

Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc

2013 SYMPOSIUM

Empire State College/State University of New York

177 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201-5875

OCTOBER 26, 2013

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION



“WHO ARE WE?”

OR...“IMAGINING GUYANA BEYOND INDIAN AND AFRICAN POLITICS OF RACE”

Report and “White Paper”

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Guyana Cultural Association of New York

The Guyana Cultural Association of New York is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, registered in New York dedicated to the study and celebration of Guyana's rich cultural heritage and the promotion of Guyanese creativity. Our mission is to document, showcase and celebrate the multiple roots of Guyana's cultural heritage. Through our work we preserve our cultural heritage and make it available through various channels to inspire future generations of Guyanese at home and abroad. In short, our mission is to preserve, promote, and propagate Guyanese creativity.

Introduction

Traditionally, the term “white paper” has been associated with governmental policy. The “white paper” is often the result of the study of a pressing societal problem and invariably includes a strategy for remedying the studied social challenge.

The *Social Insurance and Allied Services Report (The Beveridge Report)* presented to the British Parliament in November 1942 is an exemplar of the governmental “white paper.” That document was the blueprint for the reconstruction of Britain’s social sector after World War II. The Beveridge Report articulated an integrated strategy to respond to squalor, ignorance, want, idleness, and disease—the “five giant evils” that threatened the lives of a majority of the people living in the United Kingdom. It was an early response to the ongoing global effort to ensure equitable access to basic human rights.¹

The term “white paper” is also used to refer to a strategic instrument that is used in the private sector. Like white papers in the public sector, white papers in the business sector are comprehensive policy documents that define goals, allocation of resources, performance outcomes, and accountability. They are fundamental to developing and implementing business opportunities in the global business environment.

Following those traditions, this “white paper” focuses on ethnic mistrust in contemporary Guyanese society. This document also offers an initiative aimed at engaging Guyanese at home and in the

diaspora and designed to bloom in 2016—the 50th anniversary of Guyana’s independence. The proposed initiative is a contribution made by participants prior to, during, and since Guyana Cultural Association of New York’s “Who are We?” symposium held in October 2013 at CUNY/Empire State College, Brooklyn, New York. The participants brought to the symposium substantial evidence-based knowledge about the complexity of Guyana’s interrelated environmental, social, cultural, economic, and political life since the end of World War II.

This “white paper” is presented through ten chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc., and its annual Folk Festival season of which the symposium is one of the five core events. This is followed by syntheses for each of the five themes around which the 2013 symposium was organized. Following those syntheses, conclusions are drawn and recommendations for a three-year (2014–2016) initiative are provided.

¹ See a copy of the Atlantic Charter (signed by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill at <http://www.ssa.gov/history/acharter2.html> Accessed December 6, 2013.

Guyana Cultural Association and Its Symposium Heritage

In this section we quickly review GCA's annual symposium season and describe how the theme for the 2013 symposium was selected. The first symposium was held in 2002 at Union United Methodist Church, 121 New York Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. Since 2002, GCA has held an annual symposium in Brooklyn or Georgetown, Guyana. Each symposium is typically a day-long event which focuses on some aspect of Guyanese heritage and creativity through research reports, creative works, performances, and dialogue. The foci have included:

- 2003: Celebrating Our Musical Heritage (Medgar Evers College, Brooklyn)
- 2004: Celebrating the Guyanese Word (Columbia University, New York)
- 2005: Celebrating Guyanese Dance (Borough of Manhattan Community/CUNY, New York)
- 2006: Carifesta'72 Revisited (Borough of Manhattan Community College/CUNY, New York)
- 2007: "Oii:" Origins, Identity and Influence (Columbia University, Teachers College, New York)
- 2008: "Creole Mehcheh Mehcheh" Celebrating Mac: Folk, Identity, and National Cohesiveness. (National Convention Center, Guyana)
- 2009: Mittelholzer (York University, New York)
- 2010: Diversity in Our Villages; Harmony in Our Culture (Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church, Brooklyn)

- 2011: Aal Bady, Waan Bady (City University of New York/Empire State College, Brooklyn)
- 2012: Masquerade Lives! (Umana Yana, Guyana)
- 2013: Who Are We? (City University of New York/Empire State College, Brooklyn)

Since 2003, GCA has made efforts to engage global Guyanese (Guyanese at home and abroad) in the Folk Festival season. In the early years (2003–2006), there were "link ups" with the radio service of Guyana's National Communication Network during Family Fun Day, also one of the core events of the Folk Festival season. In 2013, an Internet-based system incorporating email, Skype, Facebook and AnyMeeting was introduced to support international participation during the symposium.

Symposia in Guyana

Two symposia have been held in Georgetown. The first was held in 2008—the result of an invitation from the Pro-Chancellor of the University of Guyana, Dr. Prem Misir.² The 2008 symposium celebrated Wordsworth MacAndrew's contributions to the study and celebration of Guyana's folk heritage and explored the role of folk heritage in building national cohesiveness.³ Two paradigms—"plural society" and "creolization"/

² Dr. Prem Misir, formerly an academic in New York, maintained his connection with the Guyanese academic community through participation in the annual symposium during the early 2000s.

³ See Wordsworth McAndrew, "Guyana—A Cultural Look" for details. Available at <http://www.silvertorch.com/wordsworth-on-culture.html>

“transculturation”—were explored during this symposium. The former contended that Guyana has remained a plural society—in which there are “economic exchanges” in the marketplace but not one in which there was cultural exchange. The “creolization”/“transculturation” perspective offered a more optimistic view of life in which there was cultural exchange.

The 2008 symposium reinforced GCA’s position about the contributions Guyana’s multi-originated folk heritage, generated out of the human encounters that have taken place over the past 5,000 years, can make to resolving Guyana’s multiple contemporary challenges.⁴ Specifically, the symposium also reaffirmed that this folk heritage is a crucial asset in the development of trust and national cohesiveness—the *sine qua non* for equitable and sustainable development in Guyana.

The 2012 symposium—“Masquerade Lives!”—was a partnership with Guyana’s Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sport. The five-day event was held in December 2012 (Guyana’s masquerade season) and was intended to raise awareness about the precarious state of an essential Guyanese folk art. It also provided a forum for sharing knowledge about the art, tracing its history and international connections, as well as identifying strategies for reinvigorating it. In addition to the international conference, there were a number of community-based activities. These included the Flounce Off at Victoria Village, East Coast Demerara; the stilt-dancing workshop; the premiere of a new masquerade-influenced musical composition; public art (creation of “The Masquerade Lives” mural); a showing of

⁴ See N. Whitehead, “Lost Cities of the Arawaks—Berbice, Guyana.” Available on-line at http://www.academia.edu/215906/LOST_CITIES_OF_THE_ARAWAKS_-_BERBICE_GUYANA Accessed January 22, 2014 at 8:33 am.

video documentaries on masquerade traditions in the Caribbean, Central America, and Central Africa; and a concert featuring music influenced by the masquerade genre.

The 2012 symposium also facilitated research. The events allowed for the collection of oral histories and close observation of Guyana’s masquerade culture, specifically inter-ethnic collaboration, masquerade toasts, costume design, band membership and management styles, musicianship, and opportunities for monetization. The event also provided an opportunity for Guyana’s Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sport to begin to articulate a policy for supporting the rehabilitation of masquerade in Guyana. The video record of the 2012 symposium was presented to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sport, for deposit in Guyana’s National Archives.⁵

The post-symposium evaluation meeting between Dr. James Rose, Guyana’s Director of Culture and members of the GCA executive board focused on assessing the achievement of declared goals and identifying the strengths and weakness of the partnership. Improving participation by the national schools system was identified as a goal for the future. GCA is expected to continue partnerships with the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sport for symposia in 2014 and 2016—the 50th anniversary of Guyana’s independence.

2013 Symposium

As mentioned above, each year GCA selects a theme to orient and guide its Folk Festival season. In 2013, the theme was “Sacrifice, Hope, Togetherness.” This was in

⁵ For details on the symposium, including recommendations, see Draft Rapporteur’s Report of December 14, 2012 by Dr. Michael Scott.

recognition the number of significant anniversaries in Guyanese post-Columbian history—250th anniversary of the 1763 Berbice Slave Uprising, 190th anniversary of the Demerara Slave Revolt, 175th anniversary of the arrival of Indentured labor from India, 175th anniversary of the emancipation of enslaved Africans, and 160th anniversary of the arrival of indentured labor from China.

