CROSS-BORDER FILM PRODUCTION: THE NEOLIBERAL RECOLONIZATION OF AN EXOTIC ISLAND BY HOLLYWOOD PIRATES

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This qualitative study explores the relationship between Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Hollywood’s cross-border film productions by examining the strategies that these islands use to facilitate the filming of big-budget foreign films within their borders. The dissertation also analyzes the inherent implications of transnational film production practices from the perspective of the host location and reviews extant theories of international film production to explore whether they adequately explain the peculiar dynamics and experiences of filmmaking in SIDS countries by heavily financed, non-resident film producers.

The study blends relevant strands of political economy of media and critical cultural studies to construct a customized theoretical backbone. From this critical standpoint, it engages theories of globalization, development, cultural industries, post-colonialism, and policymaking to analyze the interaction between SIDS nations and international satellite film productions. Adopting a grounded theory methodological framework, it uses interviewees, focus groups, participant observation and document analysis to collect data from the island of Dominica in the Caribbean, which hosted two films in Disney’s Pirates of the Caribbean franchise.

The study found that these foreign film producers received unprecedented levels of concessions and amassed huge savings from their ability to manipulate governmental authorities and local elites and exploit the weak institutional capacity of the state and its poor systems of accountability. It also revealed the relative incapacity of the host location
to extend the inherent benefits of accommodating these big-budget film products from temporary economic activities to more lasting and sustainable development projects.
This dissertation is dedicated to the loving memory of my mother, Beta Nada Watty Frampton, who in such a short time so diligently taught my brother and me the importance of education and critical thinking, but who never lived to glow from any of our academic accomplishments. This one is for you, Mammy!
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

Public authorities in every country on every continent, many vigorously and few parsimoniously, are prostrating at the feet of Hollywood producers and studio executives for a share of the profitable international film business. The practice of sovereign bodies offering subsidies to Hollywood is not new or even previously undiscovered. For long, media scholars have argued convincingly that Hollywood owes much of its unmatched dominance of the domestic and global film industries to decades of tax credit schemes, unprecedented U.S. Government representation and financial support, discriminatory copyright laws and regulations, oligopolistic manipulation of all the modes of production, and even specific federal aid programs like the Informational Media Guaranty Program (Miller et al., 2005). What appear to be unprecedented in this current era of Hollywood hand-outs are the ubiquity, scale, depth, and frequency of the assistance that governments splurge to attract Hollywood film productions to their jurisdictions, an almost axial turn from Hollywood producers being the pursuers to becoming the pursued.

Throughout the past two decades, national and regional public authorities have rationalized the potential of Hollywood’s location values to spur local economic development, mainly through the tourism and service industries (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006). They continue to restructure their economic development policies and plans to compete for Hollywood’s business (Monitor Company, 1999). The intensifying global competition to secure offshore film productions has produced a significant increase in the number of film commissions worldwide, since these are the bodies frequently emboldened with the responsibilities for marketing and managing local film incentives program and other efforts by host locations to secure foreign film
productions (Weinstein & Clower, 2000).

Although varied and nuanced in their details, these models of film incentives to Hollywood have some common characteristics with some new features in labor, location, financing, and regulation. Usually, they include some form of tax credits or refunds, emphasize local labor as a core component, and involve foreign production companies partnering with resident private businesses. Governmental regulation and technical assistance frequently provide these film productions with privileged access to public services and infrastructure for little or no charge, but at significant cost to taxpayers (Mayer & Goldman, 2010).

The film industry in the U.S. frames this now commonplace exodus of Hollywood productions away from the United States as a “runaway” phenomenon (Monitor Company, 1999, p.3). The Motion Picture Association of America has distinguished two types of runaways: the creative runaways, whose characteristics inherently feature a specific foreign location; and economic runaways, whose primary motive for migration is cost reduction (Monitor Company, 1999). Between 2000 and 2006, runaway productions stripped the US Economy of 47,000 jobs, each year hemorrhaging an estimated $23 billion from the domestic economy (Katz, 2006). These are not simply productions that are intended for international audiences: these films are also an integral part of Hollywood's business model, which acknowledges the American public as the prime consumer. The Center for Entertainment Data and Research noted that runaway productions accounted for 53% of the revenue of domestic theatrical releases (Katz, 2006, p.7).

Background of the Study

Film production assistance programs targeted at attracting business from international film and digital media producers, conglomerates, and multinational corporations are now a
popular, if not an institutionalized strategy by local, regional, and national governments to stimulate economic growth and development (Wasko and Erickson, 2008). Public authorities in most countries cultivate public policy instruments in the service of Hollywood producers, including tax rebates, tax credits, tax incentives, loans, exemptions for legislative and regulatory oversight, privileged access to public places, and unmitigated access to public facilities and utilities (Goldsmith and O’Regan, 2008). The intensifying global competition to secure these productions has produced a significant increase in the number of film commissions and unprecedented gratuitous overtures to Hollywood producers. An evident indication of the scale of this new phenomenon is the spike in the number of institutions worldwide established to lure Hollywood productions to specific territories.

As Hollywood production companies revved up the dismantling of the traditional geographic boundaries of their on-location film and television productions, they began extensively requesting favored regulations, rules, processes, and incentives in these newly targeted territories, motivating existing film commissions to organize into an international representative body. The Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) founded in 1975 is the global industry representative for film commissions and offices. AFCI helps facilitate the common goal of all its members to lure filmmakers and videographers to their locations by providing attractive services that are difficult for their target clients to refuse. AFCI members are mostly state or government entities who not only market their destinations, but also assist in negotiating, monitoring, and facilitating local regulations, laws and procedures to significantly reduce bureaucracies, bottlenecks, and challenges for foreign film producers. Public and private authorities burden them with the responsibilities of marketing locations and managing national, regional, and local relationships with Hollywood interests (Weinstein and Clower, 2000). Over
the past 20 years, the AFCI has had a steady inflow of new members at a rate of 10 to 15 each year (Hudson and Wing Sun Tung, 2010). AFCI declares a current membership of 300 institutions from 30 countries in every continent (Association of Film Commissioners International, 2012).

Throughout the past two decades, public authorities have tendentiously based their support for Hollywood on its potential to spur local economic development, mainly through the tourism and service industries (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006). Their argument centers on the anticipated effects of spin-offs from the high expenditures of Hollywood productions, which appear increasingly attractive. A decade ago, the cost to make a typical Hollywood film was estimated at $60 million (Weinraub, 1997). In 2007, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) reported that its members spent an average of $100 million on bringing a film to the market (MPAA, 2007). More conservatively, an academic study conducted by Walls & McKenzie (2012) revealed the average cost of 2000 Hollywood films produced between 1997 and 2007 and exhibited in 7 countries to be $41 million. Hollywood pundits estimate current figures to be much higher, noting that films distributed, but not always produced, by major Hollywood studios cost an average of a little over $139 million, with the cost of the top 20 most expensive films totaling just over $4.5 billion (“Answer,” 2012).

In the current neoliberal system, there is hardly a more compelling punch line for publicly elected officials than one pregnant with data promising jobs, especially when the associative film budgets argue the potential for eye-popping spending. The Hollywood industry is responsible for 2.5 million private sector jobs in the U.S., 256,000 of which register as direct employment in the production, marketing, and distribution of television and film products and services (Cieply, 2009). According to the MPAA, its U.S. wage bill also includes 478,000
workers in related services, such as online, theatrical, and cable services (Cieply, 2009).

Plausibly, what may make Hollywood even more attractive to local economies as a big-spending investor is the multiplier effect of its production activities that provided 1.7 million indirect jobs in the U.S. in 2009, many of which were non-industry related (MPAA, 2009).

That Hollywood is liquid is no secret. Hollywood benefited tremendously from the economic boom of the mid-2000s, with Wall Street investors pumping as much as $16 billion into film productions (Zeidler, 2009). The industry has surplus money, which it is spending on its own regeneration (Epstein, 2005). According to Endicott (2000), grouping the major film studios into a single brand revealed the size of their 1999 advertising expenditure to be US$2.55 billion, only behind the automotive and retail sectors. In 2009, Hollywood broke box office revenue records, earning $10 billion domestically and $30 billion internationally (Contrino, 2011). That year, revenue for the U.S. film production and distribution industry, including copyrights, reached $58 billion; notably, in 2009, Hollywood accounted for 84% of U.S. music and film total revenues (“The creative media industry in the United States,” 2012). With 20,620 companies raking in $95.4 billion in revenues in 2010, the U.S. film and recorded music industry dominated the global entertainment industry. Consequently, public authorities vigorously work on restructuring their economic development policies and regulations to compete for Hollywood dollars (Monitor Company, 1999). Clearly, Hollywood’s track-record of stimulating economic activity and its unrivaled potential to enhance destination marketing are in demand domestically and internationally.
Statement of the Problem

Nick Herd (2004) explains that an “incentives game” aptly characterizes the contemporary obsession of public policymakers who doggedly seek Hollywood productions (p. 43). Worldwide, governmental and private entities bandy offers with deep logistical and financial implications for cross-border film productions, certain to catch the attention of big-budget filmmakers and producers, forging new rules and practices that are increasingly becoming no longer distinct and prospective but normative and required. Policies advocating financial incentives to Hollywood fall within the larger, conventional neoliberal tenet touting government subsidies for businesses as an economic growth and employment creation strategy. Hozic (2001 observed, “The crucial paradox of the intense competition between states and localities for investment dollars is that their attempts to differentiate themselves from each other are ultimately making them more similar” (p. 120)

Governments in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), desperate to explore new economic strategies for growing their economies, are increasingly looking towards the global entertainment industry as a viable option. PricewaterhouseCoopers projected the value of business in the global entertainment industry in 2012, which includes film, music, and multimedia, at US$ 1.4 trillion (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011). Lewis (2012), a Bahamian media commentator, aptly reflected the enthusiasm in the Caribbean when in response to the PricewaterhouseCoopers report he wrote, “That’s a lot of money!”

Film incentive programs are quickly becoming one of the most common foreign investment strategies in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which is made up predominantly of SIDS. These programs fuel intense competition among islands in the region (Nurse et al., 2009; Ysaguirre, 2012). One of the major problems is that these Small Island
Developing States are pursuing concessions to big-budget film productions without independently researching the implications and consequences of adopting this economy strategy. While many U.S. States and developed countries are scaling back on their film incentive programs, most of the islands in the Caribbean are gearing up to develop attractive packages to lure Hollywood productions to their shores.

**Purpose of the Study**

This research project investigates the penetration of globalization and the neoliberal global economy into Small Island Developing States (SIDS) through the production of Hollywood films on satellite production locations. The study also contributes data that can potentially assist in understanding the implications of SIDS nations attracting and hosting big-budget, cross-border film productions. Nurse et al. (2009) have declared that the Caribbean’s cultural industry is in dire need of research projects that use empirical data and analyses to guide policies and debates with the potential to impact decisions by public authorities. This study partly responds to this call, but also embraces a wider agenda, that of exploring theories that appropriately explain major elements of cross-border film production in small, economically-challenged nation-states.

These types of research projects ought to not only analyze the economic benefits of artistic and cultural spaces, but should also highlight the usefulness of these spaces as cultural and social development models. A multi-perspective and multi-dimensional approach to researching these film productions are important, because economic matrices, which are the conventional preference for studies of such projects, frequently ignore many developmental factors pointing to the overall improvement in the welfare of people in host countries. The point
is that isolated economic measurements often fall short of placing history and context at the heart of analyses of human and social phenomenon, which political economists and many cultural studies scholars believe should form the crux of any developmental paradigm.

Rationale

The political and economic debates surrounding the integrity and efficacy of film incentive programs have inspired extensive academic and industry research examining the role of foreign film productions in the development of local economies (Coe, 2001; Turok, 2003; Weinstein and Clower, 2000). Surprisingly, most of these studies have excluded analyses of the strategies of film commissions and the grassroots perspectives of developing countries that are the major proponents and architects of film incentives and film tax credits (Hudson & Wing Sun Tung, 2010). The Caribbean region is an ideal site for such studies; hence, the focus of this dissertation research.

