. Thus, organizations or offices imposed by the national government must rely largely on voluntary compliance, and when this fails the case is most often simply handed over to the Belizean government, which handles fines and punishments.

School

The one exception to the generally weak government-imposed organizations is the school. The school is supported by islanders for two reasons. First, it is staffed by islanders. The principal is both an islander and a teacher. Second, the islanders generally value an education. They recognize that Caye Caulker has never been able to support a large population and that there

will always be some young who want to leave. Therefore, islanders want their children to get a basic education so that they can be prepared for further schooling in Belize City and eventually for jobs elsewhere. Girls especially have been encouraged to continue with schooling because they had no other means of attaining economic independence. It is generally agreed that those who stay on the island also require an education. First, there is more and more need to deal with the outside, both through fishing and tourist business. Second, fishermen who expect to run their own cooperative successfully must be educated as well. The co-op, for example, has financed the higher education of several men in training programs abroad.

Government Officials

Nonislanders who are sent by the Belizean government to fill official positions of policeman and nurse on Caye Caulker represent the least effective form of authority. As outsiders in roles imposed from the outside, they have little basis of legitimacy in the islander's view and violate the local ideal of noninterference.

A government nurse is regularly assigned to Caye Caulker although frequently there is no nurse residing on the island at any one time. She lives in the community center where she has a clinic from which she dispenses medication and administers first aid and immunizations to babies and children. Though many islanders believe it is a good idea to have a nurse, they are accustomed to self-reliance and self-medication, sometimes with herbal remedies; therefore, many do not use her services. Most islanders prefer to go directly to Belize City for emergencies or to the United States or Mexico for serious illnesses and surgery. Expectant mothers also go to Belize City for delivery, although for many years an elderly islander was the local midwife. The nurse's role is primarily as a public health officer. In this role, she is often perceived as an 'interference', by the islanders.

For example, in January 1983, a handful of malaria cases appeared on the island. In an attempt to kill off the malaria-carrying mosquitoes, the nurse requested the government send out a crew to spray inside all houses and hotels with a mixture of kerosene and DDT. The reaction of the islanders was hostile. Some questioned whether or not the cases were really malaria. Many refused to allow

their houses or hotels to be sprayed. One hotel owner who refused to allow spraying in either her house or hotel, described her encounter with the 'spraymen'.

I told them, 'I have a clean house, and there are no bugs in it.' I told them I had a sick baby in the house and I was sick too, so they couldn't spray. That wasn't true. They threatened to take me to court. But I said, 'I'm not a thief. I don't kill. So I'm not afraid of any court.' They went away then, but they had the police call me and tell me they would take me to court. But I told them the same thing.

The government assigns two policemen to Caye Caulker and tries to achieve an ethnic balance by sending one Creole and one Spanish policeman. The most serious local crimes include stealing lobster skiffs and their motors, and personal property from houses left unattended. There is a small amount of vandalism as well. Some crimes are directed against tourists, but islanders also have to be very careful to avoid being robbed. Houses are locked and watched by relatives when people are away, and even then thieves are sometimes successful. One Martin family was robbed of several thousand dollars of jewelry while visiting relatives in Belize City. One man reportedly had six motors stolen from him in one year. Although in several cases, he knew who took them, he took no action against the thief. Valuable property such as motors and gas tanks are now brought in from skiffs every evening and secured next to the house.

There is some indication that personal assault, usually by groups of young men, referred to as 'no good' by islanders, is on the rise. In one case a long term foreign resident was so badly beaten by a group of young men, allegedly for complaining to the police about the shooting of endangered species of birds, he left the island permanently. Trouble may also flare up between policemen and the young island men when the policemen try to enforce any kind of discipline. One young man recounted a small confrontation with the police.

One night I was in front of Bob Rodrigues' with some guys. Bob called the police because he said we were making too much noise. The police came down and told us to leave, you

know. Try to show their power, man. They try to rule here. No way man. We told them 'Forget it, man, we aren't going nowhere. We rule here, man.'

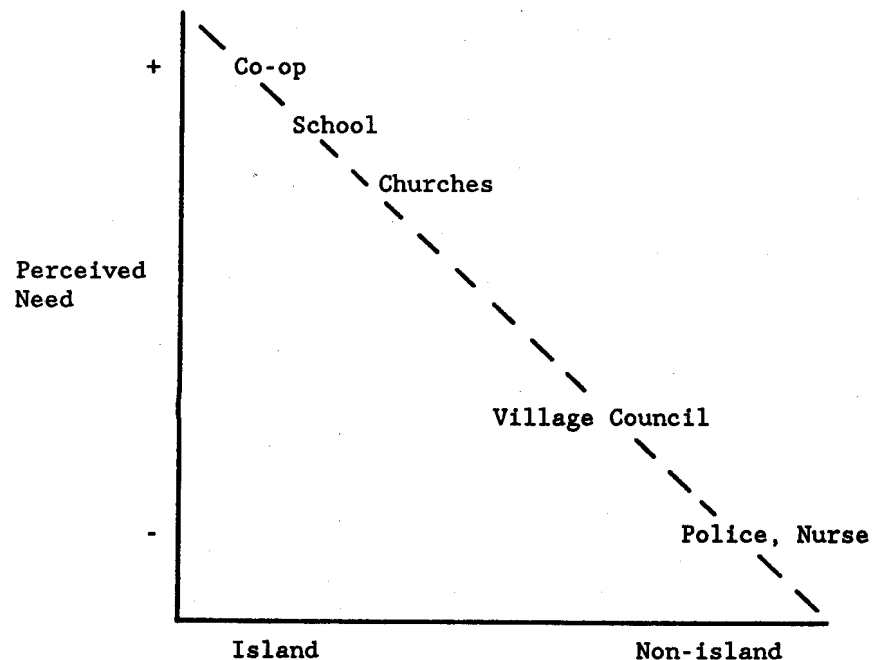
In December, 1983, a local policeman was assaulted by a group of 'boys' and badly beaten.