Also influencing the selection of the focus for the 2013 symposium was the August 11, 2013 editorial in the *Sunday Stabroek*. The editorial sought to explore “what the peculiar Caribbean brew of ethnicities might produce in terms of regional identity and culture.” The editorial spoke about new immigrants (Chinese and Brazilian) to Guyana and some of the societal anxieties associated with this development. The editorial also highlighted the persistence of mistrust born of racial fears, especially among Guyanese of African and Indian ancestries, in contemporary Guyanese society. The editorial also noted that 2013 “has also thrown up questions about some fundamental aspects of our national identity: Who are we? How should we live together? What can we become?”

The editorial cautioned:

We should avoid the temptation to perpetually Balkanise our history and our heritage. This is not to deny or detract from the value of the work, art, music and scholarship that has emerged from a close examination, appreciation and conceptualisation of the experiences of African slaves and Indian indentured labourers in the history of our nation. These two dominant influences should not be

allowed to overwhelm our identity or diminish its complexity.⁶

This is the context in which “Who are We?: Imaging Guyana beyond African and Indian politics of race” became the focus for GCA’s 2013 symposium.

The Call for Participation

The Call for Participation is an important element in the symposium process. The “Call” articulates the focus and invites participation. The 2013 symposium invited participants to explore Guyanese identity in the context of persistent racist myths and stereotypes and to offer ideas for eliminating them.

The following responded to the Call for Participation by submitting abstracts via e-mail, creative products (music videos), posts on social media, or granting permission to share their scholarly research:

- Alfred Adams, Musician, Maryland
- Dr. Shamir Andrew Ally, Independent Scholar (by Skype)
- Dr. Vibert Cambridge, Professor Emeritus, Ohio University.
- Rose October-Edun, Ph.D. Candidate, State University of New York, Empire State College
- Dr. Juliet Emanuel, City University of New York/Borough of Manhattan Community College
- Derry Etkins, Music Educator, British Virgin Islands
- Dr. Rory Fraser, Professor of Forest Economics and Policy, Alabama A&M University

⁶ See “Who are We?,” *Sunday Stabroek*, August 11, 2013. Available online at <http://www.stabroeknews.com/2013/opinion/editorial/08/31/who-are-we-2/>

- Dr. Gillian Richards-Greaves, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, DePauw University
- Dr. Melissa Ifill, Lecturer II, University of Guyana
- Eusi Kwayana, Independent Scholar (by SKYPE)
- Gentian Miller, Lecturer II, University of Guyana
- Dr. Lear Matthews, Professor, State University of New York, Empire State College
- Henry Mootoo, M.B.E, Director of Culture, Cayman Islands
- Cynthia Nelson, Media Professional, Author, and Lecturer, Barbados Community College
- Dr. Robert J. Moore, former Guyana High Commissioner to Canada (by SKYPE)
- Desmond Roberts, Independent Scholar
- Hubert Williams, Retired Journalist.

Based on responses to the Call for Participation, the organizers of the symposium identified a cluster of five interrelated themes:

- The natural environment and identity
- The peopling of Guyana
- The diaspora
- Guyanese creativity
- Governance and leadership

These themes guided the plenary and small group conversations which characterized the organization of the symposium. Given GCA's commitment to participation, the organizers sought to create a communication infrastructure that would support the dialogue needed among global Guyanese. Participation in the 2013 symposium was possible through multiple modes—face-to-

face, and virtually through Internet platforms such as Skype, Facebook, and Any Meeting. The symposium had three sessions—a morning plenary session, an afternoon break-out session, and a final plenary session.

Morning Plenary Session

Focused conversations, facilitated by Dr. Juliet Emanuel, were featured during the morning's plenary session. The participants in this session included:

- Dr. Shamir Andrew Ally, Independent Scholar (via Skype)
- Dr. Vibert Cambridge, Professor Emeritus, Ohio University
- Rose October-Edun, Ph.D. Candidate, State University of New York, Empire State College
- Dr. Juliet Emanuel, City University of New York/Borough of Manhattan Community College
- Dr. Rory Fraser, Professor of Forest Economics and Policy, Alabama A&M University
- Dr. Gillian Richards-Greaves, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, DePauw University
- Dr. Melissa Ifill, Lecturer II, University of Guyana
- Dr. Lear Matthews. Professor, State University of New York, Empire State College
- Gentian Miller, Lecturer II, University of Guyana
- Dr. Robert J. Moore, former Guyana High Commissioner to Canada (via Skype)
- Desmond Roberts, Independent Scholar



Photograph courtesy of Dr. Vibert Cambridge

Small Group Sessions

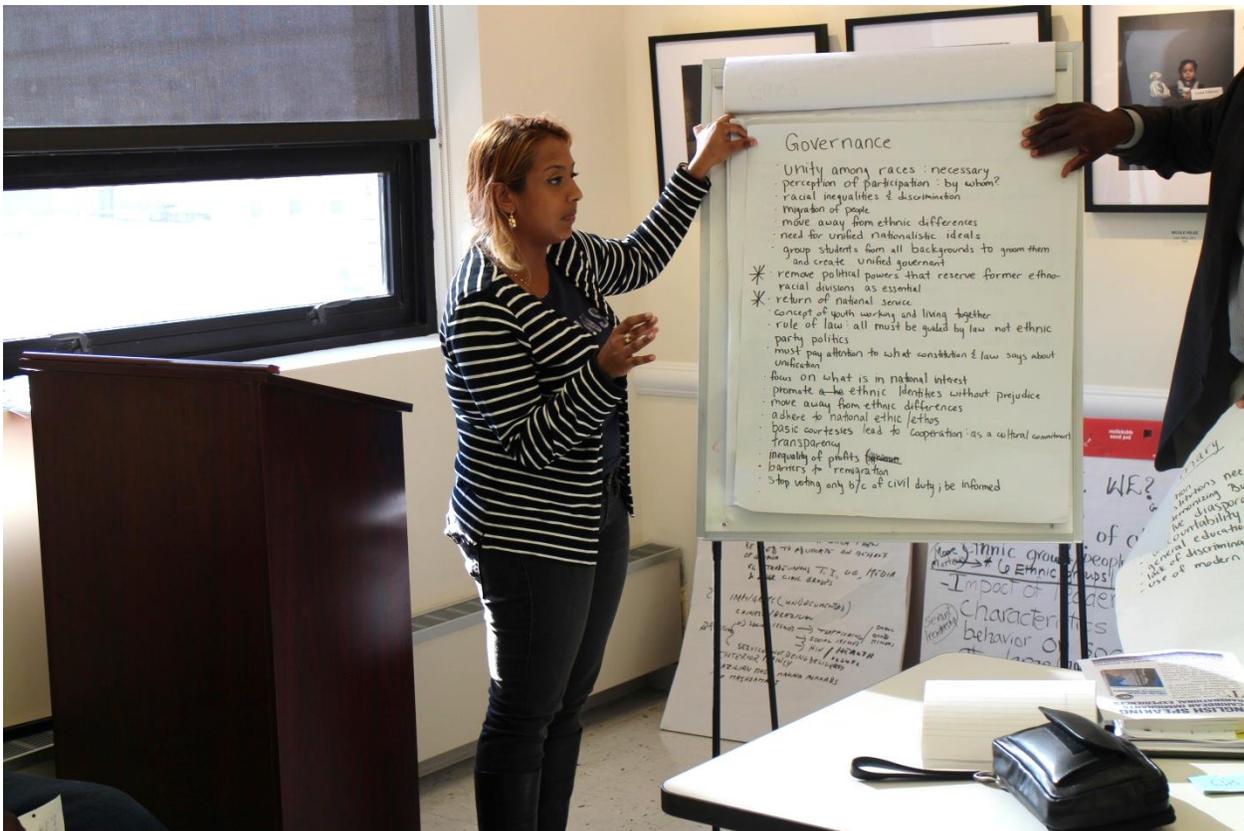
After lunch, participants assembled in small groups organized around the five earlier mentioned interrelated themes and the focused conversations from the morning plenary session. The reports from these small groups were presented during the final plenary session in the afternoon.