This research project also offers insights into the ways in which Small Island Developing States (SIDS) interact with transnational media in an attempt to remedy their disadvantageous position in the global political economy. Any approach to the development of a film policy for the Caribbean that does not recognize and analyze the structures of global neoliberalism, which regulate power relations between Caribbean nations and developing countries and their associative industries and corporations, is incomplete. These structures and relationships are crucial for understanding the nature and characteristics of international trade negotiations, such as film tax incentive programs. No other country is as aggressive as the United States in facilitating the global operation and expansion of its constitutive conglomerates through treaties, free trade agreements, loans, and direct investment (Miller et al., 2005).
Even the Motion Picture Association of America (2007) admits that U.S. governmental representation on trade and foreign affairs is more powerful than direct subsidies in nurturing the global dominance of the U.S. film industry. For the U.S. Government and the MPAA, film culture belongs to free-market forces (Jin, 2011). The United States has used its control over global political and economic systems to normalize this neoliberal thesis, while simultaneously nurturing one of the most protected domestic film markets in the world. This convenient logic has established an oligopolistic global film industry controlled by a few transnational firms, most with strong U.S. roots and connections, which exploit economies of scale and scope. They engage in practices and create systems that remain relatively immune from national legislative and policy oversight (Jin, 2011).

Predominantly, governments around the world have approached film policy as an instrument for facilitating commerce and enterprise (Goldsmith & O’Regan, 2008). Most countries that rely on the hosting of international film productions for economic growth tend to make related policy decisions based on political expediency and short-term economic indicators rather than in support of sustainable development (Goldsmith & O’Regan, 2008). Goldsmith & O’Regan (2008) identify two major characteristics of modern film policy: it embraces the peculiarities of production in a particular place and it addresses modes of configuring a project’s intellectual property in a given place. No longer is film policy simply about accommodating stories and projects that preserve local intellectual property, but more frequently it allows for the mobility of a production into multiple possible localities.

Public policymakers who are ignorant of these unique characteristics of contemporary film production, such as Hollywood’s disinterest in developing local talent and its fleeting interest in locations, leave taxpayers whom they represent vulnerable to a number of fallacies
about investing in the international film industry. These decisions are often costly, even when they are reversible. The balance is delicate, because while production infrastructure and financial incentives are a staple of the modern film location, they are not guarantees of business, furthermore profitability. While a skilled workforce remains a prerequisite for host countries, employment options for these workers are bleak, even when big-budget films arrive (Goldsmith & O’Regan, 2008).

My focus on Small Island Developing States is important, not only because international media studies often neglect attention to these territories, but, more importantly, because it holds the potential for a counter-narrative to normative theories of international political economy of media. Within the expanding scope and influence of globalizing forces, it is imperative that international media scholars remain open to multiple interpretations and perspectives of transnational and cross-boarder interactions. Only by doing so will they appreciate the peculiarities and vagaries of local specificity and the unique historical identities and influences of these locales. In this study, I also present a critique of the theories of international film production that argues for robust and progressive local media policy frameworks as a counter-thrust to neoliberalism and media imperialism.

I examine cross-border film production from the perspective of developing countries in order to contribute to a more balanced and nuanced conversation of the role and effectiveness of film policies in national development within the paradoxical context of globalization. Such a focus is not only important but necessary for assisting in averting cross-border conflict and for more realistically assessing national development goals amidst the overarching threats of superpower interests and transnational corporate excesses. If anything, the First and Second World Wars have indicated that political and economic impositions by elites in powerful nations
can potentially lead to widespread global catastrophe.

The Masstricht Treaty established in 1992 offered a similar reminder that imperialist agendas inevitably lead to cultural-corporate conflict. Spearheaded by some of the most powerful European nations, plans drawn up at Masstricht proposed a single currency, abolition of internal borders, and the integration of foreign and defense policies of countries in Europe; ultimately, they pointed to the formation of a federated Europe (Baun, 1995). Battles over the treaty were inadvertently an ideological fight between protectionism and neoliberalism, between corporatization and workers rights, between imperialist agendas and cultural and political diversity (Baun, 1995; Vamvakas, 2010).

Cognizant of these tensions, I adopt a perspective in this study that focuses on the interlocking tensions between developed and developing nations and their distressingly asymmetrical relationship. Developmental scholars from SIDS are perennially concerned about the implications of this increasing imbalance. I am no different. As a critical media scholar from a small developing country, I am continually introspective about tensions between praxis and careerism in my academic work. Even when I empathize and partner with colleagues from the developed world who proselytize democratic cultural studies, liberal theories, and arcane media analyses, I am acutely aware that their perspectives so often flirt with bourgeoisification and elitism, betraying any grassroots agency. My experiences as a journalist, development worker, and policy advocate in the Caribbean make me keenly aware of the counterproductivity of patronizing research projects. I am perennially conscious of the desperate need for useful media-related research in these countries that engages a bottom-up perspective and politics.
Research Questions

As a student of political economy and cultural studies from a small island, I am almost impulsively driven to deconstruct imperialist ideologies and economic theories that have dominated too much of international political economy literature, dogmas forever rooted in the accumulation of capital, prioritization of competition, delineation of power hierarchies, regeneration of conflict, and the valuation of difference. Critical media scholars are not only keenly aware of both the subliminal and overt implications of this politics of dominance; they are acutely troubled by it. No wonder the critical paradigm is the preferred approach to inquiry for scholars from the developing world. Within this tradition, I am particularly driven by an axiological sensitivity to multiple readings and an unwavering commitment to the exploration of subterranean levels of societal power, particularly when they implicate the media (Klaehn, 2010). I am fascinated by systemic validations of the rights and wrongs of the global political economy and engage media theories that promise legitimate blueprints for critiquing them.

Closely entwined with my preoccupation with media power relations is my commitment to praxis, what Habermas (1987) argues involves sociological inquiries into struggles that improve humanity. While some advocate the separation of politics from inquiry (Hammersley, 1992), I hold that a political agenda is both unavoidable and necessary in useful research. Indeed, politics and inquiry are interconnected and inseparable (Creswell, 2003).

In line with my intellectual philosophy, I chose a critical political economy approach to this project that leans adequately on cultural studies (Meehan et al., 1993). Not only is this approach inclusive, it rejects the essentialist framing of scholarship, embracing varied viewpoints, interests, and foci (Babe, 2003; Mosco, 2009). The foundations of the political economic approach to communication while critical are also realistic. Political economy is
apprehensive about theories that are not rooted in realities of power relations, although it does not blindly discount their contributions to knowledge creation.

Contemporary scholars of political economy of media ought to extend current approaches that can effectively address not only significant reconfigurations in the field, but also unprecedented transformations of societies at all levels. This is why I augment my political economy framework with theories and lessons from cultural studies: their marriage creates a template for acquiring a deeper understanding of the relationships between economics, politics, and lived experiences (Murdock, 1997; Murdock & Golding, 1992). I adopt this approach in order to capture the wide-ranging expressions of economic and political power in the disruption and reorganization of the institutional hierarchies of states and markets, corporations and governments, and place and space.

In this project, I use a customized framework that interrogates these institutional and systemic processes and interactions at deep levels and on wide scales. Arguably, to remain relevant in the globalized age, scholars of both political economy and cultural studies ought to revisit traditional paradigmatic boundaries, many artificially erected, to explore possibilities for integration that do not necessarily erode their substantive bases, but rather establish new gangplanks for sailing with the unprecedented challenges and experiences of contemporary society.

From this perspective, I ask questions that extend political economy theories beyond explorations of class and the dialectics of the powerful and the powerless. Convinced that meaningful political economic inquiries are inseparable from struggles for social equity and justice, I do not only engage marginal perspectives in this study, but also prioritize them. My study employs this strategy as a means of capturing more subterranean articulations of economic
and political power behind the systems, structures, and human interactions of cross-border film productions.

Based on these points of departure, I have formulated the following research questions for this study:

RQ1: How do Small Island Developing States facilitate the production of Hollywood films within their borders?

RQ2: What are the political, economic, and cultural implications of Small Island Developing States hosting the production of Hollywood films within their borders?

RQ3: How do the realities of on-location shooting by foreign film productions in Small Island Developing States fit extant theories of cross-border film production?

I select these research questions because such inquiries are necessary in order for extending understanding of the role of media and cultural policy in economic and developmental programs within the unfolding challenges of globalization and neoliberalism. Using this framework, I take a critical view at the impacts of global neoliberal policies and practices on national culture and development (Curran & Park, 2000).

Significance of the Study

Film incentive programs are quickly becoming one of the most common foreign investment strategies in the Caribbean, fueling intense competition among islands in the region. Although varied in their details, these models of economic incentives to foreign film producers have some common characteristics that promote competitive advantages in labor, location aesthetics, public financing, and regulation. Usually, they feature some form of tax credits or refunds, emphasize local labor as a core component, and involve foreign production companies’
partnerships with resident private businesses, which government regulation and technical support facilitate even to the point of frequently providing them privileged access to certain public services and infrastructure for little or no charge (Mayer & Goldman, 2010).

Many studies look at the marketing and invitation of Hollywood, few look at the hosting of Hollywood, and non look at SIDS. My study constitutes a starting point from which to understand how the Caribbean grouping of Small Island Developing States establishes and manages its relationships and interactions with foreign film producers and executives. From this research, I offer new insights to policymakers in Small Island Developing States who develop and manage film incentive programs in areas before unquestioned. I also provide an alternative narrative to the Eurocentric perspective that privileges Hollywood’s interests in international or cross-border film productions, one that reassesses the usefulness of previous theories of global film production strategies in explaining the realities and experiences of SIDS.

Understanding these inequitable power interactions is important for gaining clearer answers to crucial questions that address whether or not policies, regulations and activities in the Caribbean involving foreign productions compromise the welfare and development of the people of the region, even going as far as hinting at potential consequences in either direction. Through this study, I also provide original perspectives on ways in which transnational media corporations attend to their social responsibilities in the developing world and the ensuing risks to global order and harmony.

Currently, economic rationality dominates the understanding of international film production, but a political economic framework fed by critical media analyses can possibly offer a more comprehensive approach to examining the transnational practice of big-budget filmmaking. Additionally, current theories of cross-border film productions prove somewhat
inadequate to explain some of the unique characteristics of this activity in SIDS: in this research, I offer a springboard from which to engage some of these peculiarities.

The unique experiences of the Caribbean with foreign film productions bring into sharper focus distinctions between two types of runaway productions: the creative runaways, whose characteristics inherently demand a specific foreign location; and economic runaways, whose primary motive for migration is cost reduction (Monitor Company, 1999, p.3). Insights into how these two different categories of runaways affect the Caribbean successes and failures with foreign film productions are beneficial to media and cultural studies. In this project, I contribute to the ongoing debate and theorizations by highlighting some significant distinctions. Research into this area is also of urgent and paramount importance because conventional film-incentive programs in the Caribbean, along with their requisite policies, seem tentative if not uncertain about where the region fits into the larger picture of a globalized film industry.

In this research, I explore ways in which film policy in the Caribbean follows the binaries of the commercial versus the developmental and the market versus the public sphere, underscoring the circumstances under which policymakers give priority to generating revenue and those under which they preserve economic, political, and cultural sovereignty as an insurance for the wellbeing of the Caribbean people. Furthermore, the study provides important analyses into ways in which cross-border film productions generate revenue for host countries and how, if at all, they subjugate the social, political, cultural, and economic agencies of the people of these territories.
Definition of Terms

The definition of Hollywood that I use in this study is the name commonly given to the mainstream film industry in the United States. My usage relies on the understanding of the American film industry not primarily geographical, but spatial (Bordwell et al., 1985; Christopherson and Storper, 1986; Storper and Christopherson 1987).

By cross-border productions, I mean productions that occur in non-traditional production locations, both outside and within countries, involving media labor, local industries, and space and place (Wasko & Erickson, 2008).