From the government point of view, serious crimes include assault of policemen, drug dealing (by Belizeans and foreigners) and contraband smuggling (consumer goods from Chetumal and drugs). Although crimes of personal violence have, until very recently, been rare on Caye Caulker, these crimes will be difficult to control without a central authority such as that represented by the policeman.

Conclusions

The success of any social organization on Caye Caulker depends on two key factors: the perceived need for such an organization and whether it is initiated by islanders or outsiders. This relation can be illustrated diagrammatically as follows:

Figure III: Relative Effectiveness of Organizations on Caye Caulker



The dotted line in the graph represents the relative effectiveness of the organizations. The co-op, locally organized and locally run, is at the top. Institutions such as the school and the churches, though connected with large external organizations, are essentially locally run. Also, they provide a function that the islanders value. The Village Council, a form imposed from the outside to meet a need the islanders seldom see, is much less effective. Least effective are offices or organizations that violate the island rule of noninterference, are imposed from the outside, and held by nonislanders.

NOTES

1. Acheson, James, Anthropology of Fishing, Ann. Rev. Anthropol, 1981, p. 284.
2. Ibid, page 285.
3. Gregory, James R., "Cooperative: 'Failures' Versus 'Successes'", Belizean Studies, Vol. 12, No. 5, 1984, page 1.
4. Ibid, page 9, 12-15.

VII

Tourism

During the past 15 years, thanks primarily to the Co-op, Caye Caulker has become an affluent community relative to the rest of the country. More recently, tourism has also grown. These new cash resources and the influx of visitors have, in turn, brought considerable change to the island and its people.

On my first trip to Caye Caulker in 1972, there were no hotels and no restaurants. I slept on the beach and had to ask another foreigner to give me food. At that time, one could count on one hand the foreigners on Caye Caulker: Annette, an American woman in her 50's was on Caye Caulker to spend her last days dying of cancer; Frank, an odd job man from Florida who married a young Belizean woman and lived on Caye Caulker for several years eking out a living through diving and charging the occasional visitor for a trip to the reef. These foreigners were oddities, frequently casualties of "modern" society. One engineer, who had worked for years at Cape Canaveral finally buckled under the stress of countdowns and small screens. He suffered from bleeding ulcers and endured a mental breakdown. When doctors in Houston gave up trying to cure him, he came to Caye Caulker, sat in a Mennonite rocking chair, ate papaya for six months, and returned to the U.S. a new man. Caye Caulker cures for American civilization were a common feature of these early visitors. A no less colorful figure was that of the modern day pirate. People arrived

regularly with a 'story' and a 'past' and usually some scheme for making a fortune. One year a man in a medical orderly shirt arrived on Caye Caulker. Almost never sober, breathing rum in my face, he announced to all that he was a free mason and an anthropologist, a psychologist and a professor of art and a stone mason as well (he was later dubbed the stoned free mason). Or there was the group referred to as 'the Texans', a crowd of time-warp 60's hippies who come every year to the 'Caribbean Inn' to whoop it up on beer and marijuana and re-experience the 60's. One of them is called 'Shark Bait' apparently because his friends once dragged him, in a drug-induced stupor, along the reef to attract sharks. Proud of his story he has had it immortalized on his arm in the form of a tattoo: a naked woman riding a shark. Underneath the legend reads: "Shark Bait."

Gradually more and more foreigners, young and generally adventuresome, began to discover Caye Caulker, learning about the island by word of mouth. A 29-year-old carpenter from Kansas, told the following story:

It was just an accident that I first came to Caye Caulker when I was 21. I was hanging out in Merida waiting for a friend when I met Mike. I told him I was heading for Peru. He said, 'Hey, you're going that far south, are you going through Belize on your way south?' and I said 'Where?' He said 'Belize'. I said, 'Belize, I've never heard of it,' and he said, 'Well, it used to be British Honduras'. I had heard of British Honduras, but still I couldn't place it. 'Well it's the next country south. You won't miss anything by going through it. If you want to go to Guatemala you might as well see Belize.' He told me about Caye Caulker and all the fishing out here, and I love to dive and spear fish so I came out here for about three days when I met some National Geographic photographers who were headed for Tikal and asked me to come along. We were hanging out in the jungle for three days and I was lying in my hammock one night, and I decided to come back to Caye Caulker. I decided to come back for a week and ended up staying four months. I have come back every year since then.

Initially a haven mainly for backpackers working their way down the 'Central American trail', Caye Caulker now attracts a wide range of young (25-35 year old) American, Canadian, and European travellers of the more adventurous nature. Many of these adventurers use Caye Caulker as a pleasant island break before heading off for the more politically unstable areas of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. Others come for the diving on the reef after becoming disenchanted with resorts like Cancun or Cozumel. Or they sail down on their sailboats and anchor for awhile at Caye Caulker where they can purchase supplies and take advantage of the bars in the evening. For others Caye Caulker offers a regular escape from Northern winters or restricting jobs. Such visitors return again and again, settling on Caye Caulker for a few winter months of island sun, diving, drinking rum and smoking pot before returning to their job in April or May. All of these travellers are attracted to the unpretentious fishing village appearance of Caye Caulker and to the very lack of luxurious amenities. For their part, the islanders seem to like the younger, less conventional crowd of visitors and make little effort to attract the tourist market that demands hot water and air conditioning.

The proliferation of modern schemers and pirates on Caye Caulker and in other areas of Belize has recently received attention in the U.S. press. The Washington Post (January 27, 1985) carried an article entitled "Mildewed Intrigue at Land's End: All That Changes in Belize are the Fantastic Sun-Baked Schemes" (by Ken Ringle)

In the smoldering Central America of the 1980s, however, Belize has come of strategic age. Tiny as it is, its position at the foot of Mexico makes it a potentially unyielding domino, across whose notoriously porous borders any major arms shipments from Cuba or Nicaragua would logically travel.