Afternoon Plenary Session

Syntheses of the conversations associated with the five interrelated themes along with the “core documents” are provided in Chapters 3–7. Conclusions and recommendations are provided in Chapters 8 and 9. Chapter 10 identifies the challenges directed to Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc. and its early responses to those challenges.



Ms. Noorjahan Deolall, scribe for “governance” small group. Photograph courtesy of Dr. Vibert Cambridge



Ms. Noorjahan Deolall presents the “governance and leadership” small group report to the afternoon plenary session. Photograph courtesy Dr. Vibert Cambridge

Chapter 3

Natural Environment and Identity

Professor Rory Fraser drew upon three of his recent research reports for his commentary on Guyana's natural environment, its natural resources and the interplay this has on Guyanese identity formation, ways of living together and the future.⁷ The main thrust of his commentary was based on his 2013 article "Eldorado Verde: Guyana's Biocapacity."

According to Professor Fraser, Guyanese interactions with the natural environment and use of natural resources have shaped our identities, how we live together, and our vision of ourselves and our nation. The word Eldorado has resonated in Guyana for good reasons, as recent gold mining activities have demonstrated. However, Guyana's greatest asset is a global leading 59.75 global hectares (gha) per person of excess biocapacity. The biocapacity of ecosystems refers to a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment - to produce useful biological materials and to absorb waste materials generated by humans, using current management schemes and extraction

technologies. Useful biological materials are those demanded by the human economy. Hence, what is considered "useful" can change from year to year.

A country's biocapacity depends on the availability of natural capital, *i.e.*, the stock of natural ecosystems that yield a flow of valuable ecological goods or services into the future. For example, a stock of trees or rivers provides a flow of new trees or fish, a flow that could be sustained indefinitely. Natural capital also allows for processing wastes, fresh water collection and erosion control, *i.e.*, a flow of services from ecosystems.

The provision of these goods and services, however requires that ecological systems function as whole (eco) systems, wherein the structure and (bio) diversity of the system are important components of natural capital. The biocapacity of an area (usually expressed in global hectares) is calculated by multiplying the actual physical area by the yield (output) factor and the appropriate equivalence (common denominator) factor.

There were 12 billion hectares of biologically productive land and water on this planet in 2008. Dividing by the number of people alive in that year, 6.7 billion, gives 1.8 gha per person. Guyana's biocapacity is estimated at 62.13 gha per person, but the net 59.75 gha, referred to above, discounts for our ecological footprint of 2.38 gha per person. Where ecological footprint is the estimated area required to produce the goods and services we used.

In a world with an increasing ecological deficit—ecological footprint exceeds

⁷ R. Fraser, "Policy without Values: Forest Management in Guyana" In *Forest Policy Center Conference Proceedings*. Auburn University, 2001, pp. 211-219. Available online at http://www.auburn.edu/academic/forestry_wildlife/forest_policy_ctr/Proceedings/Proceedings.pdf; R. Fraser, "UG: Exciting Times: Human Capital and Development" In the Diaspora, *Stabroek News* (March 12, 2012). Accessible online at <http://www.stabroeknews.com/2012/features/in-the-diaspora/03/12/ug-exciting-times-human-capital-and-development/>; R. Fraser, "Biocapacity: Eldorado Verde." In the Diaspora *Stabroek News* (October 24, 2013). Accessible online at <http://www.stabroeknews.com/2013/features/in-the-diaspora/10/14/eldorado-verde-guyanas-biocapacity/>

biocapacity—this declining resource is becoming increasingly more valuable. This in effect was the premise for low carbon development strategy. The Government of Guyana made a case for renting Guyana’s forest ecosystems based on the McKinsey and Company’s 2007 estimates (in *Creating Incentives to Avoid Deforestation*) of the overall and tradable values of Guyana’s forests. The value (EVW) of Guyana’s ecosystems services was estimated at more than US\$25,000 per ha, *i.e.*, a total value of about US\$460 billion for the 18.39 million ha of forests, or approximately US\$40 billion per year contribution to the global economy. However, in determining the value (EVN) to be traded, the government used US\$300 to \$3,500 per ha, to end up with a total value ranging from US\$4.3 to \$23.4 billion. This is a huge spread in estimates—US\$4.3–\$460 billion. The big difference is based on whether Guyana cuts down the forest and sells it (as either a whole or in pieces over time) or keeps it relatively intact and rents out its services (in parts or as a whole). The EVN numbers are in the range of the US\$31.3 billion World Bank’s 2005 estimates of the value of Guyana’s subsoil, timber, non-timber, protected areas, cropland, pasture land, and natural capital. Whatever the numbers, these estimates provide a glimpse of Guyana’s enormous current and future wealth and why it is Eldorado Verde, the green land of gold.

The World Bank’s 2011 publication *The Changing Wealth of Nations* (the source of the estimate quoted earlier) shows a clear link between careful management of natural capital—forests, protected areas, minerals, energy and agricultural land—and increasing levels of wealth and economic well-being. In this study of the wealth of more than 150 countries between 1995 and 2005, the authors’ definition of “wealth” included natural capital, produced or

manufactured capital, and intangible wealth assets like strong institutions, human skills, education, innovation and new technologies. Their key finding in low-income countries, where natural capital averages between 30 and 50 percent of total wealth, is development is about leveraging natural capital for growth. When a low-income country has strong institutions that reaffirm the rule of law, ensure government accountability, and help control corruption, investment follows and grows. Botswana is presented as a success. The government has a Sustainable Budget Index, which monitors the extent to which revenues from mining are put back into the government’s budget.

How we, Guyanese, negotiate the future in large part depends on how well we know and understand our environment, resources, and the management of these assets. Alternative development paths, such as Dutch Disease, are also possible.

Dutch Disease is the relationship between the increase in exploitation of a natural resource (*e.g.*, gold) and a decline in the manufacturing and/or agricultural sectors. It can also refer to any development which results in a large inflow of foreign currency, including a sharp surge in natural resource prices, foreign assistance, remittances, and foreign direct investment. History is replete with examples such as the decline of the manufacturing sector in the Netherlands after the discovery of a large natural gas field in 1959.

Guyanese Identification with the Country’s Natural Resources

For many Guyanese, Guyana is a “coastal island,” and there is little appreciation of the scope and complexity of the territory. In many ways, most Guyanese operate like islanders—living in spatial and linguistic

isolation by the sea to the north, a river and Dutch to the east, the forests and Spanish to the west, and a savannah and Portuguese to the south. Before the opening of National Service centers, the advent of foreign large scale timber and gold operations, the availability of aviation services, the widening and surfacing of the Georgetown to Lethem trail, and the current gold rush, few Guyanese ventured off the coast.

Despite these development/exploits, however, 95% of the population still lives on 5% of the coastland. From all reports, those who venture into the “interior” live under Spartan conditions while exploiting natural resources (gold, bauxite, and timber) to provide for their families along the coast. With the exception of the Amerindians and some of the hardy “pork-knockers” and “timber-grant workers” and their progeny, very few Guyanese commune in the forests, along the rivers, on the mountains, or in the savannahs. In fact, most of the little that is known about Guyana’s natural resources or ecosystems is stored in vaults, archives, and displays of the museums and universities in England, the United States, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, and France. Even more troubling is the limited (physical, educational, or virtual) exposure of Guyanese children to this vast and bounteous country and the small number of tertiary education students with an interest in pursuing careers in forestry, agriculture, or other natural resource professions.

In effect, most Guyanese are ignorant of this national patrimony, are not involved with or pay little attention to how it is managed, and have few expectations of deriving any benefit. Those involved directly have/are exploitative, and those indirectly involved seem to willingly cede the benefits for pepper-corn returns. This begs the question: How do Guyanese identify with their

country? To answer this, one can turn to the scholarship of the relationship between place and identity, indigeneity, and nationalism.