My use of political economy in this study follows Mosco's (2009) definition, which describes it as "the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communications resources” (p. 18).

In this study, I borrow Massey's (1994) definition of place as social relations "which have over time been constructed, laid down, interacted with one another, decayed, and renewed. Some of these relations will be, as it were, contained within the place; others will stretch beyond it, tying any particular locale into wider relations and processes in which other places are implicated too” (p. 120).

I rely on Massey's (2005) triadic propositions of space as "the product of interrelations," the sphere in which multiple and heterogeneous existences reside and the sphere of relations continually under construction (p. 9).

In this study, I adopt a Gramscian concept of civil society, the semi autonomous area of the state comprising of institutions and practices that are in constant tension with the state (Gramsci, 1971). The aspect of the state consisting of non-governmental social actors that
mediate the spaces of private and public, state and market, and the particular and universal (Beasley-Murray, 2010, p.69).

I understand global or globalization to mean the “cultural integration and disintegration processes which take place not only on an inter-state lee but processes which transcend the state-society unit and can therefore be held to occur on a transnational or transsocietal level” (Featherstone, 1990, p.1). Although I concede that in certain situations the term transnational may be a more appropriate label for the type of activities and processes characterizing international film production than the concept of global, which may seem too universalizing in certain cases (Hannerz, 1996), I use the two terms interchangeably, aware that they both hint at different levels of intensity and agency of state intervention (Chalaby, 2005). I employ this editorial judgment only in cases where such nuanced distinctions may lead to more confusion than clarity, since international film production occurs simultaneously on global and transactional levels.

I use the term global financial system to mean the system of global economic transactions, whose main purpose is the distribution of capital to facilitate economic production (Almiron, 2010).

By financialization, I mean "the increasing role of financial motives, financial markets, financial actors and financial institutions in the operation of the domestic and international economies’ (Epstein, 2005)

My use of the term imperialism derives from Said’s (1993) definition, which describes it as a practice, theory, and attitude of a powerful metropolis in ruling foreign territories.

By culture, I mean a combative identity that facilitates the engagement and integration of politics and ideology. A theatre of dialectics that bring different causes into confrontation with
each other (Said, 1993).

I understand *neoliberalism* to be a system and an institutional political-economic model that promote maximizing the rights and freedoms of entrepreneurs through “private property rights, individual liberty, free markets and free trade” (Harvey, 2006).

In this project, I mobilize the modern concept of *Pax Americana*, which explains the global military and economic dominance and influence of the United States, expressed both directly and indirectly through its leveraging of finance and diplomacy to control international institutions, structures and processes (Louw, 2010).

I rely on Hall’s (1996) definition of *post-colonialism* as “a general process of decolonization which, like colonization itself, has marked the colonizing societies as powerfully as it has the colonized (of course, in different ways)” (p.246).

I use the term *soft power* as Nye (2004) conceptualized it, referring to the ability of an entity of power to use enticement and cooption instead of coercion, force, or financial inducements to persuade others.

I understand *public policies* to mean institutional mechanisms involving the management of taxes, administrative practices, and decision making processes executed to address problems facing people in a society (Birkland, 2005; Smith, 2005).

I refer to *business model* to mean the characteristics, structures, and foundations of the activities of profit-oriented firms, organizations, and institutions that facilitate commerce (Picard, 1989).

In this research project, I use the term *Small Island Developing States (SIDS)* to refer to the group of developing countries identified by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 1992, as
sharing a distinctively common set of social, economic and environmental challenges and insecurities (UN-OHRLLS, 2013).

Nature of the Study

I use political economy alongside strands of cultural studies as the theoretical backbone of this study, because this blend offers an effective approach to understanding cultural industries, particularly Hollywood. I welcome Wasko’s (2003) recommendation to scholars to use the political economy paradigm as the foundation for studying the practices of media corporations, because of its capacity to explore complex discourses on the pressures intersecting their corporate practices and public responsibilities. The political economy approach leads to a better understanding of the subtleties of the Hollywood’s economic logic, its connections and interdependence with political power brokers, and its positioning within the American and global capitalist systems. Few other approaches are as useful as the political economy perspective in capturing the varied ways in which Hollywood dominates global cultural industries though its production, distribution, and exhibition processes and apparatuses (Miller et al., 2005).

Throughout this study, I employ a qualitative research methodology, targeting stakeholders of film production activity on the island of Dominica in the Eastern Caribbean. Having hosted a number of high-profile film projects, including the on-location filming of two films one of the world’s most successful film franchises, Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest, the 9th highest box office earner, and Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End, which recorded the 15th highest box office receipt thus far (“Worldwide Grosses,” 2013), Dominica surfaces as a suitable site for such a study. As a Dominican native who has participated in international film production on the island, I have directly witnessed some of the more
conspicuous articulations of big-budget foreign film productions in a small nation-state.

From a pragmatic standpoint, the choice of Dominica is also important because of the inherently logistical challenges of such a research project. Choosing the island as a data collection point allows me the opportunity to leverage my experiential, professional, and cultural connections to maximize the depth and richness of the study. Research participants include private and public policy makers, tourism and service industry personnel, and ordinary citizens directly impacted by foreign film production on the island. In this research project, I use the following data collection instruments: semi-structured interviews acquired mainly through snowballing, focus groups with key stakeholders, public and industry documents from local departments, organizations, and institutions. Finally, I adopt an iterative analytical strategy, using grounded-theory as my method of analysis.

Assumptions and Limitations

I pursue this project under a number of tentative assumptions: Most glaringly, I assume that extant theories offer a gateway from which to interpret cross-border film productions. Also, I believe that public authorities that host international film productions as an economic activity also approach them as part of a wider developmental objective. I appreciate this to be a particularly reasonable assumption for Small Island Developing States that remain desperate for sustainable development models. Further, I assume that these countries are interested in academic research that explores different components of this economic activity, especially when little data are available. Closely related to this assumption is my expectation that policymakers and stakeholders in these territories have a vested interest in studies of this kind.

This study has limitations. First, while it theorizes on Small Island Developing States,
comprising of states from disparate cultures and regions, it collects data from only one such member, thus stretching its abstraction to levels that may possible present some unexplainable inconsistencies or anomalies. The sample size, extracted from the island of Dominica, though sufficient for addressing the research questions, relies on a tiny representation of Small Island Developing States. While abstraction to other SIDS is possible to reasonable degrees, in many cases, further research will be required to clarify and develop these connections.

Second, this study had a relatively short timeline for completion, which invariably may have influenced the depth of data collection and analysis. Additionally, the study is conducted within the framework of a dissertation project, a format that inadvertently places particular institutional requirements on the project that may present unavoidable limitations.

Another noteworthy limitation is the reliance on archival information from a small developing country with inadequate resources, an incoherent framework, and insufficient capacity to effectively collate and preserve public documents. Related to this particular challenge is the prevalence of unclear rules, guidelines, and policies on accessing and using these documents. Such an environment leaves the researcher susceptible to whimsical and temperamental gatekeepers, who may impact the number and quality of documents examined.

The research depends heavily on self-reported data, which is difficult to confirm independently; therefore, I take a significant portion of the data that I collect on face value (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Self-reported data present the inherent risks of data distortion or bias caused by a number of factors, most notably bad memory, exaggeration, deception, attribution or confusion over objectives of the interview (McCrank, 2002).

Additionally, by focusing on Hollywood, the study limits its capacity to explain other phenomena in the wider cross-border film production industry and how they function to nurture
market growth and expansion, for such business activities are not only the domain of large companies, multinational corporations, or American media. A comprehensive examination of the multiple strategies and ambitions of global cross-border film productions ought to be more inclusive (Goldsmith & O’Regan, 2008). Finally, although the sparse literature on my research subject provides an important opening for this study, it also inadvertently poses serious theoretical challenges for it. Developing a new typology for the project demands a greater attention to levels of abstraction or theorization that are otherwise untested or underexplored.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter 1 introduces essential background information that contextualizes the study. It explains the problem under inquiry and the significance of the approach that I take. A clear rational and scope also follow that help define the research questions. In this chapter, I also disclose the assumptions and limitations undergirding my research perspective, while presenting operational definitions of important terms and concepts.

Chapter 2 peruses the relevant literature and offers a theoretical foundation for developing the study. While it explores primarily communication and media literature, it also relies on and borrows from theoretical constructions in other fields influencing political economy research.

Chapter 3 lays out a detailed layout of the research design, offering insights into my ontological, epistemological, and methodological principles and preferences. Not only does it give an overview of my theoretical framework, but it also provides a guide to the research design strategy. It also outlines the data collection procedures, data collection protocols, and data analysis procedures. Finally, it explains some of the considerations and values insuring the
integrity of the entire research process.

Chapter 4 reports and analyzes the results.

Chapter 5 discusses the impact of the study on media and communication research, settles on some conclusions, and makes a few policy recommendations. With these final remarks, I also reflect on the implications of the study, providing a transition into recommendations for future research opportunities.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

To theorize on cross-border film productions in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), I explore a number of key theoretical themes, which I outline into the following categories: international political economy of media; post-colonialism, nation, place, and space; empire and imperialism; neoliberalism and globalization; Small Island Developing States; cross-border film production and the Hollywood business model; Hollywood runaways; and Caribbean policy on international film productions.

In the early stages of the development of political economic theory, scholars paid little attention to the media; however, conventional media research is replete with studies incorporating various aspects of the political economic tradition. Pertinent to this project, several studies have examined the role of political economy in the film industry (Epstein, 2012; Franklin, 2006; Klein, 2004; Miller et al., 2005; Wasko, 2003). They have developed a body of work that provides critical insights into the dynamics of cultural industries. More significantly, they have traced a clear relationship between economic power, political manipulation, and the production and consumption of film products.

To develop a theoretical construct, I examine concepts of post-colonialism, nationhood, place and space. I recall Thussu's (2000) advice to media scholars to privilege the historical context in evaluating developments in communication and media. Adopting a constructivist approach to this study, as outlined by Potter (1996), I reason that to understand the dynamics surrounding Hollywood's production activities in the Caribbean, I ought to negotiate the socio-historic roots shaping the relationship among the Caribbean, the global political economic system, and the American Empire. In order to accomplish this, I look at linkages between
colonialism, post-colonialism, and nationhood, interweaving them with concepts of place and space.

The question that Louw (2011) asks concerning whether analyses of the impact of American international exploits are more insightful when they prioritize the American global informal empire rather than when they emphasize overt anti-imperialist activities is instructive for this research. Such an approach seeks to understand the articulation of American power through multiple dimensions of imperialism, moving beyond the traditional focus on territorial conquest and domination and exploring less obvious traces of imperialistic processes and activities. At the least, it extends cultural and economic imperialism theses to a more sophisticated analytic plain. In this study, I do not presume that the efforts of developed countries, spearheaded by the United States, to promote global free trade, to fund socio-economic development programs in the developing world, or to propagate liberal-democratic institutions worldwide are predominantly altruistic. Rather, these agendas may point to a more complex system of statecraft that interlocks coercion and diplomacy to preserve empires.

The common ideology threading different strands of liberal theories that form the bedrock of neoliberalism and much of globalized activity is the belief that market-oriented policies and open trade approaches offer the best paths towards achieving national development. These theories are united in their promotion of private business and an unhindered market as the core of economic activity (Friedman, 2002). Friedmanesque economists also believe in the interdependence of national economies around the world, arguing that poorer countries benefit more than developed countries from these cross-border economic linkages (Cohn, 2010). They posit that most of the economic problems in the Less Developed Countries are due to poor domestic policies and mismanagement and not from dependency on the global economic system.
Debates continue in the international community on the validity of the SIDS classification and their vulnerability within the global neoliberal framework. For advocates of the current global economic system, these countries are unable to compete because of a lack of comparative advantage and due to their diseconomies of scale. They argue that it is not the inequality and unfairness of the international political economic system that is at fault, but the natural characteristics of these countries and their self-inflicted economic policies (Campling, 2006).