"Living in Belize is like living in Casablanca," said ex-patriate American William Harmon one night over a Belikan beer in San Pedro. "About three times a day, somebody comes up to you with a fantastic scheme of some kind for making a fortune. It may involve smuggling or drugs or timbering or Mayan artifacts or just development

investment. But the figure is always the same: \$2 million."

That endangered species, the soldier of fortune, still thrives in Belize.

As visitors began to appear in larger and larger numbers during the seventies the need for sleeping and eating facilities became apparent. Edith's hotel, constructed by enclosing the area under the house into small cubicles, was one of the first places on the island to offer accommodation. Other places quickly followed suit, and gradually people began to build separate 'hotels' on their land next to their homes. Women began to prepare meals to serve in renovated rooms or to sell cooked food out the window to tourists walking down the sand lanes. Eventually extra 'dining rooms' were added on to houses, and in the last few years restaurants separate from dwellings now operate daily to serve the increasing number of visitors. By the late 1970's, apart from a slump in tourism in 1982 due to the devaluation of the peso in Mexico, during the peak of the tourist season, January, as many as 200 tourists would be on Caye Caulker at one time, but the rest of the year, the number ranges from 20 to 50. As one man put it, "January is a squall, the rest of the year it drizzles."

The tourist 'industry' on Caye Caulker has grown slowly, as the islanders invested only limited capital and time in it. However, by the 1980's tourism had become an attractive means of making extra money during the winter season. For example, Hershey has for many years provided regular transportation by skiff from Caye Caulker to Belize City. Proud of his ability to provide a service that tourists need - reliable transportation - Hershey makes a very good living (U.S.\$35,000 per year approximately) entirely from tourism and is developing boat tours of inland sites and nearby islands. Only a few islanders depend solely on tourism for an income, however, and most do not fare quite as well as Hershey. Richard, for example, earns \$30,000 per year from lobster traps, but in addition he runs a hotel and two rental houses and repairs skiff motors. His wife teaches school and his two sons also haul traps when they are on vacation from school. Each son earns approximately \$7,000 each per year.

In 1983, twelve hotels, ranging from four to a couple dozen rooms per hotel, accommodated tourists coming

to the island. Eating places included a pastry shop or two, five small restaurants, and five individuals who served dinner to people with reservations. Caye Caulker has increasingly moved towards tourism as a source of income. Many young men and women are developing tourist businesses as a full-time occupation and some older men, who in their later years find fishing too physically taxing, are retiring to run hotels and other businesses. Thus, a dual economy balanced between fishing and tourism, is emerging on Caye Caulker. Furthermore, the pattern developed in the fishing business, of local control of resources by local islanders, seems to be repeating itself in the development of tourism.

However, investment in tourism has a number of disadvantages. It does not represent real development, and the number of tourists are subject to the fluxes of foreign economies. A recession in the United States or Europe has an instant impact on the number of tourists that come to the island. The recent devaluation of the peso, for example, caused a dramatic drop in numbers of tourists visiting Caye Caulker because they found better bargains for their dollar in Mexico. In spite of these problems, there are measures that can be taken to have as much local control of the tourist business as possible.

On Caye Caulker, foreign investment in tourist facilities has been discouraged, with islanders maintaining ownership of land and controlling investment in improvements on the land. In contrast, nearby San Pedro and Caye Chapel, both of whom can accommodate tourists arriving by air, have developed almost entirely through foreign money. One islander commented:

On Caye Caulker we saw what happened on San Pedro. It used to be for the San Pedranos, but now all the development is by foreigners and the profit goes to them. We want to develop Caye Caulker ourselves. When we can get loans like \$100,000 to \$200,000 then we will develop ourselves, but until then we are holding on to our own land. We don't sell to foreigners. On San Pedro, the people all live on the back street. We keep the front for ourselves. Mr. Marsh, he's selling land to foreigners, but it's back land and it's not in the village. At the moment, I still make more by hauling traps, but if I expand my hotel in Belize City where the tourist trade is

constant, I could make more than I do here on a hotel. Here the tourism is seasonal and you make more if you do lobster all the season.

The few foreign investments begun on the island have failed in part because of the lack of cooperation from local people. Several foreign investors have tried to get a foothold on Caye Caulker. 'Eden Isles', a resort at the southern tip of the island, and a scuba diving group that owns land near the cut, have both had serious problems. In the late 1970's Eden Isles was ransacked and stripped clean when its managers were arrested for cocaine smuggling. It has never opened again. The thatched cottages built at the cut to house large groups of divers were once burned to the ground, and although they have been rebuilt, the capital investment in the property is now very limited. Following their preference for noninterference, the islanders as a group have not taken measures to ensure that foreign investments be protected from acts of vandalism. Furthermore, for reasons that are none too clear, the airstrip on the island has never been completed thus limiting the numbers and kinds of tourists likely to make their way to Caye Caulker.

An important point is that the islanders have limited their investments to the use of cash rebates from the co-op rather than relying on credit from a bank. When they do need credit, for example, for fishing equipment, they can borrow from the co-op. In general they do not need to become indebted to banks, either national or foreign. Secondly their investments in tourism are modest expansions of existing facilities using family members as partners in the work of running a hotel, restaurant or shop. They have not built expensive, luxury accommodations with high running costs. Finally, they have created a dual economy so that seasonal and annual fluctuations in one area are offset by a second source of income.

Recent Developments

Autonomy from exploitative foreign economies, local control of individual production and distribution, a balance between two sources of income, and compatibility with local ideals and organization are factors in the successful development of Caye Caulker. This development is successful not only because it has produced local wealth, but because it is culturally and socially constructive, building on cultural ideals and social

relationships to achieve a measure of economic independence and political autonomy in a situation of national underdevelopment.