As Parker has noted, identities are ever evolving cores shaped by past and current genetics, cultures, environments, relationships, experiences, and choices.⁸ Reed and Bolton contend that identities can be defined by the myriad of labels people use to express who they are.⁹ These labels are fluid, varying across time and situations. For example, Guyanese may refer to themselves as Caribbean, West Indian, South American, Guyanese-American, etc. Identities, Reed and Bolton argue, are hats people put on or take off as the need arises. Identity marketing, as demonstrated by Reed and Bolton, provides empirical evidence that people are more powerfully attracted to products and ideas that are linked to their multiple identities. In addition, many people have aspirational identities, *i.e.*, they invest in what they want to become.

This concept of multi-faceted identities (as against psychographic segmentation, which ignores this complexity by assuming one hat fits all occasions) is important because there is increasing empirical evidence that identity-driven thinking supersedes analytical reasoning. Identity-based judgments are especially resistant to change because they are entrenched in people’s views of themselves and those views are shared and reinforced by others. The late Stuart Hall reminded us that identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. He suggests we think of identity as a

⁸ N. Parker, *The Geopolitics of Europe’s Identity: Centers, Boundaries, and Margins*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 252.

⁹ A. Reed II and L. Bolton, “The Complexity of Identity” in *MIT Sloan Management Review* (Spring 2005), p. 23.

“production” that is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, presentation.¹⁰

Place identity has been identified Pohansky as a “sub-structure of the self-identity of the person consisting of broadly conceived cognitions about the physical world in which the individual lives.”¹¹ People’s everyday interactions with their physical settings help to shape their attitudes, feelings, ideas, memories, personal values and preferences. Different environments fulfill various components of a person’s biological, social, psychological and cultural needs. Also, some places are associated with ‘good’ or ‘bad’ experiences, and these are reflected in personal values, attitudes, feelings and beliefs about the physical world. Thus, place identity is an individual’s incorporation of place into the larger concept of self.

Geographers assert people live and create memories within a place, become attached, and through this personal connection gain a sense of belonging and purpose, which then gives significance and meaning to their lives.¹² Place identity then becomes a cognitive “database” against which every physical setting is experienced.¹³

¹⁰ S. Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” in *Framework* (1989: 36), pp. 222-237.

¹¹ H. Pohansky, A. Fabian, and R. Kaminoff, “Place Identity: Physical world socialization of the self.” *Journal of Environmental Psychology* (1983: 3), pp. 57-83. Available on-line at https://www.zotero.org/groups/aesthetics_and_the_national_parks/items/B4SBW5SU

¹² Y. Tuan, “Rootedness versus sense of place” *Landscape* (1980: 24: 1), pp. 3-8; E. Relph, *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion Ltd., 1976 and A. Buttimer, “Home, reach, and sense of place” in A. Buttimer and D. Seamon (Eds.) *The Human Experience of Place and Space*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1980.

¹³ H. Pohansky, et.al, “Place Identity: Physical world socialization of the self, *Journal of Environmental Psychology* (1983: 3).

Ordinarily, people are unaware of the array of feelings, values or memories of a singular place that may influence how comfortable or uncomfortable they find certain broad kinds of physical settings or their preferences for specific spaces. Alternatively, some poets, artists, writers and others (farmers, foresters, surveyors, etc.) living and working in different rural spaces are highly cognizant of their environment and this influences their sense of self. Place attachment (or sense of place) is an associated concept and much studied by urban geographers, sociologists, and psychologists. The theory here is people develop emotional and affective attachment(s) to place(s) where they spend time and have positive experiences. Environmental psychologists have also recognized that architecture affects human behavior and are assisting in designing outdoor and indoor spaces.

In a very thought provoking paper, Farnum et al. raised some very interesting questions about sense of place with respect to public lands used for recreation and tourism: Can People Be attached to areas they have never visited? Does place attachment form at a specific scale? How does sense of place differ among user types? Local versus nonlocal attachment to public lands? Does level of involvement or specialization relate to place attachment? Does level of place attachment relate to activity type?¹⁴ That most of these questions have been asked in Guyana and not yet answered is no indication of their lack of importance. Rather, these questions point to the need for closer examination of Guyanese sense of identity and how much of is shaped by

¹⁴ J. Farnum, T. Hall, and L. Kruger, *Sense of place in natural resource recreation and tourism: An evaluation of research findings*. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 2005, p. 59. Accessible online at http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/pnw_gtr660.pdf

where people live, what they do, and to what they aspire.

Indigeneity is another aspect of place-based identity formation. Referring to a recent workshop on indigeneity at the University of London, Fraser noted that the concept was a complicated one associated with belonging, ancestral rights, place, space and time, and “social, cultural and political boundaries and un-boundaries.” It was a term also associated in “an intricate web of ideas such as ethnicity, hybridity, authenticity, diaspora, nation and homeland, and the ways those ideas are formed, developed and “owned.”

Indigeneity influences national identity and national aspirations—important factors in the construction of nationalism. Fraser also noted that over the 20th century, there have been several permutations of nationalism—ranging from struggles for political independence, minority rights, and “the expansionist politics of states, and irredentist and secessionist movements.”¹⁵

Citing Franz Fanon, Fraser stressed:

A national culture is not a folk-lore, nor can an abstract populism that believes it discover a people's true nature. A national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence.¹⁶

¹⁵ See C. Tschirhart, “In the Balance: Indigeneity, Performance, Globalization” available at <http://projectcobra.org/in-the-balance-indigeneity-performance-globalisation/>

¹⁶ F. Fanon, “On National Culture” In *The Wretched of the Earth*. London, 1963, p. 170..

The symposium concluded that significant multi-disciplinary research will be required to increase our understanding of how Guyanese sense of self and national identity has been shaped by the relationship with the nation’s resources. For example:

- What does the concept of place identity (attachment to place) mean for Guyanese:
 - Farmers, ranchers, agricultural workers, forest workers and their families?
 - Villagers, township dwellers, in developments (renters, homeowners, squatters)?
 - Who own land (individually or communally), don’t own land?
 - In the Diaspora?
- How do Guyanese view:
 - The ownership of public lands - national, regional, local?
 - Their role in the allocation of national land?
 - Their responsibility for management and activities on national lands?
 - Their rights to access and use of national lands?
- What are Guyanese concepts of indigeneity among:
 - Amerindian?
 - Other ethnic groups?
 - Members of the diaspora?
 - Immigrants?
 - Foreign entrepreneurs?

- How do Guyanese view:
 - National policies/strategies regarding land use and resource allocations, *e.g.*, LCDS, Land Use Planning, National Development Strategies with respect to

allocation of resource
use/extraction, Housing
Development

Resource Document

Dr. Rory Fraser, “Eldorado Verde:
Guyana’s Bio Capacity.”

Chapter 4

The Peopling of Guyana

“There is no primordial problem between Africans and Indians” (Eusi Kwayana, October 26, 2013).

Guyana has been the site of dramatic experiences in human migration. It has been the location of significant ethnic encounters, multiple modes of interactions, and these encounters and interactions have resulted in the construction of a rich, communally owned reservoir of wisdom, knowledge, and creativity. A variety of theories have been used to describe the Guyanese society that has emerged from these migratory confluences. Among them are plural society, creolization, and transculturalism.

The conversations on this theme explored three strands—settlement, the colonial experience, and post-colonial practices.

Settlement

Contemporary archeological research on early Guyana is confirming the presence of human settlement in the Guyana space for more than 3,000 years. The earliest settlers are our Amerindian ancestors, some of whom are connected to larger Lokono/Arawakan and Carib civilizations of South America.¹⁷

In the post-Columbian era, Guyana has attracted populations from around the world. The Essequibo, Berbice and Demerara colonies were established by the Dutch in

¹⁷ See for example, D. Williams, *Prehistoric Guiana*. Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2003 and N. Whitehead, “Lost Cities of the Arawaks—Berbice, Guyana.” Available on-line at http://www.academia.edu/215906/LOST_CITIES_OF_THE_ARAWAKS_-_BERBICE_GUYANA Accessed January 22, 2014 at 8:33 am.

1616, 1624, and 1741, respectively. The colonizers, primarily European, were attracted by the accessible natural resources—land, minerals, and forests.