International political economists counter that SIDS share obvious economic disadvantage and difficulties. Although these scholars emphasize that smallness is not an intrinsic deterrent of economic growth, they conclude that these countries have small domestic markets, limited resources, low exports, attractive foreign trade regimes, and significant challenges with transport and communication that make them vulnerable in the global economic environment (Armstrong and Read, 2003). Read (2008) observes that SIDS nations with good economic performance usually show a balance of natural and human resources, economic infrastructure and effective governance.

The unflinching grip of the Hollywood business model on local, national and international politics and economics confirms the relevance of Mosco’s (2009) theory of commodification, spatialization and structuration, which explains the structures and functions of multinational media conglomerates and their role in reconfiguring economies and constructing the “transnationalization of political authority” (Mosco, 2008, p.108). Hardly any other part of the world typifies this more glaringly than the Caribbean region.

Mayer & Goldman (2010) have suggested that in their eagerness to realize the economic
benefits of hosting large film production projects, state and national governments worldwide have inadvertently bequeathed public authority and responsibility to Hollywood elites. Their observation dovetails McChesney’s (2008) expositions on the interconnections and conflicts between the ubiquity of the neoliberal model of media industries and sovereign democracy.

International Political Economy of Media

Political economy in the field of media and communication covers scholarship examining the way economics and politics influence media in local, national, regional, and global capitalist systems. Political economy is both a theory and method for investigating power connections and networks. Mosco (2009) views political economy as “the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources” (p. 2). As it relates to the study of media and communication, political economy examines the structures, resources, and processes used in producing knowledge, and the ways in which the networks of media industries, the political and economic environment, and to a lesser extent cultural spaces impact these relationships.

Perhaps the most attractive and compelling characteristic of the political economy approach to the study of media and communication is its inclusivity. The diverse backgrounds and perspectives of international scholars who rely on the framework are evidence of its eclectic appeal. These scholars, who invariably differ on multiple levels, established a community of scholarship inspired not only by their intellectual approach but by their endorsement of the need to integrate research with social activism (Mosco, 1996).

The epistemological foundations of the political economic approach to communication
while critical are also realistic. Political economy attends to abstract theorization with suspicion, but it does not discount its usefulness, nor does it necessarily consider empiricism always the ideal medium for generating knowledge. Within the political economy framework, ideographic and nomothetic approaches do not banter for superiority, rather they coexist, giving way to each other at appropriate junctures. The political economy of communication appreciates both approaches to knowledge acquisition, steering away from absolutism in either direction.

Mosco (2009) writes of political economy, “It declines to accept the position, prominent in some theories that only our ideas or only our observations, but not both are real” (p.156). The advantages of the political economy approach to studying media and communication illuminate through a concept that Mosco (2009) calls *decentering*. He explains *decentering* of the media as a process of considering the media’s communication systems as crucial components of the wider economic, political and cultural fabrics of society. Inherent in Mosco’s nomenclature is the axiological elevation of a holistic approach to scholarship that moves back and forth within the particular and the general.

The political economy framework generates a constituent advantage. It stimulates new insights into studying media and communication systems; unsurprisingly, the framework has produced diverse approaches to communication research. One of the most prominent of them is the British/European interest in applying neo-Marxian theories to communication. The academic posture of these political economists contrasts with that of their North American colleagues who tend to rely on both neo-Marxian and institutional paradigms. Another influential approach is the Third World political economy school, which deconstructs dependency and world systems theory and various neo-Marxist traditions (Mosco, 1995, p.20). Mosco (1995) contends though that all these various approaches have common threads that tie them together into a unique form
of scholarship. He traces their commonalities to a commitment to decentering the media, the foregrounding of capital, class, contradiction, conflict and resistance. At the heart of this approach is the venerated practice of connecting research and theory with advocacy and social intervention.

The political economy approach to media research is also unique in its intellectual preoccupations. Wasko (2005) identifies five major recurrent features of the expansive collection of political economy research on media and communications. These features are the emphasis on historical analysis, the focus on the business of mass communications, the interest in the international and global impacts of media industries, the analyses of the relationship between the media and the state, and the attention to resistant and oppositional responses to media and communication industries.

Neoclassical economists of the political economy of media focus on variables like value, price, and cost, coded in mathematical forms to explain interrelationships in the study of wide ranging social factors, including human behavior (Albarran, 2010). Maintaining that its major values are self-interest and free-market principles, the neoclassical school argues that most economists are too cautious when focusing on economic behavior. They advocate applying economic analytical models to all forms of life: social, political, and cultural (Picard, 1989). This tradition corresponds with public choice theory, the rational expectation school, and the new positive political economy intellectual camp.

The foundation of the neoclassical approach to political economy of media and communications is media economics. Albarran (2010) defines this tradition as the use of microeconomic and macroeconomic principles to study “how media firms and industries function across different levels of activity” (p. 3). The research tradition has an unavering
commitment to applying microeconomic concepts and principles to studying media and has a record of heavy reliance on the industrial organization model.

The fundamental values of media economics bring it into direct contention with other areas of the political economy of media and communications. Some argue that it does not belong to the political economy field, because it is not inherently critical. Picard (2006) dismisses such claims by placing the critical political economy within the field of media economics. He outlines three paths of media economics research: a theoretical tradition, an applied tradition and a critical tradition, also known as the political economy of media (Picard, 2006).

Other political economists of the media have criticized this approach for its over-reliance on econometric models and its emphasis on microeconomic factors, which they consider too limited as interpretive tools (Galperin, 2004). They also attack media economists for avoiding any serious criticisms of capitalist media structures and systems, adding that they often work as proponents of capitalism with overt principles that advocate survival and expansion of capitalist interests. Wasko (2005) notes, “While competition may be assessed, little emphasis is placed on issues relating to ownership of media resources or the implications of concentrated ownership and control” (p. 41).

A twin of media economics is the public choice theory approach that pervades policy studies of media and communication. Critical political economists of media are weary of this approach, because of its over-reliance on pluralist theories and neoclassical economics and its exaggeration and cynicism of the state’s role in legislating and regulating media and communication (Sen, 1987; Shiva, 2005). Public choice theorists tend to deny the oppressive and repressive effect of market forces on public interests and the inequitable power relations of capitalist systems (Wasko, 2005). Mosco (2009) accuses public choice theorists of reducing
social order to individual choices and market functionalities. They also tend to overlook negative externalities, implications of the market's influence on democracy, social responsibility, and global ecology.

Pioneers of media economics used microeconomic models to research the print media examining competition among newspapers (Ray, 1951; Ray, 1952) and the economic behavior of newspaper companies (Reddaway, 1963). One of the most influential works in the field is Steiner’s (1952) microeconomic research on radio competition. Levin’s (1958) and Berlson’s (1961) research on competition in the television industry also stand out. Media economists are particularly fascinated with quantifying competition and concentration in media and communications industries (Albarran & Dimmick, 1996; Bagdikian 2000; Compaine 1985; Dimmick & Rothenbuhler, 1984).

Political economy is also fairly steeped in tradition, leading Mansell (2004) to call for “a revitalization of the political economy of media and communications” (p. 97). Historically, critics have charged that the traditional political economy approach overemphasizes class studies and its focus on structure and dependency ignores the role of agency in mediating power (Lee, 2011; McLauglin, 1999); however, conventional approaches in the field are more sensitive to questions of agency and continue to explore them alongside inquiries of social class. Others also argued that the field historically tended to be too functionalist, frequently subscribing to theories of economic reductionism that fed into the practices of scholars like Nicholas Garnham and Herbert Schiller who analyzed cultural phenomena within economic debates (Turner, 2010). With the documented diversity of contemporary political economy scholarship, such a criticism is now largely unjustified.

Perhaps the most vociferous critiques of political economy have emanated from various
schools of cultural studies. As a student of both cultural studies and political economy, I find these tensions often exaggerated and unnecessarily inflamed; therefore, I prefer to align with Kellner’s (1995) position, which situates political economy within the strongest applications of cultural studies, alongside textual analysis and reception studies. While political economy often attends to the relational dynamics of communication systems and structures, and class dynamics, and their impact on society, conventional cultural studies mostly attend to language and social relations in meaning formation.

Wasko (2005) believes that some of these attacks on the political economy framework have inspired many of its scholars to revisit and re-articulate many of their theoretical propositions; however, it has also fueled a protracted and heated diatribe among scholars of both traditions. The development of a feminists approach to the political economy of media and communications is indicative of a response to addressing the traditional failures of the field in integrating gender, race, age, and ethnicity into the core of its research projects (Riordan & Meehan, 2002). Wasko (2003) observes that attacks on both sides are often legitimate. She points to political economists’ anxiety over the absence or marginality of institutional and structural contexts in much of cultural studies research. Likewise, the tendency of cultural studies scholars to overemphasize textual construction, polysemy, and interpretive agency also compounds the problem (Mosco, 2005).

Cultural studies scholars traditionally resent the foregrounding of structures by political economists in analyses of society and human interaction. They argue that humans are not “passively manipulated cultural dupes” (Grossberg, 1995, p. 75). This anxiety by cultural theorists often seem irrationally inflated, since political economists do not deny human agency nor do they proclaim the omnipotence of structural formations in shaping human action. The
core of the difference seems more to do with the extent, intensity, and effect of human agency, and its articulation of and interaction with structures. That structures and systems are inescapable is undeniable. Critical political economists merely assert that these structures and human agency are in a constant state of interdependent elasticity (Mosco, 2009). They do not occur by happenstance, but are direct products of conscious and unconscious human action.

Although institutional political economy perspectives depend on Marxist ideologies, they proffer that the organizational structure of the economy drives the production, distribution and exchange of goods and services; therefore, they mostly refrain from any meta-critique of socio-economic systems, like capitalism (Bagdikian, 2000). Not that they ignore the pressure on institutions from external interest groups. Only that they recognize a complex set of institutional relationships that impact these pressures. The tendency of this brand of political economy scholarship to examine media as almost distinctly isolated from, but influenced by, wider power centers of society is a problem for critical media scholars, who consider the media as integrated and often complicit in power articulations.

Political economists do not simply focus on institutions as separate and distinct entities, noting that their relationships with other wider societal structures are insignificant or marginal and non-constitutive of any privileges from an overriding political or economic order as argued by Campbell (1998), but they emphasize the totality (Mosco, 2009). They tend to prioritize the agency of institutional actors and power elites, arguing that their ability to form coalitions and exploit external conditions is the major factor underpinning their success or failure. North (1990) describes institutions as, the “composite of rules, informal constraints (norms of behavior and conventions) and their enforcement characteristics’’ (p. 364).

Partly, political economists study media institutions to understand stakeholder
relationships and hierarchies, the purposes and utility driving laws, regulations, and reforms, and their enforcement (North, 1990). A fitting example of an institutional study that only implicitly refers to the neo-Marxist tradition is Ben Bagdikian's influential text *Media Monopoly* (2000). Unfortunately, despite commenting on the negative impacts of media concentration on news production, it generally steers away from analyzing the wider systems and contexts facilitating this type of ownership structure.

Ithiel de Sola Pool’s (1983) research argued that improvements in communication technology affect media industry rules and standards, putting pressure on the economic and legal apparatuses sustaining them. Several other scholars have examined the institutional influences on policy and economic performance (Cowhey & McCubbins, 1995; Krasner, 1989; North, 1993). Other scholars have looked at the intra-industry policies and procedures within the media industries. For instance, Noam (2006) argued that ownership limits deny the fact that large investment entities, not individual shareholders, own the majority of stocks in the most powerful media companies through their interlocking memberships of corporate boards. Additionally, Potter (2005) insists that the distinction between media ownership and media control is important for appreciating the depth of concentration and centralization of power in the media industries.