All of this development of course produced visible change on Caye Caulker. Since first visiting Caye Caulker in 1972, I have witnessed virtually the entire development of tourism on the island. The increased contact with the outside, both through economic ties developed by the cooperative as well as through the influx of tourists to the island, has had a marked effect on Caye Caulker. The most obvious effect is the change in technology and products from industrial countries, both in the form of basic services such as plumbing and electricity, and consumer goods such as washing machines and televisions.

During the seventies Caye Caulker obtained constant electrical current, the telephone, and indoor plumbing with septic tanks. Though the Village Council had acquired a used electrical generator in 1957, the current was neither constant nor reliable. It broke down often and the voltage fluctuated wildly. Electrical appliances had a short life span under these conditions. Today the island still relies on used generators, there are two backup generators in case one fails, and the generating plant is staffed round-the-clock by three employees who work eight-hour shifts. With electrical current constant and more reliable, it became possible to run electrical appliances such as washing machines, refrigerators and freezers. This eliminated the need for many of the traditional types of food preservation and allowed for much needed food storage.

The first telephone connected Caye Caulker with the mainland in 1973. Today there is still one main exchange for the island, but as many as twenty-five families have telephone extensions in their homes. They use them to keep in touch with nuclear family members who work or attend school in Belize City. Some families which are divided between Caye Caulker and the mainland phone one another daily to keep up with news. In addition the common use of motorized skiffs makes it possible for families on Caye Caulker to have easier contact with families and institutions on the mainland. Some families with high school age children in Belize City can virtually commute from their fishing business on Caye Caulker to a home in Belize City. Motors also allow a more constant flow of outsiders to the island.

During the seventies, the first vehicle appeared on the island. A small tractor was transported to the island

by an American who used it to haul cargo. There are now three jeeps on the caye for that purpose, along with a few bicycles, a three-wheeler, and two scooters, whose owners ride them around and around the village for entertainment in the evenings.

In 1972 the islanders had no plumbing. They drew water with a bucket from a well near the house and used outhouses at the end of the pier. Now outhouses have been replaced with indoor plumbing, electric water pumps and septic tanks. Although a few outhouses are still in use, a recent government edict allows no construction of new outhouses. Partly these changes are a response to the needs of tourists, but they also have been encouraged by the government because of the subsequent threat of hepatitis the tourists have brought with them. The introduction of septic tanks has reduced the risk of communicable diseases, particularly for children who swim off the shore, but it may pose a future threat to the purity of well water. The introduction of indoor plumbing has also brought about the demise of early morning socializing at the outhouses on the piers.

In 1982 television reception became clear enough to be viewable. Most families immediately got television sets, and now many islanders spend their evenings watching American television programs on the Chicago station they receive. They get their daily dose of American civilization with exercise programs in the morning and "The Jeffersons" every night at 7:00. Whereas whole families used to go down to their pier to cool off in the evenings, many of them now gather together in the living room to watch TV. On the other hand, they now have a source of news other than the government controlled Radio Belize even though they have to watch Belikan Beer commercials along with it.

Many of these innovations have diminished Caye Caulker's isolation, bringing it into closer contact with mainland Belize and the rest of the world. At the same time they tend to decrease interdependence between nuclear families. However, because most of these changes have taken place only in the last few years, it is too soon to observe any substantial cultural impact.

The most important change in the last decade is undoubtedly the result of an increasingly cash-oriented economy, bolstered by high lobster prices, and the growth of tourism. During the 1978-79 lobster season, lobster prices increased dramatically, elevating Caye Caulker fishermen into affluence. Although incomes had been

growing steadily since the establishment of the co-op, this sudden jump in prices and the continued high production have combined to make Caye Caulker one of the most affluent villages in Central America. Within the span of two decades Caye Caulker developed from a poor village, dependent on subsistence fishing, meagre cocal incomes, and the generosity of kin and neighbors, to a relatively wealthy village where people work for themselves and individual families are increasingly self-sufficient. One woman who has two brothers on the caye, explained that they don't visit one another or exchange help as often as they used to because "We don't need to. We all have the same amount. We all have enough. But when I was sick before Christmas, then they came to visit and offer help."

In general, formal cash agreements are beginning to replace informal exchanges of goods and services. A few people now hire young men or women to work in their restaurants or hotels. This innovation of wage labor in the tourist industry is related to the increasing cash-orientation of the islanders and the island economy in general.

I used to be able to bum a ride into Belize. If someone was going in, he would take me with him. But now if I want to go, I have to pay for it. Same sort of thing, it used to be that if a guy had a big catch, I'd help him with the catch and he'd give me some fish in return. Now I have to pay him for the fish and he pays someone to help him with the catch.

As a result of the success of its fishing industry, the growth of tourism, and population pressure on its scarce land resources, Caye Caulker has also experienced some demographic changes in recent years. According to an unofficial 1980 census, Caye Caulker has a population of 413 people. During the peak of the tourist season there may also be as many as 300 tourists on the island. Geographically the island has expanded to two new locations. A settlement of foreigners has sprung up at the south end of the village in an area known locally as 'the bush'. The dense underbrush and accompanying mosquitoes and sandflies in the area prevented many islanders from settling there. The settlement has become known as Marcialtown after Marcial Alamina, who acquired

the whole section of land at the back of the island in about 1937 and sold it to individual foreigners in the 1970's. Several houses have been constructed, and a few more are in progress. They are owned primarily by Americans and Canadians in their late twenties or thirties who work in the north during the summer and spend their winters on Caye Caulker.