Since the 17th century, plantation agriculture has dominated Guyanese life. With this came ideological racism, specifically white supremacy. Initially it was cotton and coffee, but by the turn of the 19th century sugar was king and has remained so. Plantation agriculture and slavery brought ethnicities from North, West, Central, and East Africa to Guyana. Sugar’s post-emancipation labor needs were partially met by indentured labor from Portugal, northern India and southern China.

The sugar economy also supported immigrant tradesmen. Prominent Guyanese families can trace ancestors who came to Demerara during the 19th century and established careers as wheelwrights and coopers who catered to the needs of the sugar industry.¹⁸

By the 1930s, the owners and investors in plantation agriculture and mining exerted substantial power in the territory’s economic, political, and cultural life.

The cessation of Indian labor migration to British Guiana in 1918 did not stop migration to Guyana. For the past 90 plus years there have been trickles of new immigrants from Barbados, Sri Lanka, India, Jamaica, Trinidad, Surinam, China, the United States, Canada, and Europe. However, the start of the 21st century has seen an acceleration in new immigrants from

¹⁸ See for example R. Heath, *Shadows Round the Moon*. London: Harper Collins, 1990.

China and Brazil into urban, rural, and hinterland Guyana. Further, the agricultural land settlement schemes anticipated between Barbados, India, and Trinidad and Tobago are also expected to contribute to definition of “Who are we?”

University of Guyana lecturer Gentian Miller’s report on her current interdisciplinary research was a valuable contribution to the conversation on the peopling of Guyana. Her current research project examines “the new immigrants from Brazil” and “the societal anxieties associated with this contemporary development.” This cultural anthropology project is taking place at the Guyana-Brazil border and includes Lethem and Nappi (in the North Rupununi) and Boa Vista in Brazil. Her research is currently at the data collection phase and this includes field recordings of “narratives of the Macusi.” These data are to be analyzed later to glean information about and insights into the cultural experiences of the Macusi Amerindians living close to the very active Guyana-Brazil border. She is also drawing upon the work of Denis Williams and Wilson Harris to illuminate her findings regarding migration, culture and identity.

The Colonial Experience and its Consequences

Domination, both physical and psychological, has characterized relations among the peoples of Guyana. The development and the deployment of racist myths and stereotypes have been the most pernicious and persistent forms of domination in the Guyanese experience. Dr. Robert Moore’s “Colonial Images of Blacks and Indians in 19th Century Guyana” traced the development of these myths and

stereotypes that dictate African-Indian relations in Guyana.

The story of 20th century Guyana is dominated by mistrust, especially the resulting tensions between Guyanese of Indian and African ancestries. This mistrust undermines the society’s opportunity to construct a sense of being that is inclusive, enriched by the knowledge of its constituent peoples—all of them.

We have already referred to the questions by Professor Fraser about how Guyanese identity is informed by relationships with place. Other questions and perspectives that emerged from the conversations on the “peopling of Guyana” included the need to recognize and address challenges at the individual and social psychological levels, especially the culture of shame that sometimes manifests itself in self-loathing and the cultural cringe associated with some aspects of Guyanese religiosity and expressive culture. The symposium noted the “denial of Guyanese identity” as an extreme manifestation.

Post-Colonial Practices

Both Cynthia Nelson and Dr. Melissa Ifill explored post-independence efforts to construct a national identity in Guyana. Cynthia Nelson’s paper focused experiences at the intersection of multi-ethnic identities and the culinary arts. Dr. Melissa Ifill concluded that all hitherto efforts in the political sphere had failed because of a tendency by post-independence governments to be triumphalist and to privilege particular ethnicities and their cultural symbols. This, she argued, undermined opportunities to construct a transcendental identity. The table below is offered as a visualization of Dr. Ifill’s analysis.

Table 1

Dr. Melissa’s Ifill’s Typology of Approaches to the Construction of National Identity and Practices of Resistance

Period	Characteristics of the era	Dominant responses
Matured colonialism - 1953	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matured colonialism/New imperialism • Divide and rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-ethnic resistance to “common enemy”—colonial exploitation • Migration • Ethnic division and polarization
Preparation for Independence: 1953 - 1966	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will rule multi-ethnic Guyana after independence? • The geopolitics of the Cold War 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black vs. Indian struggle over who will rule multi-ethnic Guyana after independence • Accelerated migration.
The early-post colonial era/Burnham and decolonization 1966 - 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framing National Identity (privileging “the local”) • The colonial legacies • Afro dominated • No lasting consciousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistance • Migration • Perpetual ethnic division
Return of participatory democracy and the Jagan era 1992 – 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indo dominated • National symbols neglected • Over valorization of Indian heritage moments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistance • Migration • Perpetual ethnic division
The post-Jagan era 2005 – present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indo dominated • Intergenerational tensions • Identity vs. Ethnicity • New economic model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences in perceptions about race and ethnicity among generations (elders vs. youth) in urban, rural, and hinterland contexts. • Concerns about ownership • Concerns about democracy • Concerns about integrity • Marginalization and abuse of the hinterland and its residents.

Addressing the Challenges

This theme led to discussions on the role of the Guyanese media environment, especially how the publicly owned media assets can be engaged in a sustained and evidence-based programming strategy aimed at debunking the racist myths and stereotypes that nurture and promote mistrust in Guyanese society.

Resource Documents

Dr. Robert Moore, “Colonial Images of Blacks and Indians in 19th Century Guyana.”

Dr. Melissa Ifill, “Constructing a National Identity in Guyana.”

Gentian Miller, “The New Immigrants From Brazil and the Societal Anxieties Associated with this Contemporary Development.”

Cynthia Nelson, “Who Am I: Heritages & Connections.”

Chapter 5

The Diaspora

Guyana: A Site for Diasporas

The third strand in the conversation was about the scope and the nature of global Guyana—Guyana and its diaspora. In terms of global human migration, Guyana has been the host site for multiple diasporas. Guyana's indigenous peoples are members of larger hemispheric civilizations, including the Arawakan/Lokono and Carib civilizations. As mentioned previously, contemporary archeology on Guyana has provided valuable evidence on the early settlement patterns of our Amerindian ancestors in the tidal, riverine, savannah, forested and mountainous regions of Guyana.

Among the consequences of the post-Columbian interactions between Europe and the Guyana space has been the establishment of multiple diasporas from the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia. The development of these diasporas and their contemporary interactions influence all aspects of Guyana's political, social, economic, and cultural life.

The post-Columbian experience, in which plantation agriculture dominated, privileged the coast and created the "coastal island" referred to by Professor Fraser. African enslavement in Guyana was multi-ethnic. The enslaved Africans included ethnicities from North, West, Central, and Eastern Africa. The settling process during enslavement involved developing a common language, finding cultural similarities, and inventing ways of living together. This dynamic, nurtured on plantations, provided the nimbleness to respond to the immediate post-emancipation era as manifested in the launching of a village system in 1839. The

African village movement represents an embryonic and home grown approach to governance.

The economic imperatives of the ruling class during the early post-emancipation era accelerated and further diversified settlement opportunities in British Guiana. The indentured labor scheme resulted in the settlement of almost 250,000 people of different ethnicities and religious beliefs from India between 1838 and 1918. The economic imperatives of the ruling class provided incentives, such as free land, to encourage the settlement of our Indian ancestors.

By the 1920s, these diasporas had manifested their presence through the proliferation of ethnic organizations. The Chinese Association was established in 1920. In 1921, the Negro Progress Convention (NPC) was founded by the Buxtonian E. F. Fredericks, Esq. The British Guiana East Indian Association (BGEIA) was founded in 1922. The Portuguese Club was founded in 1924, and in 1929, the St Andrew's Association, catering for the Scots in British Guiana, was revived.

By the 1930s, these groups were becoming more politically active and adopted expanded definitions of self as they engaged in the defining wider transnational identities as Pan Africanists, global Indians, West Indian federalists, and as members of the international proletariat—members of the globally oppressed and exploited working class. The British Guiana Labour Union, which was legally registered in 1921, has roots reaching back to the Ruimveldt Riots

of 1905. The success of the People's Progressive Party in 1953 was based on the mobilization of this working class affinity.

The aftermath of the suspension of the 1953 Constitution, the expulsion of the PPP government, and the split of the party along ethnic lines, have attracted academic attention to the society through theories such as plural society, creolization, and transculturation.