One of the most popular and influential studies in the political economy of media is the work of Jurgen Habermas (1989), which proposed that conventional capitalist systems have transformed the role of the media in society. Habermas (1987) reasoned that capital powerbrokers have reconfigured the media from facilitating public debate to constructing and manipulating public discourses that serve their interests, especially political elites, corporations, and media owners. Habermas (1987) explains that one of the most vivid indicators of this transformation is the media’s re-framing of the citizen as consumer. This, he adds, relates closely
to the commodification of citizens not only into consumers, but also into objects of media content that facilitate the preservation and accumulation of capital.

Habermas (1964) went on to develop the concept of the “public sphere,” which has varied ideological hues, with tangents advanced by liberal, conservative, socialist, and neoliberal scholars; however, in its simplest form the notion of the public sphere encapsulates ideas and values of the public’s interest. Coining the term, Habermas (1964) described the public sphere as a social space for establishing public opinion, where the conversations of private citizen coalesce into community discourses. He distinguishes this public space from business, professional, or state apparatuses. Although arguably his most riveting theory, Habermas’ (1964) contributions to political economy of media extend beyond public sphere theory into themes addressing communicative rationality, deliberative democracy, and civil society (Dahlgren, 2008).

Exploring Habermasian concepts, Curran (2002) explains that the media’s imperative role in securing the fundamental principles of the democratic state has a rich history. He presents two deep-rooted arguments that advance an understanding of the relationship between the media and society. First, he points to the historical struggles of the journalistic profession to remain free from the control and oppressions of governmental power as one of the underlying tenets of the elevated positioning of the media in society.

Second, Curran (2002) writes that there is a general belief that free media operate to empower the citizenry. They do so by exploring public issues in a way that embraces the varied sensibilities of the public, some of which may not harmonize with the agenda or beliefs of society’s authoritative bodies. Ultimately, this practice operates as a process of gauging and accounting for gaps in the democratic workings of society (Curran, 2002).

Almiron (2010) concludes that the bourgeoisie and concentrated media empires are the
main benefactors of modern capitalism’s transformation of the media, a battle fought since the Middle Ages. She adds that contemporary elites use liberal theory to justify their dominance of the press. These elite and corporate interests have worked overtime to renegotiate conceptions of the public interest in contemporary democratic societies. Aufderheide (2008) agrees, adding that the public sphere is either progressive or destructive in a modern democracy, not both.

McChesney (2008) frames the invasion of the public sphere by a few wealthy corporations in the United States within the binary of the rich media/poor democracy paradox. The two pillars of his paradox are political crisis and media ideology. The political crisis registers the ways in which the commercial media hijack and reshape much of the country’s political and cultural systems and processes, while media ideology refers to how media owners manipulate the country’s history to stifle or even evade debate on the undemocratic composition and function of its media industries. He charges that a deliberate corporate advocacy on media control has propagated five sustained myths among Americans: the current system arose from the free market, the founders intended the system, professional journalism standards will protect us, the media system gives people what they want, and technology will set us free (McChesney, 2008). McChesney (2008) is quite skeptical of any perspective that views the media as representative of the public, arguing that they work more as a facility of corporate and political elites.

In a clear attempt at reconciling both the liberal and public sphere perspectives, Croteau and Hoynes (2006) present four critical components of public interest media. They list them as the diversity of cultural and political expressions, technology and content innovation, substitution of content on important social issues, and separation of the sources and channels on public interest programs.
Arsenault and Castells (2008) take a macro-level look at the establishment and functions of some of the world’s largest multi-national media organizations, arguing that corporate and technological conventions marked by concepts such as globalization, digitization, networking, and cultural differentiation have reconfigured their operations. This phenomenon is most evident through the globalization of capital and production and the localization of media content. “Capital is global; identities are local,” they write (p.2). This ubiquitous commercialization of the media, they note, blends with the proliferation of processes of information digitization that are dynamically reshaping global business.

Of particular relevance to this study are the ways that Hollywood, in creating its fictional constructions, influences the public sphere through spaces of production. Habermas’ (1964) initial preoccupation with the concept remains important, since it centered on the bourgeoisie as an enlightened, progressive group, ignoring their complicity in appropriating and configuring public spaces to serve dominant and hegemonic interests; however, his explications of the public sphere downplayed the role of the media in developing and nurturing public discourse. It appears that he may have created self-limitations by remaining reticent in incorporating film into his theorization of the public sphere (Modisane, 2010).

Offering the first durable patches for the void left by Habermas, a few scholars of the new German cinema picked up the slack, especially Alexander Kluge. While validating Habermas’ (1964) bourgeois public sphere theory, Kluge recognized it as a particular space of public discourse, incorporating it into a broader concept that embraces “an emphatic notion of publicness, defined by such principles as openness, freedom of access, multiplicity of relations” (Hansen, 1988, p.184).
Post-Colonialism, Nation, Place, and Space.

Studies progressively using post-colonial theory as an integral part of their theorization are by nature interdisciplinary and interventionist, focused on conceptualizing colonization and decolonization problems (Shome & Hegde, 2010). Post-colonial theory is at heart cultural studies, although it provides important insights into a number of critical political economy questions. Humme (1995) understands the post in post-colonialism as marking both a temporal shift in the organization of states and the emergence of a critical brand of scholarship. Hall (1996) considers Hume’s explanation more useful than that of Shohat’s (1992), which frames it as loaded with epistemic and chronological contradictions.

Reflections on colonialism allow for greater insights into dimensions of the post-colonial inquiry (Said, 1993). Mani and Frankenberg (1993) trace an important common thread in colonialism and post-colonialism: this thread weaves different encounters through tensions between colonizing societies and the vulnerable other. Said (1993) considers colonial independence a misnomer for the most part since "many of the imperial attitudes underlying colonial conquest continue" (p. 17). Colonization is not about clearly demarcated epochs, but about the continuous colonizing process (Hall, 1996). Hall (1996) agrees with McClintock (1992), that post-colonial scholars ought to understand epochal formations as producing contiguous and continuous phenomena.

Alternatively, Shohat (1992) suggests that post-colonial theory is too politically ambiguous in its proposition of a universalizing phenomenon. She charges that it subdues political resistance to colonialism, neo-colonialism, and Third Worldism, because it does not clearly define the oppressor nor does it prescribe any clear oppositional strategies (Shohat, 1992). Hall (1996) chastises Shohat for supplanting theoretical conceptualization with polemics
in her critique of the post-colonial. For Hall (1996), post-colonialism is about both the past and the future. He does not see the inherent epistemic tensions of the post-colonial negatively, but productively, observing that it extends epistemic choices beyond the rational, logical, and deconstructive.

Several scholars have taken post-colonial theory to task for its preference for textual and narrative analyses and its reluctance to go beyond the text to explore political economic phenomena (Griswold, 2004). Prakash (1994) argues that post-colonial theory is a post-structural way of thinking, a discursive practice that certain intellectuals use to mark their newfound academic privilege. Hall (1996) is intolerant of Dirlik’s ad hominem assault on post-colonial theorists as self-serving. Dirlik (1994) largely condemns post-colonial theorization as a fancy of hybridized Third World intellectuals, Westernized elites, who he accuses of using the concept to navigate the politics of Western intellectual practice, a convenient marketing of academic propositions (McClintok, 1992).

Despite his intemperance, Dirlik (1998) advances a poignant critique of post-colonial theory, that it overbears discourses and suppresses modern capitalist structural formations. His recommendation that post-colonial scholars refrain from scholarship that addresses the relationship between post-colonialism and global capitalism is a scathing dismissal of the theory, and a regrettable extension of his otherwise lucid critique.

Although Hall (1996) considers Dirlik’s (1998) attacks symptomatic of a “failure of theorization,” he does not rubbish the entire critique (p. 258). In discounting Dirlik's claims, Hall (1996) also turns inward for a reasoned rebuttal, regretting the tenuousness of post-colonial theorists to extend their inquiries beyond literary subjects and discourses. While urging them to explore new horizons, he advises post-colonial scholars to clearly define the operating definition
of the term *post-colonial* to avoid errors of homogenization (Hall, 1996). Consistent with Hall's recommendation, Mani & Frankenberg (1993) muzzle the importance of post-colonial definitions based on commonalities in the colonial experience; rather, they argue for explorations of intersections among evolving relationships and ongoing tensions evolving from colonial encounters.

Hall (1996) emphasizes that post-colonial theory is useful in tracking the transformation of global relations and formations from “empires to the post-independence or post-decolonisation moment,” and the emerging global power dynamics (p. 246). He adds that the post-colonial is a valid conceptual space to critique political choices and positions (Hall, 1996). He does not subscribe to the binary of the colonized and the colonizer, opting instead to view their unfolding power relations as a form of “transculturation,” (Hall, 1992). He credits post-colonial theory for clearly articulating more complex and multilayered examinations of the connection between colonialism and imperialism than other cultural theories. Bhabha (1994) agrees with Hall, noting that any intellectual explorations of modernity must account for imperial projects.

Anderson's (1991) deconstruction of a nation into an imagined community is a major subject of post-colonial debate and a central maxim in a large body of Western scholarship. The main argument of his thesis posits that the nation, which was a late-eighteenth century structural formation, evolving out of the dearth of monarchical and theocratic empires, is really a synthesis of agreements on sovereignty and state authority legitimized through popular processes (Anderson, 1991). Although his work is celebrated widely for advancing seminal perspectives on the chronology of national formations and their placements, Anderson (2006) later regretted his lack of attention to concepts of space in his original thesis.

Likewise, Bhabha (1990) posits that nations are discursive constructs. Like Said (1993), he deliberates on post-colonialism by mobilizing discourses on knowledge claims (Bhabha, 1994); however, he drifts from him when he does not approach an examination of post-colonial communities and identities by emphasizing the significance of boarders or boundaries. He views these identities as hybridized, a cultural translation, producing social spaces that escape the binary of colonized and the colonizer or formalized bordered limitations (Bhabha, 1994). Proposing the notion of a third space, Bhabba (1990) considers post-colonial identity as a cultural space with no clear and definitive original identity. Bhabba's (1990) deliberations on space, while providing an important contribution to theories of the ways identities interact with spaces, is deficient of concepts adequately explaining negotiations of class dynamics (Ahramd, 1992; Soja, 1996).

Jacobs (1996) argues that an exploration of the spatial legacies of British colonialism that overemphasizes the tensions between imperial impositions and native resistance is likely to be
devoid of nuances that are important for generating rich explanations. She recommends an approach to these spatial residues as relics of agendas to simultaneously civilize and violate. Her advice hints that issues of absorption, accommodation, and complicity are as important as resistance in any such inquiry. Similarly, Said (1993) explains that empires are preoccupied with possessing lands, a logic that forms a critical strategy in their construction of knowledge and projection of culture. The culture of imperialism celebrates geography and control over places: throughout colonization, it is obsessive about owning it and during decolonization and post-colonization it is anxious about native claims to it (Said, 1993). Imperialist projects have profound influence on how we understand places and interact with spaces.

Place is a humanized space loaded with emotional and personal significance that is a key component of how its users think and behave (Tuan, 1999). Massey (1994) understands it as a web of evolving and reconstituted social relationships. Pitzl (2004) explains that a place only acquires meaning and significance in reference to other places: what geographers identify as the difference between its absolute location and relative location. Absolute location refers to its geographical mapping and relative location explains its distinctiveness (Pitzl, 2004). Relative location ascribes external characteristics to a place in relation to other places (Gersmehl, 2008). Hozic (2001) posits that places acquire definition from not only what is included in their classification but also from what is excluded.

Space is the taken-for-granted location of social practice, an abstract structural foundation that accommodates both tangible and intangible processes that move from place to place (Harvey, 1973). Space is not just material but imaginary (Hozic, 2001). Tuan (1977) considers place and space interdependent. No place can exist without a space and space only has meaning when it traverses different places. Lefebvre (1991) considers space as an articulation of the
formation, procurement, and transformation of social relations. How space is organized determines delimitations of public and private boundaries and reality and fantasy (Hozic, 2001). Space and place are not simply historical records, but results of conflicts and tensions among economic and political players (Hozic, 2001).