Beyond the north end of the village, the 'New Site' is developing near the Cut. Land in the village, in traditional family localities, has become scarce. Large plots of family-owned land have already been subdivided among children as much as is possible, and few families are willing to sell any extra land to non-family. As a case in point, the land that belonged to old Mr. Lenos and has been passed down in his family has now been divided as much as is possible among three relatives and two tourist businesses, and his great-great-grandsons have had to obtain land through the government raffle at the Cut. To accommodate the islanders' need for more land the Belizean government has authorized distribution of land north of the village by lottery. A result of the lottery system, is that the community at the New Site is developing in a very different pattern from the kin localities of the old village. However, there are already indications that clusters of kin are beginning to form at the 'new site.'

The island's demography has changed not only in terms of distribution, but also in terms of ethnic homogeneity. The original population was almost completely Mestizo. However, the prospects for fishing have attracted several Creole and Carib fishermen to Caye Caulker. A few Central Americans, from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have also settled on Caye Caulker. As the number of foreigners visiting the island grew throughout the seventies, some of them have stayed, and many of them make Caye Caulker their second home. Growing tourism has also attracted 'Rastafarians' from Belize City, known locally as "the boys from Belize". Partly because of the influx of Belizeans and foreigners, and the increase in crimes, since 1983 fences have been erected around homes and hotels, cutting up the open spaces on the island and restricting the flow of outsiders into people's yards.

Another result of the influx of foreigners and Belizeans is the increasingly more visible drug use on the island. The marijuana trade on the mainland of Belize has been growing rapidly mainly because the profits are so huge. In the Northern part of the country, milpa farming

has turned to marijuana production and planes land daily to load, and transport the drug to the U.S. market. Select areas in Belize have also been stopping places for cocaine traffic. However on Caye Caulker, although marijuana use is not unusual, the islanders generally prefer rum and, for the most part, do not make a living from the marijuana trade. The local dealers are primarily nonislanders or young islanders who do not have the large incomes obtainable from fishing or tourism.

Tourism has also opened up economic opportunities for women. In response to tourist needs women sell take-away food from their homes, serve meals in their homes or cook meals for a designated eating place. They squeeze oranges, papayas and limes and sell the juice in old rum bottles from their houses. They also work along with their husbands in the daily business of running a hotel. All of these sources of income are new for women and have given women work that is compatible with their roles as housewife, cook and mother. Most important, this is work that they can do on the island as members of their extended families. They do not have to live in Belize City or abroad to work. The possibility of earning a good income releases women from total economic dependence on a father or husband.

Although Caye Caulker is still characterized by the features that have shaped it historically; a strong sense of individualism and autonomy, egalitarian forms of organization, fishing as the primary mode of production, and the family as the focus of individual loyalty, with the advent of the cooperative, tourism, motorized skiffs, mass communication and an increasing affluence, the days of isolation for Caye Caulker are over. The traditional ideals of noninterference and autonomy discourage cooperation and community action. As Caye Caulker has increasing contact with the outside, these ideals will be tested for their viability both for individuals, as well as for the future of the island.

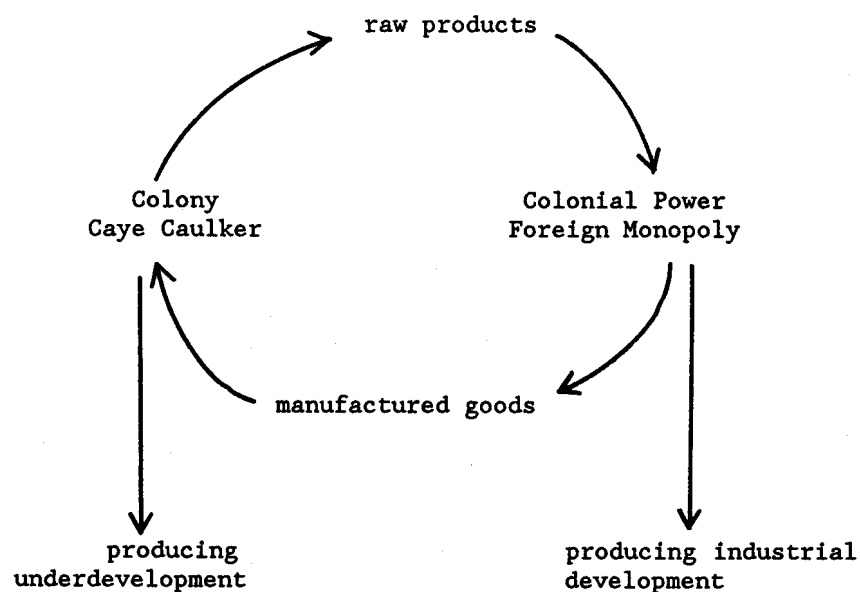
VIII

Conclusions

The development of Caye Caulker is the story of the interrelationship between the individual, the wider network of kin to which the individual is connected, and an economic system that promotes individual entrepreneurs. Caye Caulker functions not as a community, but as a collection of individuals with links to a number of groups that range from the local household to international business. Although the focus of this book is on these interrelationships, the individual is the primary unit on Caye Caulker making direct links with all other units.

In its early years, Caye Caulker developed in much the same way as any area under a colonial government. A few entrepreneurs working with colonial export companies began to extract raw materials from the island. Beginning with coconut plantations, they later moved to lobster production with islanders acting as workers in the system. The colonial model of exploitation was established. Raw products were produced for foreign companies who obtained export agreements and quotas from a colonial government. In return manufactured goods were sold to the islanders (see Figure IV).

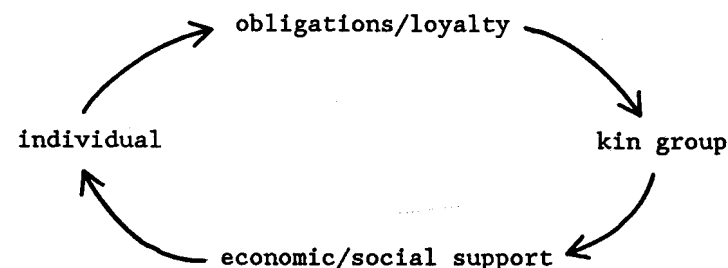
Figure IV. Model of Colonial Exploitation on Caye Caulker



This classic colonial situation found in both the Caribbean and in Latin America contained certain differences on Caye Caulker. Caye Caulker had no indigenous population nor were slaves brought in as workers. The island was populated in the late 1840's by Mestizos from Yucatan who came to the island after fleeing the caste wars there. A plantation system with slavery, and later a strict race/class hierarchy, did not develop. Ruling families did not take root. Furthermore the area remained in isolation from the Colonial government.