Guyana's migration story also has another dimension—the sojourner. Plantation agriculture, the bureaucratic demands of new imperialism, and the extractive industries, also generated the itinerant settler. The sugar industry administrators, colonial civil servants with six-month leave packages, along with the administrators of the bauxite industry, exemplified this genre of immigrant.

Global Guyana: The Guyanese Diasporas

An important stream in the Guyana migration narrative has been the Guyanese who emigrated to other countries. Guyana's global diaspora has expanded dramatically since World War II. The United Kingdom can be considered as the site of Guyana's oldest diaspora. As

Desmond Roberts pointed out, changes in U.S. immigration laws in 1965 and the Canadian demand for domestics around the same time were pivotal “pull” factors that expanded the Guyanese diasporas in the United States and Canada. Fear about the politics of post-colonial Guyana may have been among the “push” factors that facilitated the establishment of Guyanese diasporas in Australia and, to a limited extent, New Zealand. The constellation of push and pull factors since the 1970s have not only expanded diasporas in North America and the Caribbean but created new ones in Latin America and Africa.

Guyanese diasporas have always played a role in Guyana's political, social, and cultural life. During the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, Guyanese in the UK were active in the agitations for expanding suffrage and gaining political independence. The North American diaspora agitated for electoral reform and political change during the 1980s and 1990s. Currently, the diasporas (“The Guyaspora”) play a significant role in the nation's economy. In 2006, remittances from the United States rose to US\$225.9 million from US\$29.2 million in 2000. Table 2 provides data on the size of “The Guyaspora.”

Table 2

Top Locations of the “Guyaspora” Based on UN 2010 Data

Country/Region	Size	Comments
United States	263,147	
Canada	101,505	
Europe	25,822	UK (24,970), Other European: Ireland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Poland, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece (852)
South America	19,507	Surinam (10,924), Venezuela (6,551), Brazil (1,613), Other Latin America (359)
CARICOM	n/a	There are significant Guyanese populations in Antigua, Barbados, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago.
Australia	631	
Asia		Japan (9)
Africa	n/a	In recent years, small numbers of Guyanese have been migrating to Botswana.

Sources: Data accessed from International Organization for Migration

<https://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/about-migration/world-migration.html> on March 28, 2014 @ 8:23 am. Some unofficial sources suggest that the “Guyaspora” is approximately one million.

Transnationalism

Dr. Lear Matthews, Desmond Roberts, and Rose October-Edun shared their current research on the Guyanese Diaspora in New York. Dr. Matthews identified and discussed the transnational character of the contemporary Guyanese immigrant in the United States and the ways this facilitates the maintenance of the immigrant’s bonds with Guyana. In a presentation that explored multiple dimensions of contemporary Guyanese migration, Dr. Matthews reminded the symposium that Guyana’s diaspora in the United States now represented nearly 50 percent of the total Guyanese population. He further noted that current dynamics, especially the combined forces of the new communications

technologies and the communication practices they support, relatively low-cost travel, and continued economic relations have resulted in the emergence of vibrant transnational communities. This, in turn, has led to heightened levels of transnational activities, such as sending remittances and forming Hometown Associations.

Transnationalism enables immigrants to maintain multiple relations across national boundaries, binding them to the country of settlement and non-immigrants in the country of origin. These social relations range from the individual to collective ties including familial, economic, organizational, political, and religious connections. The experiences of Guyanese immigrants are indeed characterized by such relationships.

Continuous identification with the home country, re-enforced by immigrant community networks, provides a persistent grounding in Guyanese culture and helps to maintain emotional connection. However, this merging of transnational ties and identities cross-continentially results in a plethora of adjustments, opportunities, risks and challenges varying from self-identification and ethnic relations to child rearing practices.

Desmond Roberts' research reveals that much of what has characterized ethnic relations in Guyana has been reproduced in the United States.¹⁹ This is evident in residential patterns in New York. African-Guyanese immigrants are generally dispersed residentially. Indian-Guyanese are more likely to settle in their own enclaves, such as Richmond Hill, New York. In addition, each group tends to support its own hometown associations and, by extension, communities in Guyana, with little interaction across organizations. They continue to reflect the religious and ethnic differences that divide them in Guyana. The annual Guyana Folk Festival was identified as being among the few attempts to bring the two groups together.

Rose October-Edun's research reported on the dynamics and tensions associated with child rearing and discipline among the children of Guyanese immigrants in New York.

The Guyanese diaspora--global Guyana—is an understudied aspect of contemporary Guyanese life. In addition to contributing to the understanding and debunking the racist myths and stereotypes that breed mistrust,

¹⁹ See Desmond Roberts, "'Indo and Afro-Guyanese Immigrants in New York City: An analysis of Transnational Experiences.'"

the study of global Guyana can provide evidence for developing strategies to:

- Counters the effects of the brain drain of the educated, qualified, innovative, and experienced;
- Undermine the tensions between the populations resident in Guyana and the various permutations of the “comebackees”—the remigrant, “the overseas who comes to go back”—the tourist, and the “overseas who comes never to go back”—the deportee. These tensions are sometimes couched in phrases like, “Where were you all when we did struggle? Or “Duh is fuh outside!” This tension retards.
- Prepare Guyanese for the inevitability of emigration (as is done by China, India, and South Korea). Guyanese migration is not only driven by economic motives, but also by the family reunification principles that guide the immigration laws of the United States. Among the social and cultural challenges faced by Guyanese immigrants are:
 - Depression and other socio/psychological challenges among the elderly
 - Lack of access to cultural materials and opportunities to share
 - Domestic violence
 - Difficulty dealing with inter-cultural and cross-cultural communication
 - Issues related to remigration and repatriation, especially:
 - Remigration fraud
 - The reintegration of the criminal deportee

- The collection and repatriation of Guyanese heritage

Understanding “global Guyana” was considered necessary in the effort to answer the questions “Who are we? How can we live together? What can we become?”

Resource Documents

Lear Matthews (ed.), *English-speaking Caribbean Immigrants: Transnational Identities*. New York, 2014.

Desmond Roberts, “Indo and Afro-Guyanese Immigrants in New York City: An Analysis of Transnational Experiences.”

Rose October-Edun, “Childrearing and Discipline Among Guyanese Immigrants in New York: Implications for Adjustment.”

Chapter 6

Guyanese Creativity/The Creative Experience

One of the consequences of the peopling of Guyana has been the churn of interaction and exchange that has yielded the rich, communally owned reservoir of wisdom, knowledge, and creativity referred to earlier. This wisdom is evident in Guyana's tangible and intangible heritage. Residential patterns and other factors in the social, economic, and political spheres, especially the communication environment have retarded the wider society from receiving the full benefits of this communal asset.

Participants in the symposium revealed the enrichment they derived from the study of and the engagement with Guyana's cultural multi-ethnic heritage. There was reaffirmation of the belief that Guyana's multi-ethnic heritage can serve as social glue that facilitates trust and enrichment for all Guyanese. The contributions submitted by Derry Etkins, Alfred Adams, and Cynthia Nelson framed this conversation during the symposium.

Derry Etkins's "Guyana's Cultural Repertoire," directed attention to Guyana's built heritage, fashion, and music. Cynthia Nelson's "Who am I?: Heritages and Connections" focused on personal identity and the culinary arts. Two original musical compositions were presented during the conversation on Guyanese creativity. These included Alfred Adams' *Slavitude* and Derry Etkins' *Masquerade Sweet Suite*.

According to Alfred Adams, the music video *Slavitude* was conceived out of the 1964 political/racial unrest in the bauxite mining town of Mackenzie. It was then completed a month before the last elections in Guyana. *Slavitude* is made up of 11 tracks performed by Alfred Adams. Three other

tracks, the drum beats by Duhulla, Tabla and Neusia drums were also sequenced by Alfred Adams. He hopes that *Slavitude* the story will someday be told as a short musical film that will represent one of the perspectives of that unrest. The short film will place heavy spotlight/focus on all of the positives that have come out of the coexistence. *Slavitude* is the story of a man of African descent who in the midst of racial unrest, is concerned for the safety of his neighbors who happened to be of Aruban descent, but who had been described by his son as being of Indian descent to men of African descent who were seeking to harm people of 'Indian' descent.