From a structuralist perspective, places are entities competing with each other on a wider geo-political level. Agnew (1987) explains place through three main concepts: location, locale, and sense of place. Location explains a place's fit within the geopolitical and economic environment. The concept of locale highlights the formal and informal institutions characterizing a place, while sense of place refers to human identification and interaction with a place (Agnew, 1987). Augé (1995) offers an instructive distinction between concepts of space and place. He recommends an understanding of place as a localized, natural, and occupied physical area, a dwelling site, whose history and identity have significance and meaning for its residents and visitors. Ultimately, he concludes that a space is a location that facilitates the formation of relationships and the creation of stories (Augé, 2000).

Massey (1994) does not engage space without engaging time. She writes, “Space must be conceptualized integrally with time; indeed the aim should be to think always in terms of space–time” (Massey, 1994, p. 2). Massey's (1994) approach to space and place resonates with a critical political economy framework, because she emphasizes the importance of history and insists that both space and place contain immense power, meaning, and signification. Noting that places are not just passive agents, she implicates them in the ongoing construction of global relationships. Massey (1994) disturbs notions of a duality of the local-global by arguing that both the global and local engage in mutual formations.

Harvey (1973) proposes an understanding of space not as a thing but as a constructed,
dialectic process. He directs us to the distinctive human practices and social processes that create spatial identities and the resultant effect of those spaces on the generation and regeneration of the very processes and practices that shape them, a phenomenon that Sojar (1989) terms "socio-spatial dialectic" (p. 78). Harvey (2001) understands places as environmental, cultural, and demographic constructions with distinguishable characteristics; although he concedes that global capitalism links these places into a similar economic framework. Similarly, Augé (2000) sees the effects and excesses of neoliberalism and globalization as transforming characteristics of places.

Alternatively, exploring the spatial significance of globalization, Castells (1996) suppresses the significance of places, preferring to understand social structures as nodes in a giant and complex network of flows, of which even space is a flow, a "spatial logic" distinct from the "space of places" (p. 408). For him, a place is a process and the global center a network of production and consumption, comprising of advanced and ancillary services. Castells' (1996) conception of power dynamics, and the role of history in space and place, contrasts starkly to that of Massey (1994). He writes, "The space of flows does not permeate down to the whole realm of human experience in the network society" (p. 453). That Castells (1996) sees the possibility of flows being "ahistorical" underscores his reluctance to highlight the role of power in these formations and appreciate the dialectic linkages between space and society (p. 446). Massey (1994) would likely find this perspective disturbing, especially the assertion that, "Experience, by being related to places, becomes abstracted from power, and meaning is increasingly separated from knowledge" (Castells, 1996, p. 459).

In line with Castells (1996), Appadurai (1996) argues that globalization, with its flows, has redefined and reconstituted notions of sovereignty, bypassing the nation-state to create cross-bordered community linkages or disjunctures. By creating tanslocalities or plural identifications,
these formations present a new cartography based on geo-politics and global economics. Appadurai (1996) conceives of two forms of translocalities: the gaps left open by the nation-state, such as boarders and conflict zones, and the cosmopolitan centers. Ultimately, these expanding translocalities directly threaten the relevance and usefulness of the nation-state (Appadurai, 1996).

These varied observations of globalization and neoliberalism's impact on space and place are critical for exploring issues associated with cross-border film location, especially since neoliberalism facilitates the expansion of financialization across borders by creating spaces for conflating disparate and dispersed practices and relationships under the guidance and control of American rules and structures (Konings and Panitch, 2008).

Perhaps even more pertinent, Mosco’s (1996) spatialization offers a fitting framework from which to analyze Hollywood’s impact on the global communication space. Mosco (1996) reminds us that communication space is vulnerable to powerful influences from governments, corporations, and civic entities. Silverstone’s (1999) concept of mediation, which explains the mobility of meaning from text to text, discourse to discourse, event to event, opens up further possibilities for expanding space in political economy of media and communications. Its core argument is similar to Mosco’s (2009) understanding of spatialization, which addresses the shifting of space and time in media and communications, a concept that borrows from Giddens (1990) time-space distanciation, Harvey's (1989) time-space compression, and Castell’s (1996) space of flows. Spatialization also helps clarify the underexploited potential of Appadurai’s (1996) five ‘scapes’ – ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes – to describe the dynamics of contemporary global media production (p.33).

Harvey (1990) recommends both an objective and subjective approach to appreciating the
connections between space and place. The subjective approach is important for understanding how residents of places perceive the impact of the actions of strangers on their lives (Harvey, 1990). One of the most important insights of this perspective is that conceptions and interpretations of place-space dynamics may differ acutely at the local, regional, and global levels. Likewise, Massey (1995) makes little distinction between the social relations of production and the spatial relations of production, emphasizing that capitalist structures invariably construct and reconstruct spatial differentiation. Adopting her standpoint, I do not conceive of cross-border film production as a standardized practice, but as a dynamic process of facilitating capitalist interests in different locales.

Applied to cross-border film production, space is not merely about relocation or reorganization of production, but about the articulation of power in facilitating political and economic activities and interests (Hozic, 2001). The spatial dynamics of on-location filming of cross boarder film production also fit into Pratt’s (1991) contact zones: social spaces characterized by unequal power relations where cultures interact, contend, and osmose. Despite being somewhat vacuous and unclaimed, space is not neutral, because “someone already lives there” (Osterweil, 2011, p. 185).

In this study, I consider on-location shooting of cross-border film production a type of mediated space, a translocal space where the local is both the object and subject of spatial construction. These spaces derive peculiar meaning and agency from their intersection with the transnational identities framing them and the translocal processes containing them (Curtan and Shah, 2006). More importantly, Hollywood’s historical dominance of the international film industry has implicated it in processes of deplacialization, which rids places of their identities and characteristics. Notably, Osterweil (2011) argues that deplacialization also takes place
during the process of film production. He notes, “Hollywood evacuates actual places of their
textures and histories” (Osterweil, 2011, p. 187).

Hozic (2001) notes that the design and construction of Hollywood sets often mirror other
industrial sectors, although they have a unique character since their architects are able to
construct space and place according to their fantasies. Hollywood production zones are normally
“more exuberant, more excessive, and easier to read as valuable documents on social and
economic change than steel plants or contemporary silicon fabs” (p. 12).

Hollywood’s commercialized space is multidimensional and multifaceted, evident
throughout the production, distribution, and consumption of films worldwide. From its
influential production centers and theaters to its lobbying efforts on copyright law, to its
packaging and marketing of films, and commercialization of film images and narratives,
Hollywood exemplifies the commercialization of space. Spatialization helps us critically assess
the different processes and structures of the film industry to analyze how films serve as
instruments of power in societies.

Directly relevant to on-location film production, I hold that it is instructive to view
landscapes or seascapes not simply as neutral physical constructions or material objects devoid
of social and cultural meaning (Cosgrove, 2006); but as Cosgrove (1989) argues we should
consider them important participants in a reciprocal relationship with their uses, both shaping
and redefining each other. For cross-border film production, this theory suggests a dynamic and
multi-directional process of creation and recreation between the production space and the
location as place, especially since scholars have observed that the global film industry thrives on
divesting places of their uniqueness, transforming everywhere into anywhere (Hozic, 2001).

These political and economic projects are never innocent nor are they often unproblematic.
Curtain & Shah (2006) make this clear when they note that film productions reconfigure spaces and places in their commitment to serving the sensibilities of global and transnational audiences.

*Empire and Imperialism*

Empires extend the administration and authority of states. Delineated by territory and sustained by force and violence, they stretch beyond the "homeland" into new global spaces by employing a blend of soft and direct power (Murdock, 2006, p.21). Said (1993) notes that one of the legacies of an empire is that it has contributed considerably to making all cultures hybrid, heterogeneous, and differentiated. He calls for closer examinations of the role of culture in procuring empires.

Adopting a post-structural and post-imperialist posture, Hardt and Negri (2000) mobilize Marxian concepts to abandon the traditional notions of empire, opting for a thesis that promotes a hybridized global imperial project formed by interconnected networks of communication and power structures. In the Marxian sense, they conceive of contemporary imperial formations as immaterial and intangible, characterized by multi-layered associations and agreements (Hardt & Negri, 2000).

Hardt & Negri (2000) construct a tiered structure of global empire, placing members of the G8 and a handful of powerful IGOs, such as the WTO, the World Bank, NATO, and the IMF at the top, which they identify as a "global monopoly of force" or the monarchy (p. 314). At the next level, they position selected nations and multinational corporations into an oligarchy. The United Nations, non-governmental organizations, and the media constitute the bottom tier or the democracy. They note that although closely interconnected, this global hierarchical capitalist structure or empire is chaotic (Hardt & Negri, 2000). Conceiving of global imperial power as
"totalizing and "decentered," they embellish it with altruistic potential, noting that it advances peace and justice through International Governmental Organizations, the global media, and global humanitarian projects (Hardt and Negri, 2000).

Embedded within Hardt & Negri's (2000) perspective is their rejection of any argument identifying a single global imperial power. Furthermore, they do not see the global imperial agenda unchallenged. To argue this point, they invest heavily in the multitude: a conflation of global resistant movements that they assign extensive agency to disrupt and even overturn imperial projects (Hardt & Negri, 2004). Heart and Negri's (2004) multitude not only desires global democracy, equality and freedom, but it knows how to bring them about. These authors warn though that the resistance of the multitude is constantly threatened by the expanding power of capital, which is increasingly slipping away from containment by the nation-state (Hardt and Negri, 2000).

Roberts (2010) takes little restrain in declaring erroneous Hardt and Negri's (2000) dismissal of a preeminent global imperial power, emphasizing that the United States remains the unparalleled mediator, arbitrator, and benefactor of the global neoliberal system. The surface informality and immateriality of global finance ought not to be taken as symptomatic of the decentering of empire, because financialization has clearly facilitated the expansion of U.S. economic imperialism: it is not networks, but the imperialist state that is driving global neoliberalism, with the U.S. in the driver's seat (Roberts, 2010). Notwithstanding their conspicuous oversights, Hardt & Negri's (2000) thesis on empire is a coherent and appealing web of cultural and economic modeling that presents thoughtful reflection on the workings and structures of imperialism (Palm, 2011).

An alternative concept for theorizing the workings of the American Empire is the Pax Americana. In providing a sophisticated framework for understanding the contemporary
American Empire, the Pax Americana argues that American imperialism mostly does not appear as an imposition, but at its core it is no less imperialistic. The theory asserts that one of the crudest, though frequently unquestioned, features of American Empire is the requirement that independent nations conform to and participate in the global trading system, which mostly favors it (Nye, 2004). Technically, no country can openly entrap another state into participating in the global economic system, but the alternatives and implications are too dire for any country to seriously contemplate, especially when the Pax Americana has consistently shown exceptional aptitude and dexterity in leveraging its control of the international financial and trading system as a cleaver against non-conformists (Louw, 2011).

Indeed, there are often severe political and economic consequences for countries that resist this entrapment and obvious benefits for those who embrace it. Maverick countries are often vilified as fascist abusers or anti-democratic regimes, ominous to the smooth operation of the global economic system: these vitriolic charges often culminate in strained multilateral support for economic sanctions or military intervention against such bold expressions of sovereignty and self-determinacy (Brown, 2009). A less explored aspect of the Pax Americana is the contributions of other advanced capitalist nations in buoying the American Empire. These countries invest heavily in the U.S. economy and global agenda to secure associative benefits from the United States' global economic dominance (Panitch and Gindin, 2003).

A central pillar of the Pax Americana is a global media network that facilitates its implementation and management of varied forms of soft power (Nye, 2004). The American media are maestros in the art of "attractiveness," successfully marketing to vulnerable countries, policies, products, and agreements that are counterintuitive to their own interests (Nye, 2004). Most projects of soft power reside in the non-governmental domain, of which the television and
film industries are some of the most active partners. Olson (1999) asserts, "Hollywood has conquered the world" (p. vii). Admittedly, contemporary Hollywood is not as dominant now as in the pre-millennial period, but changes in the American domestic film industry and the international film market do little to undermine its impact as a global political-economic power (Miller et al., 2005).