The Mestizo population brought with them a kinship structure based on strong family ties. The original families on the island developed wider networks of kin concentrated into kin localities. This network of kin functions as a cooperative unit, with the individual fulfilling certain obligations and receiving in return certain kinds of support (Figure V).

Figure V. Model of Cooperative Relationship between the Individual and the Kin Group

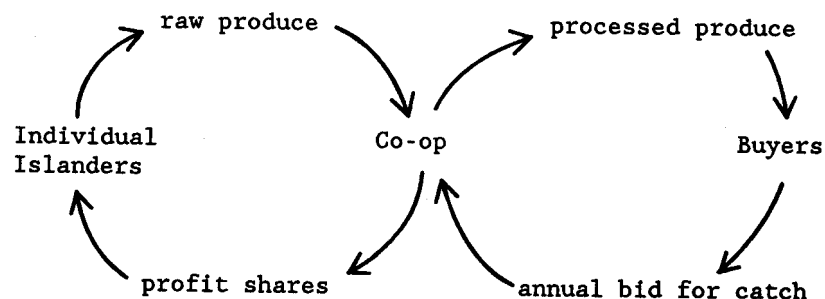


Reciprocal exchanges of goods and services between kin have the important effect of helping the individual to achieve economic independence.

Social interaction and organization beyond the kinship network are based on the ideals of individual autonomy and egalitarianism. Islanders believe that individuals have the right to determine their own behavior, without outside interference, even from family members. While these ideals can function in casual interactions, they have been an obstacle to the formation of larger organizations. Thus in order for an organization to succeed on Caye Caulker, it must interfere as little as possible with the ideals of individual autonomy and egalitarianism, and it must meet a recognized need. Any organization which islanders perceive as authoritarian or unnecessary has little chance of success. Wider forms of social organization on Caye Caulker are conspicuously lacking, and it is in this sense that the island is more a collection of individuals rather than a community.

In this context, the islanders created, during a period of economic hardship and dissatisfaction with the colonial model of exploitation, a fishing cooperative that has dramatically changed their economic situation. The structure and function of the cooperative parallels that of the kinship network shown in Figure V. Basically the co-op mediates between individual islanders and buyers from the international market (see Figure VI).

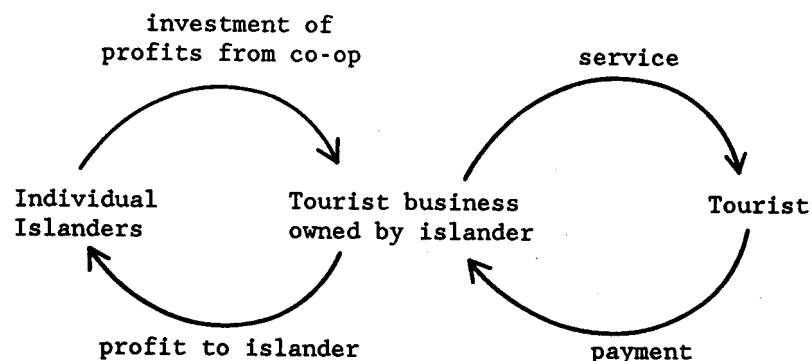
Figure VI. Model of Relationship of Producer, Co-op and International Buyer



This arrangement has allowed Caye Caulker fishermen to obtain a better price for their produce, to exert greater control over its distribution and at the same time to maintain their traditional ideals. Furthermore, the co-op has been managed with an eye to its independence as an organization. Islanders have insisted on managing the co-op themselves and have not handed over decision-making power to government authorities, international banks, or hired professional managers. The compatibility of the ideals and structure of the co-op with the ideals and structure of island social organization is a key to its success.

Finally Caye Caulker has continued to expand its economic base by developing tourism. Profits from fishing have been invested in tourist-related businesses, and these investments produce a direct return to the individual islander. (See Figure VII.)

Figure VII. Model of Relationship of Islander to Tourist Business and Tourists



Women have also been incorporated into the tourist business, thereby creating a new category of producers within the traditional family structure.

As islanders have come increasingly into contact with the world outside, their reaction has been to protect their resources from other Belizeans and foreigners, by moving in the direction of individual self-advancement rather than community development. Extended families have become more commercially oriented with less and less interaction based on reciprocity. Yet the islanders have kept control of the tourist development on the island and have avoided foreign investments in much the same way that they control the co-op and have avoided foreign domination of lobster production and distribution. Furthermore, tourists have been accommodated into island social life relatively easily because of the island ideals of tolerance and noninterference with others. Yet there are signs that increased tourism is creating new pressures on the community in the form of a greater frequency of theft, drug use and personal assault. Unless the islanders develop new strategies to deal with these problems in their autonomous fashion, they face the possibility of government intervention.

For the first time in over 30 years Belize has a new government led by the UDP (United Democratic Party). The UDP is composed of young, relatively inexperienced politicians who are mainly pro-U.S. in orientation. There are already signs that the government will be encouraging

private American investment in the country and receiving more American government aid than ever before. A locally controlled cooperative and a reluctance to allow foreign investment on Caye Caulker may not receive favorable treatment by a government that wants to encourage foreign investment. Instead they may promote areas such as San Pedro. San Pedro has developed primarily through foreign investment and in 1984 became a township, indicating its interest in forming closer alliances with the administrative structure of the national government. With the increasing strategic importance of Belize in the Central American-Caribbean region, the U.S. will be trying to consolidate its interests in one of the democratically-elected, stable governments in the region. Caye Caulker represents a successful local development through individual entrepreneurship and cooperation with each other as producers. The cooperative method employed on Caye Caulker does not favor the international buyer who has to pay a high price for Caye Caulker produce. The Caye Caulker approach has, instead, favored the islanders themselves who are reaping the financial benefits of their labor, both in fishing and in tourism. Caye Caulker is a model of local development that successfully benefits the local producers, but the islanders will have to maintain vigilance in their broader political relationships to continue their independence.