Masquerade Sweet Suite paid homage to Guyanese folk songs and masquerade music. This composition was premiered during the 2012 "Masquerade Lives" symposium.

In summary, the conversation on the Guyanese creative experience expressed concern about the current patterns of ethnic polarization in the society and their exploitation in the politics of race of contemporary Guyana. This has stultified creativity in many areas of Guyana's expressive culture. The conversation reaffirmed the importance of being inclusive in the investment of national assets in order to nurture and support Guyanese creativity. The concept of inclusion was used in this context to go beyond the ethnic obvious and recognize folk heritage—the repository of Guyanese meta-narratives and the foundation of the nation's tastes and expressions. Guyana's folk heritage—that rich, communally owned reservoir of wisdom, knowledge, and creativity—deserves respectful and sustained treatment. This requires those responsible for

formulating and executing national cultural policy to establish comprehensive and sustainable mechanisms and processes.

These mechanisms and processes, established in collaboration with national communication, educational, and religious institutions, along with civil society, must encourage and sustain inter-ethnic contact, interaction, and exchange at the national level and similar practices at the international level. Guyana has to go beyond the “coastal island.”

The symposium was of the opinion that this approach to Guyanese heritage and creativity can have a salutary effect on ethnic relations by nurturing the practices of respect needed in interpersonal relations and by contributing to the sense of individual

and collective efficacy needed to advance democratic life in Guyana.

Resource Documents

Alfred Adams, *Slavitude*
(<http://vimeo.com/77819369>).

Derry Etkins, *Masquerade Sweet Suite*
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zy4tvp_fv90&feature=youtu.be).

Derry Etkins, Guyana’s Cultural Repertoire.”

Cynthia Nelson, “Who am I? Heritages and Connections.”

Chapter 7

Governance and Leadership

As mentioned previously, domination, in its multiple forms, including ideological racism, has characterized human relations and governance in the Guyana space for almost four centuries. Ideological domination, especially White supremacy and its variants such as comparative lightness, have been a naturalized world view in Guyanese society. This world view has justified the use of physical and psychological violence that characterized slavery and indentureship and is still manifested in domestic violence, human trafficking, and other forms of abusive behavior. This world view has nurtured racist myths and stereotypes, determined taste cultures, determined social status, and guided the allocation of national assets.

The exploration of domination in Guyanese society was enriched by the contributions of Eusi Kwayana who has had a unique vantage point to observe the major moments in Guyana's post World War II political history.

Participants identified domination in Guyanese governance as an inheritance from the colonial experience, especially the legacy of the maximum leader. The governors of British Guiana wielded real power. They had coordinated institutions, especially the coercive assets of the state and the capacity to bestow patronage in a society that was organized around racial superiority. This condition has contributed to a heritage of abuse. Among the questions raised were "Who are the contemporary custodians and beneficiaries of the legacies of ideological racism/white superiority and comparative lightness? What have been

Guyana's post-colonial experiences with maximum leader politics?

The contributions of Dr. Gillian Richards-Greaves and Dr. Shamir Ally focused on visions of what Guyana could be and offered the suggestions for more participatory and humanistic approaches to leadership and governance.

The conversations on this topic/theme during the plenary and small group conversations identified the following characteristics as emblematic of the post-colonial era:

- The persistence of the authoritarian governance style associated with the nation's maximum leader heritage;
- Cronyism and other forms of nepotism that contribute to disparities in the allocation of national assets; and
- Lack of respect for the constitution and destabilization of fundamental principles such as the rule of law; that
- Encourage recrimination and demonizing as rhetorical strategies in Guyanese political communication.

All of the above:

- Exacerbate ethnic tensions and contribute to the lack of trust;
- Undermine traditions of self-help and community initiative;
- Create imbalances in public sector employment;

- Create inequitable access to national assets such as education, health care, housing, security, and facilities for self-actualization;
- Contribute to a lack of confidence in national governance because of the continued lack of transparency and accountability that have characterized governance in Guyana

The participants also offered a number of perspectives on addressing these challenges. Among them were:

- Exploring other paradigms of governance, especially those that privilege inclusion, transparency, accountability, and participatory communication;
- Developing and institutionalizing formal, non-formal, and informal approaches to civic education, including a curriculum that supports the development and nurturing of trust;
- Reformulating and reintroducing the Guyana National Service as a strategy for dealing with the challenges faced by the growing ranks of under- and unemployed youth in Guyana.²⁰
- Developing a coherent program of relations with the Guyanese

²⁰ A variant of the Guyana National Service still exists in the Youth program of the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sport and is located at the Kuru Kuru Training Center on the Linden-Soesdyke Highway. The program targets students from hinterland regions and the goal is to provide them with trade skills for independent livelihoods on their return to their hinterland communities. The trade skills privileged are the traditional ones—carpentry, masonry, joinery, plumbing, electrical installation, welding, and garment manufacturing, along with business education. In recent years, there have been conversations of moving into “digital” skills, such as television and mobile phone maintenance.

diaspora, including using the new communication technologies as a strategy for “brain gain” ;

- Increasing investments in research and creative activities;
- Encouraging and developing leaders who are not motivated by personal gain.

Dr. Shamir Ally’s presentation on servant leadership focused attention on a repertoire of attributes that are needed by those who aspire to leadership at all levels of governance, especially leadership associated with the development and allocation of the nation’s assets. Among the attributes identified were the desire and/or the ability to:

- Listen. Listening was identified as a prerequisite for the development of dialog in the society. Guyanese political life and governance have been dominated by men of words who have privileged monologues.
- Empathize. Empathy is not the same as sympathy. Empathy is experiencing how the shoe pinches.
- Heal. Guyanese leadership should eschew using inflammatory racial triumphalism when mobilizing their bases. Guyanese political leadership should be measured by their efforts to heal the hurts and fears that have been festering for more than four centuries.
- Persuade. Guyanese leaders should commit to dialogue in and avoid reliance on force, coercion, intimidation, and threats to embarrass one other in the marketplace of ideas.
- Conceptualize. Guyanese leaders are expected to demonstrate strategic thinking about the challenges facing the society and to articulate

comprehensive strategies. The Band-Aid and the shoddy “top, top” approaches are unacceptable. These approaches waste scarce resources and encourage the cronyism that has characterized the performance of the executive branch since 1966. The symposium urged current and aspiring Guyanese leaders to embrace the wisdom of Guyanese people in the conceptualization, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all programs of social change.

In addition, aspiring leaders should have:

- **Foresight.** The symposium recognized the importance of an appreciation of the intended and unintended consequences of the policies and practices of Guyanese political leaders. The symposium felt that persistence of the lack of real or sustainable development in Guyana over the past century is a consequence of the failure of foresight by Guyanese political leaders and emblematic of the myopia and sycophancy associated with maximum leader politics.
- **Stewardship.** The symposium felt that the concept of stewardship—the efficient and effective utilization of the nation’s scarce human and

natural resources for the benefit of the society, must be the overarching goal. The symposium concluded that the current national garbage pollution problem and other environmental challenges associated with the harvesting of hinterland resources are manifestations of inadequate stewardship.

- **Commitment.** The conversation called on current and aspiring leaders to recognize that commitment has to be sustained. There must be commitment to institutions and policies that protect and encourage the productivity of the nation’s assets. Commitment is long-term and not driven by the pulsations of electoral politics.
- **Desire to build community.** From the conversations, this concept of community had multiple dimensions, including the local, the national, the regional, and global. Political leaders are urged to see Guyana as more than the coastal island.

Resource Documents

Shamir Andrew Ally, “Servant Leadership.”

Gillian Richards-Greaves, “Who Are We? Sacrifice, Hope, and Togetherness.”