The insights of soft power also highlight less contentious contemporary configurations of the American Empire, such as the New Policy Agenda, which integrates liberal economics with liberal democracy throughout the spheres of influences of both government and non-governmental institutions. In many cases, agents of American Empire advance narratives that foreground civil society principles as preconditions for effective performance of markets (Robinson, 1993).

Soft power does not only function to promote Western values, products, and programs, but it also serves as a regenerative strategy for the global political economic order by continuously recruiting allies and advocates, mostly through a sympathetic if not sycophantic middle-class in non-Western countries (Nye, 2004). These middle-class agents are instrumental in influencing state-level policies and actions that form a treasure trove for empires (Louw, 2011). The United States foreign policy forms part of “soft power” strategies geared at preserving the American imperial project (Sussman, 2012, p. 128).

The global economic cycle driven by empire and imperialism is predictive. Economic institutions and advisors in advanced countries distort and embellish economic matrices that encourage poor countries to open up their natural resources to exploitation, which invariably lead them to subservience or bankruptcy (Dash, 2003; Duodo, 2011). A number of powerful International Governmental Organizations (IGOs) drive and engender these imperialistic practices: the most aggressive and powerful of which are the IMF, World Bank, and WTO (Roberts, 2010). Desperate for economic advancement, Less Developed Countries approach these IGOs for technical and financial support in facilitating these economic programs.

The World Bank, the largest funder of international development programs and one of the most influential rating agencies in the world, is one of the most prominent agents of western imperialism (Cohn, 2010). The structure of power and authority within the organization partly explains its preeminence in maintaining Western economic dominance around the world. The United States has historically monopolized the presidency of the World Bank since its inception. Additionally, it is the only country with veto power: a preferential mechanism that allows it to effectively destroy any policy on its own (Cohn, 2010).

The principles and rules of global economics driven by the dictates of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) are antithetical to democracy, ignoring and weakening the agency of national governments and their citizenry (Shiva, 2005). The sacrosanct advocacy of neoliberal reforms by these international institutions, tied to threats and coercion, continue to suppress the power of the ballot in the majority of developing countries (Lamb, 2007).

The mid-November, 2001 negotiation of the Doha Development Round, which followed
the historic anti-globalization protests of the preceding decade promised a restructured WTO that would recognize and facilitate the needs of developing countries, but the promise never materialized (Walker, 2011), despite the fact that two-thirds or 150 members of the WTO remain developing countries (WTO, 2008).

Subsequently, facing the growing demands of multilateralism and the influence of transitional economies like China, India, and Brazil, the World Bank held reform meetings in spring of 2010 to reorganize the World Bank. As Wade (2011) notes, while the bank restructured shares and voting rights, increased its capital commitment to fighting poverty, laid out plans for its physical decentralization, documented a strategy for crisis response, and implemented some new guidelines for internal governance, the proposed reforms changed little. Walker (2011) observes that the global economic and political system has sidelined developing countries and the WTO promise to engineer pervasive global development remains a mirage.

Hinting at the hypocrisy of global neoliberalism, Dash (2003) accuses the IMF of establishing a precedent of bailing out international financial institutions from bad investments, while insisting on unbearable social conditions for financing developing states. Cohn (2010) notes that the World Bank and IMF insist that targeted countries commit to structural adjustment measures as a condition for receiving developmental assistance. These measures, which are based mainly on liberal economic principles, focus on inflation control, public spending reduction, fiscal frugality, privatization, market deregulation and trade liberalization (Goddard, 2003).

More specifically, many scholars and pundits view the IMF’s Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) as a threat to national sovereignty, since it arguably transfers responsibilities and authority of debt management from the indebted country to the international community, through
IMF membership (Goddard, 2003). The IMF is consistent in its operations and policies, favoring regulatory financial reforms that facilitate clients’ compliance with global financial standards and regulations and rejecting intervention that seriously incorporates a welfare agenda (Wade, 2007). Brown (2009) summarizes these policies as a process in which poor countries are pressured to adopt free trade principles: their currencies are floated, after which they are devalued.

Goddard (2003) explains that the IMF provides financial assistance to countries in three basic ways. First, it provides both unconditional and conditional funds to help countries stabilize their balance-of-payments. Second, it provides special funding emergency situations and unusual circumstances. Third, it provides financing to less developed countries through concessionary terms. The most controversial component of the IMF’s programs is its conditional assistance program. This is because countries requesting access to these funds are only able to do so after agreeing to comply with a set of rigid and austere conditions imposed by the IMF on their domestic financial systems. This is commonly referred to by scholars as conditionality and by the IMF as structural adjustment programs (Pickford & Joicey, 2011).

One of the most protracted and endemic negative examples of the World Bank and IMF’s austerity programs continues to be the recurrent food crisis that it generated among developing countries, perhaps most directly and profoundly exemplified in the Mexican food crisis of the 1980s, triggered by IMF polices that transformed the country’s corn industry from a domestic market orientation to a “free market” led industry (Bello, 2008, p.1). A United Nations Children Fund report notes that annually the ‘debt crisis’ kills half a million children (Hodgson, 2010, p. 264). The real beneficiaries of these World Bank policies are a small group of elites, most with direct economic links to Western corporations or industries.

A major weakness of the World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programs is the
devaluing of social factors that are important for sustaining and developing the living standard of citizens in recipient countries (Cohn, 2010). Many economists have argued that the economic performance targets established by the IMF, as preconditions for accessing its loans, create social instability and lead to the further impoverishment of subjected countries (Hertz, 2004).

The other major criticism of the IMF centers on the ineffectiveness of its austerity programs, which aims to reduce public spending and increase taxes as a means of lowering budget deficits. Scholars like Joseph Stiglitz, former chief economist and senior vice president at the World Bank argues that the current monetary policies of the IMF serve the interest of the Western financial markets and do not follow Keynesian economic principles, which were the foundation for their creation (Stiglitz, 2002).

Stiglitz’s (2002) critique resonates with arguments made by many scholars of the developing world, particularly those influenced by Marxist ideology. Cohn (2010) argues that historical materialists criticize the IMF and its conditions as tools of the developing countries to suppress the development of the Less Developed Countries. Historical Materialists charge that the IMF is inconsistent with its policies, even going to the point of financing military dictatorships, such as in Brazil and Argentina, and corrupt leaders, as in Kenya in the 1990s, which in varied ways serve the interest of its sponsors, while denying such funds to other democratic and transparent governments (Toussaint, 2004).

Ultimately, it is little surprise that the IMF is often vilified in the developing world. One of the most publicized reasons for the lack of trust in the IMF among the LDCs is the perception of the lack of transparency and consultation in IMF decision making and policy development (Lamb, 2007). Although critics have referenced multiple cases in their attack on the IMF, such as its intervention in Jamaica, Argentina, Mexico, and Kenya, the Asian financial crisis of 1997
provides riveting evidence of the IMFs failures and its ideological indiscretions. Dash (2003) believes that the IMF’s diagnosis of the crisis and its subsequent assistance were based on two ideological perspectives: that the economies of these countries needed greater fiscal discipline and domestic financial regulation: also that the best deterrent to capital flight and currency devaluation was high interest rates (p.278). But as Corning (2000) notes, South Korea didn’t need structural reform, but a bridge loan and debt restructuring to buffer foreign exchange reduction and increase domestic financing (p.8).

In outlining five major lessons emerging out of the Asian financial crisis, Dash (2003) recommends a more preventative rather than reactionary role for the IMF in the global financial system, one in which it provides technical support and limited financial assistance to help countries avert crisis. He also believes that the IMF needs to work on building more sustainable and healthy relationships with less developed countries, suggesting that one of the best ways that it can foster these types of relationships is to avoid exploiting the financial crises of these countries to impose structural changes that privilege the global financial capital system and its major sponsors (p.284).

Implicit in Dash’s (2003) recommendations is a rejection of the IMF’s imperialistic and ethnocentric biases, that Western economic policies and paradigms are the best, if not the only answer, to the financial problems affecting the developing world. It is notable that during the Asian financial crisis, Malaysia refused IMF assistance and advice, imposing its own remedial policies and controls to avert currency devaluation and economic collapse. Subsequently, Malaysia suffered less from all the other countries involved in the crisis, and despite initially ridiculing the country’s approach, the IMF eventually admitted to its success (Cohen, 2003). Malaysia’s response validates the view of many scholars and pundits, who argue that the current
power structure of the IMF and its administrative system operate as a threat to national sovereignty, since they tend to transfer responsibilities and authority of debt management from the indebted country to the international community through IMF membership (Goddard, 2003).

These World Bank and IMF programs may facilitate some level of economic growth, specifically in middle-income countries, but historically they have done little to alleviate poverty and stimulate development in poorer countries (Cohn, 2010). Unsurprisingly then, dependency theorists and historical materialists contend that these World Bank and IMF strategies create a cycle of recurrent indebtedness of the South to the North that only exacerbates poverty and suffering in poor countries. Even the World Bank has admitted that the current global economic environment disadvantages developing countries, because of their weak negotiating machinery and poor institutional capacity (World Bank, 2007).

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has received widespread criticism from several developing nations for expanding its reach into new issues of trade, such as intellectual property, human rights, and the environment (Srinivasan, 2005). Its expansive powers function to dilute the authority of sovereign, national regulatory bodies and weaken their capacity to represent their citizenry (Srinivasan, 2005). Behind the preponderance of criticisms against the WTO is the concern that most of the organization's practices are undemocratic (Esty, 2005). Decision making in the IMF and World Bank functions under a weighted voting system. Contrastingly, the WTO operates on the principle of one member one vote, yet developing countries get few, if any, decisions taken in their interest, let alone to their advantage (Lal Das, 1999); notwithstanding, the fact that developing countries outnumber their developed counterparts four to one in the WTO.

Lal Das (1999) cautions that although developing countries never had decision making
influence in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the WTO, they are now even more vulnerable to abuse by their more developed partners because of the extending purview and reach of the treaty, a reality that has generated increased antagonism and protracted negotiations among the membership.

Since the stalemate of multilateral trade negotiations in 1995, which concluded the Uruguay Round and created the WTO, international governments have been largely unsuccessful in reaching agreements on substantive trading arrangements, raising concern over the legitimacy of the organization (Robert and Nye, 2001). If this picture appears gloomy, then the outlook seems even darker. In the future, global trade promises to be significantly more complex because of the intensification of greater international integration, the reconfiguration of power within international trading organizations, especially the WTO, and the growing focus on developmental policies rather than free market principles (Esty, 2005).

With the increasing trend towards the growing power and influence of developing countries in establishing and legitimizing trading agreements, the WTO, which depends on consensus and packaged agreements runs the risk of becoming largely ineffective if not overly bureaucratic, because many of the national interests and developmental agendas of the members are likely to conflict with international trading practices (“The Doha Round,” 2003). Alternatively, with all its inadequacies, the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) provides a more useful model for facilitating development assistance and economic support to the developing world.

According to Murphy (2006), the UNDP uses both strategic and normative methods for addressing global development. Unlike the World Bank, it is not preoccupied with economic indices such as GDP and GNP, but emphasizes the level of economic equality and social
protection within and among nations. It also prioritizes the elimination of poverty and the existence of a more concrete and grassroots form of democracy that does not favor business but citizens. Though still relatively controlled by the financial contributions of the developed countries, the UNDP is also more transparent, decentralized, and democratic than the World Bank. With offices in over 150 countries, the organization incorporates the expertise of all the members of the UN family of organizations and functions in a way that incorporates the input of local grassroots organizations in implementing its external assistance programs (Murphy, 2006).

Rising economic giants like China, India, and Brazil will increasingly buffer the traditional dominance of Western developed countries, bringing their own perspectives on global economics and trade (Cardoso, 2009). Economists estimate that soon more than half of the top ten largest economies in the world will be developing countries (Voigt, 2012). The growing inequality and extensive poverty in their domestic markets may make them as sensitive to social issues as liberal market principles.