Bibliography

Acheson, James, Fishing, Ann. Rev. Anthropol., 1981, 10:275-316.

Ashcraft, Norman, "Some Aspects of Domestic Organization in British Honduras" in The Family in the Caribbean, Stanford N. Gerber, ed., University of Puerto Rico: Institute of Caribbean Studies, 1968.

Ashcraft, Norman, Colonialism and Underdevelopment: Processes of Political Economic Change in British Honduras, New York: Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1973.

Barry, Tom, Beth Wood and Deb Preusch, Dollars and Dictators. A Guide to Central America, Albuquerque, New Mexico: The Resource Center, 1982.

Bolland, O. Nigel, The Formation of a Colonial Society, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.

Bradley, Leo, "Glimpses of our History", Belize City: National Collection, Bliss Institute, October 1962, Vol. 4A.

Craig, Alan K., Geography of Fishing in British Honduras and Adjacent Coastal Areas, Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Coastal Studies Institute, Louisiana State University, 1966.

Cross, Malcolm, Urbanization and Urban Growth in the Caribbean, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Dippel, John, "Looking for the Last Maine Lobster", Oceans, Jan./Feb., Vol. 13, no. 1, 1980, pages 61-63.

Dobson, Narda, A History of Belize, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago: Longman Caribbean, 1973.

Escure, Genevieve, "Contrastive Patterns of Intragroup and Intergroup Interaction in the Creole Continuum of Belize", Language in Society, II, 1982, pages 239-264.

Forman, Shepard, The Raft Fishermen. Tradition and Change in the Brazilian Peasant Economy, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970.

Godfrey, Glenn D., Ambergris Caye: Paradise with a Past, Belize, a Central American: Cubola Productions, 1983.

Gonzalez, Nancy Solien, "Household and Family in the Caribbean: Some Definitions and Concepts" in The Black Woman Cross-Culturally, Filomina Chioma Steady, ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1981, pages 421-429.

Gordon, Edmund, Phases of Development and Underdevelopment in a Caribbean Fishing Village: San Pedro, Belize, Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1981.

Gregory, James R., "Cooperatives: Failures Versus Successes", Belizean Studies, Vol. 12, No. 5, 1984.

Kerns, Virginia, Women and the Ancestors, University of Illinois Press, 1983.

Kottak, Conrad Phillip, Assault on Paradise. Social Change in a Brazilian Village, New York: Random House, 1983.

Lewis, Gordon K., The Growth of the Modern West Indies, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968.

Lewis, Gordon K., Main Current in Caribbean Thought, Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1983.

Lewis, Oscar, The Children of Sanchez, Vintage Books, 1963.

Martinez-Alier, Verena, Marriage, Class and Color in Nineteenth Century Cuba, A Study of Racial Attitudes and Sexual Values in a Slave Society, London: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

1981 World Bank Atlas, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1982.

The Northern Fishermen Cooperative Annual Report, 1982, 1983, 1984.

Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, 1970. University of the West Indies, Census Research Programme.

Reams, Joanne Reppert, ed., Background Notes. Belize, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 1982.

Reed, Nelson, The Caste War of Yucatan, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964.

Setzekorn, William, Formerly British Honduras: A Profile of the New Nation of Belize, Newark, California: Dumbarton Press, 1975.

Smith, Raymond T., "The Family and the Modern World System: Some Observations from the Caribbean", Journal of Family History, Vol. 3, No. 4, Winter, 1978, pages 337-359.

Spradley, James, Participant Observation, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980.

Spradley, James, The Ethnographic Interview, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979.

Sutherland, Anne and Kroshus, Laurie, "A Social History of Caye Caulker", Belizean Studies, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1985.

Sutherland, Anne, "Kinship and Family Structure on Caye Caulker", Belizean Studies, Vol. 13, Nos. 5 & 6, 1985.

Sutton, Constance and Makiesky-Barrow, Susan, "Social Inequality and Sexual Status in Barbados" in The Black Woman Cross-Culturally, Filomina Chioma Steady, ed., Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1981, pages 469-498.

van den Bor, Wout, Island Adrift: The Social Organization of a Small Caribbean Community. The Case of St. Eustatius, Luden: Department of Caribbean Studies, Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology, 1981.

Vega, Susanna, "The Development of Spiney Lobster Fishing in Belize, 1920-1977," Belizean Studies, Vol. 7, No. 2, March, 1979, pages 1-6.