Chapter 8

Conclusions

The mood of the symposium was positive and cathartic. There was unanimous appreciation of the pivotal role of the colonial experience in determining population, residential geography, race/ethnic relations, cultural expressions, leadership styles, politics, and migratory practices of contemporary Guyana and Guyanese life. Participants were of the opinion that the pervasive ignorance of Guyana's common, collective multi-ethnic history and the communally owned reservoir of wisdom, knowledge, and creativity generated from the many human encounters that have taken place over more than 3,000 years contributes to:

Participants concluded that ignorance of Guyana's common, collective multi-ethnic history and heritage is pervasive and this contributes to:

- The perpetuation of racist myths and stereotypes which nourish and reinforce ethnic mistrust;
- A lack of appreciation of Guyana's geographic scope and the diversity of natural resources;
- The inability to distill and to apply the spiritual and philosophical wisdom born of the communally generated heritage;
- Maladaptive behaviors, especially the practices of physical, psychological, and legal domination in governance and inter-personal relationships;
- The inability to develop and to implement an equitable and sustainable national development strategy.

National Assets

The symposium also recognized the existence of a collection of under-resourced national institutions in Guyana. These include individuals and institutions, especially those associated with the national non-formal education delivery network owned by the people of Guyana. These institutions are responsible for the collection, preservation, and continuous dissemination of evidence-based knowledge about Guyanese history and heritage. The National Archives, the seven museums of the national museum system, the National Library, and The Learning Channel are important national assets that must be engaged.

The University of Guyana is an important node in the network. It is the home of a community of under-resourced scholars and researchers engaged in the study of Guyana's history and heritage, developing approaches that respond to the nation's current challenges, and acquiring skills for engaging in 21st century globalized life and living.

These Guyana-based assets create the non-formal education infrastructure that can explore the multiple dimensions of Guyanese identity, facilitating trust and national cohesiveness, and visioning preferable futures. The human resources in this system are the above-mentioned scholars and researchers at the University of Guyana; the young professionals at the National Archives, the National Trust, and the national museum system; the creatives associated with schools of the emerging Institute for the Creative Arts; and the producers and presenters employed in

agencies such as the National Cultural Center, the National Communication Network, and NCERD—the operators of the Learning Channel.

The symposium also recognized the work of intellectuals, creatives and their associated institutions in the private sector and civil society. Among the institutions are CineGuyana and the Moray Trust. The symposium urged the early and close engagement of this Guyana-based infrastructure in the initiative.

Special attention was directed to the scope and nature of national communications infrastructure. Of special interest was the important broadcasting sector, especially television. Theoretically, television is national in scope through a system of state-owned and privately owned stations. The state-owned and operated services (NCN and The Learning Channel) use a range of technologies, including satellites, to distribute content. Along with the privately owned television stations, the entire “coastal island” has access to television and radio broadcasting.

Recent investments by the state in fiber optics will bring high-speed broadband connectivity to the national communications infrastructure and, theoretically, bring the fruits of the Internet—a now essential part of 21st century human communication capacity—to Guyanese. Guyana’s One Laptop per Family intervention has been promoted as a strategy for democratizing access and participation in the global marketplace of ideas and products. There is evidence of the effectiveness of similar interventions around the developing world.

A general problem is that the national communications infrastructure, especially

the essential broadcasting sector, is not being optimized for promoting trust and national cohesiveness. It is frozen. Broadcasting is dominated by the rough and tumble of Guyanese political life. It is monologic. It is failing at the fundamental functional level of providing orientation, supporting cultural transmission, and delivering entertainment.

Entertainment programming in Guyana is dominated by pirated product. In 2009, a research report based on program guides published in Guyanese newspapers revealed that more than 80 percent of the entertainment programming delivered by state-owned and private television stations was pirated. In February 2014, there were 23 television stations and 10 radio stations operating in Guyana. The alignment of these stations represents a political logic.

The brokerage business model also determines programming in the Guyanese mass communication environment. It is biased toward generating revenue through the sale of airtime. This has privileged talking heads and vanity content. As a result, Guyanese citizens are not getting enough news, information, or entertainment to counter the racist myths and stereotypes that are pervasive in Guyanese society.

The symposium called upon the media to take steps to encourage two strands of entertainment programming in the mass media: (a) entertainment content based on Guyana’s common, collective multi-ethnic history and the communally owned reservoir of wisdom, knowledge, and creativity; and (b) programming that nurtures creativity and innovation.

Chapter 9

Recommendations

The overarching recommendation was a three- year coordinated program of events, anchored in participatory communication principles and engaging multiple stakeholders. Further, the process anticipates the development of partnerships among these stakeholders in designing, implementing, and monitoring a three-year program to encourage and to support the building of trust and national cohesion through a participatory approach involving Guyanese at home and abroad, responding to the questions: “Who are we?” “How can we live together?” “What can we be?”

The action recommendations that emerged from the symposium fall into two categories: knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination.

Knowledge Creation

Research and Creative Support

- Develop a national research fund to support Guyana’s resource-strapped researchers and creative artists (Establish competitive state funding for new and inclusive social research)
- Develop a mechanism to support and to encourage increased researcher – to- researcher relationships.
- Ensure that national institutions, especially those associated with the study and dissemination of Guyanese heritage, demonstrate absorptive capacity.
- Engage older Guyanese (at home and in the diaspora) in a process for

collecting, storing, and making accessible Guyana’s memory;

- Establish formal, non-formal, and informal education initiatives to support the study of Guyanese religiosity and other themes that will expand appreciation of the nation’s collective history.

Rehabilitation

- Continue efforts to stabilize and ultimately digitize that nation’s audio assets held in various national depositories, especially given that most of the nation’s film heritage is lost either because of flooding, neglect, or deliberate destruction
- Continue to promote the reinvigoration of masquerade
- Initiate support for the study and rehabilitation of Taan singing

Content Creation

- Protect intellectual property
- Make accessible to Guyanese, on multiple media platforms, content about the nature and scope of Guyana’s geography and their responsibilities as the future custodians;
- Make accessible to the current generation, on multiple media platforms, fact-based content related to the common collective history of Guyanese. Specific recommendations included:
 - A series of documentaries

- A series of radio programs
- New performing arts works, including musicals.
- A Virtual Museum of Guyanese Heritage.
- Production of compilations of the multiple genres of music created by Guyanese, with proper respect for intellectual property
- Make accessible to the current generation of Guyanese at home or in diaspora the meanings of the various cultural symbols associated with multi-ethnic Guyana.
- Encourage inter-ethnic celebrations of national festivals. The example of the Diwali celebrations that take place in Buxton Village is offered as a model that contributes to understanding—an important ingredient in constructing a tolerant and equitable society;
- Encourage individual creative activities that will give Guyanese insights on their sense of self and how “place” shaped that component of their identity.

Knowledge Dissemination

Optimizing and harmonizing the communication infrastructure to:

- Ensure the development and maintenance of infrastructure to sustain this global Guyana conversation is developed and maintained. Specifically, the Government of Guyana must establish or accelerate the infrastructure to support:
 - National dialogue through the integration and harmonization of recent investments (Learning Channel, fiber optic cables, and “One laptop per Family) into a transparent national communication infrastructure
 - Participation in the globalized cultural industries, especially in narrative film making, television program production, and music
 - Construction of a virtual Museum of Guyanese Heritage

It is hoped that this white paper will stimulate further conversations among global Guyanese and that additional ideas and initiatives will emerge.

Chapter 10

“We Bridgin’ ...”

Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc.: Next Steps—2014–2016

Implications for GCA

The 2013 symposium challenges the flagship events of GCA’s Guyana Folk Festival to over the years leading up to 2016, to deepen, expand, and sustain the exploration and celebration of Guyana’s common collective history, the commonalities of Guyana’s multi-ethnic heritage, and contemporary creativity as a contribution to building trust and national cohesion in Guyana.

Actions Taken So Far

Since the October 2013 symposium, GCA has adopted the theme “We bridgin’ ...” to orient its preparations to commemorate in 2016, Guyana’s 50th anniversary of political independence and the association’s 15th anniversary. Over these upcoming years GCA will, through its regular Folk Festival season and other special programs, build a number of metaphorical bridges, including bridges to:

- Support inter-generational dialogue
- Encourage the collection and access of the collective wisdom
- Common collective history
- Mobilize support for researchers, especially works that contribute to evidence-based history
- Mobilize support and provide opportunities for global Guyanese artists, in all fields of creative expression, to showcase works that promotes visions of what we can be
- Begin conversations and create opportunities to design strategies to explore how we can live together
- Encourage thinking on more inclusive and participatory practices of governance
- Help to visualize what we can become