

MA THESIS SUPERVISOR

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Subjects

Subject I: Transnational Entrepreneurship within Religious Communities in Belize

Traditional Farmers or Modern Businessmen?

Religious differentiation and Entrepreneurship in Mennonite Communities in Belize.

This research addresses the religious and entrepreneurial differentiation within Mennonite communities in Belize, Central America. In spite of the fact that most Mennonites live more or less on the edge of society, they still have been able to establish a strong and stable economic position within Belize. The different communities show a clear variation when it comes to social as well as economic activities. Since the first Mennonite migration from Mexico to Belize in 1958, they have developed a more differentiated economical system including commercial agriculture and agribusiness. The Mennonites maintain a remarkable transnational network, which consists of Mennonite communities and organizations in countries like Canada, the United States of America, and Mexico. These networks introduce innovations on different levels: from improved machinery to religious and social changes. The influences from Mennonites outside Belize on the social-economic system of the Mennonites in Belize, along with the developments within the community, will be the main focus of this research.

Key words

Mennonites, religion, entrepreneurship, agriculture, differentiation, collective identity.

Readings

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- Carel Roessingh & Tanja Plasil (2006) From Collective Body to Individual Mind: Changes in Leadership and attitudes in an Old Colony Mennonite Community in Northern Belize. In: *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 24, 57-74. ISSN 0824-5053
- Tanja Plasil & Carel Roessingh (2006) Food and Community – The Role of Sharing a Meal Among the Mennonite of Shipyard, Belize. In: *Belizean Studies* 28 (1), 42-56. ISSN 0230-6831
- Carel Roessingh (2007) Mennonite Communities in Belize. In: *International Journal of Business and Globalization* 1 (1), 107-124. ISSN (online) 1753-3635/ ISSN (print) 1753-3627

- Carel Roessingh & Linda Mol (2008) Working Ladies: Mennonite women in the enterprises of Spanish Lookout, Belize. In: *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business* (Forthcoming)

Subject II: Entrepreneurship, cultural change and tourism

Small Entrepreneurs and Culture Change: Tourism in the Caribbean Basin.

This research focuses on the way small entrepreneurs in the tourism industry in the Caribbean Basin try to cope with contextual changes caused by the development of (mass) tourism. These entrepreneurs struggle with all sorts of problems, mainly resulting from the dominance of the large, multinational, all-inclusive resorts in the tourism industry. With the exploration of new tourist destinations in the Caribbean basin in the early 1980s, the local entrepreneurs were hoping to obtain a substantial part of the income-growth derived from this new industry. This caused many locals to shift from their previous jobs to professions in the tourism industry. Nearly 30 years later, most of them are disappointed with the results, but because of the region's dependence on tourism they feel they have no way out. The cases in the Caribbean Basin are used to further explore the impact of tourism on the culture and identity of the small entrepreneurs.

Key words

- Cultural change;
- Shifting identities;
- Small entrepreneurs; &
- Tourism industry.

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