Index

- Acheson, James, 41, 127
- Agricultural Production, 3, 15
- AID Programs, 1, 16
- Ambergris Caye, 9, 20, 46, 47
- Anthropological methods, xvii, xviii, 3
- Arembepe, 5-6
- Ashcraft, Norman, 7, 16, 82-83, 85
- Autonomy, 4, 8, 44, 49, 134, 139, 143
- Barrier Reef, 9
- Bay of Chetumal 20, 58
- Belikin Beer, 13
- Bolland, O. Nigel, 16
- Caribena Coop., 20, 58, 117
- Caribbean Basin, 1
- Caste wars of Yucatan, 4, 43, 46
- Caye Caulker:
 - description, 13-15, 135-139
 - economic success, xvi, 4, 57, 117, 129, 132-139, 141-146
 - history, 45-52
 - map, 12, 14
 - island-wide organizations, 126
 - churches, 118-120
- Caye Caulker:
 - (cont'd)
 - co-op., 116-120
 - service organizations, 126
 - village council, 121-122
- Caye Chapel, 9, 46
- Change, xvi, 129, 132-139
- Children, 98-104
 - socialization, 98-104
 - roles, 98-101
 - games, 103-104
- Churches, 118-120, 126
- Climate, 11
- Coca-Cola Company, 13
- Coconut plantations, 44, 47-48
- Colonial government, 4, 49, 52, 141-142
- Comitas, Lambros, 7
- Community center, 13
- Conch, 35, 57
- Conjugal ties, 5, 8, 79-84
 - with foreigners, 83-84
- Craig, Alan, 41, 66
- Credit Union, 52
- Creole culture, 44, 81-82
- Cross, Malcolm, 16-17
- Development, 45, 134-139
 - economic success, 3, 45, 132-139, 141-146
 - dependency, 3, 141-142
- Dippel, John, 41

- Diving for lobster, 19, 22, 32-34
- Drug use, 134, 138-139
- Economic success xvi, 4, 57, 117, 129, 132-139, 141-146
- El Salvador, 1
- Ethnic groups, 15, 70-71, 138
- Family localities, 69, 72, 73-77, 84, 138
- Fishing, 19-20, 48, 87
 - and self-esteem, 19, 20
 - entrepreneurship, 19
 - partners, 21, 49
 - Deep sea, 39-40
- Fish traps, 19-20
- Flapping around, xviii, 114-115
- Forman, Shepard, 16
- Generator, xv, 13
- Godfrey, Glenn, 66-67
- Gonzalez, Nancie, 82, 85
- Gordon, Edmund, 16
- Gregory, James, 117, 127
- Guatemala, 1
- Half Moon Caye, 20
- Hauling a metal drum, 29
- Honduras, 1
- Households, 5, 8, 47, 82-83, 84, 87, 98
- Hurricanes, 11, 51, 55-56
- Individualism, 4, 21, 49, 113, 141, 143
- Inheritance, 77, 21-24
 - of land, 77
 - of lobster territory, 21-24
- Isolation, geographic and political, xv, 7-8
 - Caye Caulker, xv
 - Belize, 7-8
- Justice of the Peace, 122
- Kerns, Virginia, 16
- Kin exchange networks, 48, 107-110, 112, 137
- Kinship, 69, 107-109
 - Nuclear family ties, 4, 82, 84, 87, 142-143, 145
 - island families, 69
 - cognatic descent, 71-73
 - loyalty to kin, 107-108
- Kottak, Conrad, 16
- Kroshus, Laurie, xvii, 66, 85
- Language, 15-16
- Lewis, Gordon, 17
- Lewis, Oscar, 85
- Line fishing, 19-20, 48
- Lobster, spiny, 22, 50
- Lobster fishing
 - foreign companies, 51-56
 - future of, 36-39
 - history of, 49-53
 - markets, 4, 7, 51, 143-144
 - price, 52-53, 56, 136-137
 - production, 4, 7
 - season, 35, 38
- Lobster territory, 21, 22, 23-24, 28
- Lobster trap fishing, 19, 21, 22, 23-29
 - setting traps, 24-26
 - hauling traps, 26-29
 - seasoning traps, 26
 - locating traps, 27-28
- Malaria, 123-124
- Marcialtown, 13, 137-138
- Martinez-Alier, Verena, 86
- "Mauger" Season, 11
- Maya Mountains, 9
- Mayans, 45
 - local government, 49
- Men's Roles, 88-89
- Milpa, 44, 138
- Mosquitoes, xv, 13
- Northern Fishermen Co-op., 8, 13, 20, 43-45, 116-118, 126
 - annual catch, 37
 - annual meeting, 35, 36, 60
 - contracts, 59, 62

- Northern Fishermen Co-op. (cont'd)
 - current organization, 57-65, 144
 - facilities and employees, 60-62
 - formation of, 53-57
 - Managing Committee, 59-60, 62-65, 69
 - members, 37, 58
 - profits, 37, 38
 - "northers", 11
 - Nurse, 13, 123, 126
 - Plumbing, 135-136
 - Pirates, 46
 - Police, 13, 123-125, 126
 - Population, 15
 - P.U.P. (People's United Party), 1, 53
 - Radio Belize, xvi, 136
 - Red Lobster Inns of America, 35, 63
 - Residence, 70, 71
 - Inheritance of, 77
 - Land for, 77-78
 - New site, 78
 - Purchase of, 77
 - Rock crab, 35, 57
 - "robber economy", 21
 - San Pedro, 20, 36, 58-59
 - Sarteneja, 20, 58
 - Sarteneja Co-op., 20, 58, 117
 - School, 13, 93, 122-123, 126
 - primary, 101-103
 - secondary, 104
 - Service Organizations, 120
 - Setzekorn, William, 16, 17, 67
 - Sexual mores, 5, 8, 78
 - Sexual relationships, 78-84
 - Sharks, 32-33
 - Smith, Raymond, 71, 85
 - Stealing, xvi, 124-125
 - from traps, 28, 30-32, 39
 - St. George's Caye, 9, 45, 46
 - Telephone, xvi, 135
 - Television, 136
 - Tolerance, xvi, 4, 107, 113, 116, 126
 - Tourism, 4, 6, 40, 88, 105, 129-139, 144-145
 - and women, 93-98, 139
 - income from, 132
 - investments in, 133-134, 144-145
 - Turneffe Islands, 20
 - U.D.P. (United Democratic Party), 1, 145
 - United States:
 - strategic importance of Belize to, 1
 - policy in region, 1, 3, 145-146
 - business investments, 3, 146
 - Van den Bor, Wout, 16
 - Vega, Susanna, 66-67
 - West Indian Research, 7
 - Women's Roles, 88-89, 90-98, 105, 139
 - Work partnerships, 111-112