Many of the advanced counties are increasingly approaching these developing countries, now economic powerhouses, as direct competitors, which further complicate negotiations of the Doha Round (Cox, 2012). The most obvious example of this trend is the growing unease among many advanced nations about China’s role in the global economy, since it is expected to be the major trading partner of most countries. Although China may remain relatively poor, its influence on international trade may also be unparalleled. The economic difficulties, such as retarded growth, overspending, and climbing debt that will continue to trouble many of the developed countries like the United States, Japan, France, and Italy may cause them to turn inwards towards more protectionist behavior, which will likely influence their trading policies. The IMF predicts that by 2050, these issues will constitute 120% of the GDP of the average
developed country (IMF, 2009).

Fearing the inevitable limitations of possible agreements at the Doha Round, many countries are increasingly turning to strategic regional trading agreements that serve their national interests (Kyeong-Hee, 2012). This trend will persist, since the WTO remains ineffective in addressing many important trading issues such as services, investments, agricultural subsidies, and manufacturing imports. While international trade continues to grow because of the improvements in the living standards of people in developing countries and the expanding ubiquity of technology, many of the key players will behave autonomously when it suits their national and domestic markets. This fragmentation will likely fuel the spread of bilateral and regional agreements, especially in areas ignored or under served by the WTO (Gupta, 2008).

Notwithstanding the fact that IGOs are key propagators of global economic imperialism, they are not always the most significant players, neither are their activities necessarily isolated from the agenda and activities of transnational corporations. A number of scholars direct us to the activities of private, non-banking financial institutions to appreciate the dominance of finance in shaping the current global economic system (Almiron, 2010; Epstein, 2005; Krippner, 2005; Panitch and Gindin, 2003). Epstein (2005) explains that this extreme level of financialization is one of the most significant reconfigurations of the global economy in the last three decades. He defines financialization as "the increasing role of financial motives, financial markets, financial actors and financial institutions in the operation of the domestic and international economies" (Epstein, 2005, p. 3).

The global economy operates on a financial logic that provides huge profits for selected private interests, while consistently causing widespread economic crises in almost every corner
of the globe (García-Arias, 2010). The inextricable link between global financialization and neoliberalism points to an overt and concerted strategy by a few major developed countries, led by the United States, to control the world's resources (Seabroke, 2001), what Harvey (2005) describes as "the Wall Street-Treasury-IMF complex" (p. 85). This profound practice of capital dominance that internationalizes and globalizes markets is hegemonic and a new brand of imperialism and empire building (Almiron, 2010).

The media’s role in the construction and preservation of empires is well documented (Canuel, 2006; Herman & Chomsky, 1997; Innis, 2007). For instance, the evolution and growth of the British Empire epitomize the inextricable link between media and empire (Thussu, 1998). As early as the eighteenth century, the colonial print, and later electronic, media were an indispensable tool for consolidating and nurturing the British Empire in the Caribbean (Lent, 1990; Levine, 2007). Modern history shows a similar trend with the expansion of the American Empire (Alford, 2010).

Kaul (2006) argues that to appreciate the empire’s information network and imperial media culture, we must closely examine its communication infrastructure and its attitude to new technology. A clear illustration of this is available in Boyd-Barrett’s (2006b) contextualization of the US determined agenda to control ICTs within larger global political economy events, pointing to the nationalization of TNCs, and the increasing worldwide discontent over US hegemony in the 1970s, leading to the advocacy of the new world economic order. Such an argument is a valuable extension of the classic media imperialism argument.

Theories of cultural and media imperialism highlight an influential yet contentious debate in international media and arguably the wider political economy of cultural industries. Media research in the 1950s and 1960s had looked at international media from the modernization view
of development, searching for ways to develop the institutional capacity of local media to facilitate national and international development programs. Arguments over imperialism have dominated the global articulation of the political economy of media and communications, since Schiller (1976) contended that powerful U.S. media and telecommunications conglomerates, through their dominance of advertising, news, and television programming, were pushing for a particular model of global commerce that favored U.S. interests. Advancing the cultural imperialism thesis, Schiller’s (1976) argument paralleled the advocacy of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), which demanded more equitable access to control of the global media system by countries worldwide (Thussu, 2006).

Boyd-Barrett (1977) and Lee (1980) refined Schiller’s thesis to develop the theory of media imperialism. While sharing much of the cultural imperialism model, media imperialism was less reliant on the U.S. media industry for its analysis. It was also less structural and Marxist, focusing more on media flows and hierarchies of power in its assessment of the relationships and interactions of countries in the area of media and communications. Critics like Thompson (1995) and Giddens (as cited in Rantanen, 2005) chastised media and cultural imperialist scholars, arguing that they had exaggerated the connection between media and dependency, ignored the role of national elites, and left no room for interpreting audience agency (Rantanen, 2005; Straubhaar, 1991). Other cultural imperialism skeptics proposed the concepts of cultural identification and cultural proximity to argue that interactions among cultures, nations, peoples, and regions are mostly non-imperial (Straubhaar, 1991). Additionally, although endorsing cultural imperialism's argument of an imbalanced global power hierarchy, Hall (1991) rejects the notion that the global has engulfed the local, positing that both the local and global are simultaneously undergoing reconfiguration.
A less questioned, but more potent, contribution of the cultural imperialism thesis is its insistence that since World War II, mainly owing to its dominance over a wide range of cultural industries, no other country has benefited from the global capitalist system as the United States lingers (Beltran & Fox de Cardona, 1979; Adorno, 2001). The Frankfurt School, spearheaded by the influential text *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, penned by Adorno and Horkheimer, had provided early guidance to scholars of global media and communication on analytical insights into ways in which global capitalism transforms culture into commodity to produce cultural goods, such as films (Adorno, 2001).

While conceding some of the pitfalls of early media and cultural imperialism research, such as its avoidance of intra-national media dynamics and key cultural factors, Boyd-Barrett (1998) emphasizes that despite its inadequate attention to intra-national media relationships, gender, and ethnicity, the cultural imperialism approach remains appropriate and useful for critiquing the persistent structural dominance of global communications by a few corporations and countries, a phenomenon he describes as the colonization of communication space. I concur with Boyd-Barrett, since despite its weaknesses, media and cultural imperialist theses proffer the most comprehensive and systemic framework yet for understanding how global power circulates seamlessly through and within media industries.

**Neoliberalism and Globalization**

Orthodox liberal ideology applied to the dynamics of the contemporary global economy, such as globalization, technological advancement, the pervasive influence of MNCs, the preeminence of the Breton Woods Institutions, and the spread of liberal democracies has created a new offshoot known as neoliberalism (Friedman, 2002). Generally, neoliberalism is interested
in transferring control of national economies from the public to the private sector. One of the most concrete explications of the neoliberal agenda is the Washington Consensus, a term coined by John Williamson and appropriated by economists and political scientists to capture the theory that a harmonious blend of democracy, free markets, privatization, and trade liberalization is the best strategy for realizing national growth and prosperity (McChesney, 2001).

Neoliberalism and globalization are interrelated (Sklair, 2002). Put simply, globalization is a ubiquitous system and process of facilitating international and transnational economic integration that advance global capitalism (Thussu, 2006). Globalization is not new, neither is media transnationalism; moreover, globalization, with its tendencies to homogenize, hybridize, complicate trading, undermine sovereignties, and displace peoples, is an ancient phenomenon (Boyd-Barrett, 2006). The decade of the 60s offer sufficient cases in which transnational media engineered modernization and democratization projects within the larger concept of cultural and media imperialism (Boyd-Barrett, 2006).

Amin (1997) contends that the modern form of globalization is different. The current global trend of enveloping all countries in the capitalist system has created a level of polarization never before witnessed (Amin, 1997). Presenting his theory of the core and the periphery, he argues that countries of the core monopolize technology, finance, natural resources, media and communications, and weapons of mass destruction to preserve their global dominance. Their determination not to relinquish monopoly of these key industries and their resilience in foiling any significant revolution have intensified a center-periphery inequality, which is not resulting only in a new world order with heightened levels of polarization, but also in rising levels of global unrest (Amin, 2003).

Dismissing theories of hegemony as too “sterile” and “unscientific” to explain the
evolution and perpetuation of global inequality and polarization, Amin (2003) presents two features of the current world systems that give a more insightful perspective: the “erosion of the autocentered State, and the fracturing of the great divide from industrial and non-industrialized categories to new forms of polarization” (p.181). Registering the innate oppressiveness of the global capitalist system, Amin (1997) suggests that the only realistic alternative is to replace it with a more humanistic conception of globalization rooted in a socialist ethos.

Indeed, the increasing encroachment of globalization processes into sovereign domains has influenced several political economists to proclaim the reformation of the nation-state and the creation of a new global political order (Amin, 1997; Castells, 2010; Strange, 1996). This new order constitutes powerful global civil societies and networks that envelop the traditional nation-state without entirely destroying it (Castells, 2010).

Milton Freidman and von Hayek, major advocates of neoliberalism, view political power as a disempowering force that uses coercion to undermine individual freedom (Couldry, 2010; Friedman, 2002). An integral component of neoliberalism is the perpetual mission to expand its scope and spheres of functional operation through more ambitious pursuits of resources, an obsession with taking (Shiva, 2005).

Richard Epstein is one of the most prominent and vociferous advocates of contemporary neoliberalism and free market principles. His seminal work, *Takings: Private Property and the Power of Eminent Domain* (1985) remains one of the most frequently cited texts in scholarship advancing free-market principles. Shiva (2005) charges that Epstein's proposal of an ownership society rests on three major falsehoods that reek with intentions of enclosure: whitewashing colonization's greed and silencing indigenous rights, equating the public trust to the theory of the
eminent domain, and reducing the public to individuals.

Neoliberalism often conjures concepts of economic theories, but Foucault (2008) considers the phenomenon more as a political practice, which renders the state relatively impotent in economics under a “regime of truth” that elevates the market to preeminence as a natural and legitimate location of knowledge. Largely in consonance with Foucault (2008), Grossberg (2005) observes that the free market repudiates socio-political approaches to governing society. In that sense, it is not the people who rule but the market. Shiva (2005) reinforces Foucoults (2008) and Grossberg’s (2005) viewpoints by emphasizing that economy, politics, and culture are inseparable; in fact, they are parts of a synergistic process of human organization.

The emergence of radical neoliberal doctrines has roots in European and North American scholarship’s opposition to John Maynard Keynes’ theory of state intervention that emerged in the 1930s (Couldry, 2010). These scholars considered Keynesian theory, which advocated government’s involvement in correcting social imbalances caused by markets, irrational. Keynesian critics posited that the market not governments should wield power over society. The hypocrisy of neoliberalism in advancing a rhetoric of deregulation while employing regulatory frameworks to embolden markets continues to confound, if not unsettle, political economy scholars (Couldry, 2010; Levi-Faur & Jordana, 2005). Neoliberalism and financialization are closely related, since the former depends on the latter for sustenance (Crotty, 2000).

One of the most profound impacts of neoliberalism is its capacity to transform nations from welfare states to workfare states (Jessop, 2002). Workfare states employ rigid neoliberal policies that place the needs of the market above social development and citizen welfare (Gamble, 1988; Gough, 2000). The workfare state does not neglect welfare programs entirely.
They support them by designing and implementing them through a neoliberal framework, usually characterized by Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) (Roberts, 2010). The state utilizes PPPs to contract both global and local private or other non-governmental interests to provide public services and capital development programs meant to engender more humane and socially friendly perceptions of the relationship between neoliberalism and civil society (Flinders, 2005). Social programs initiated and administered under the neoliberal paradigm are often not based on sustainability, but on a larger political project advancing the workfare state model (Roberts, 2010).

This model of economic management produces significant tensions in the relationship between developing states and their citizenry, because it demands sovereign subservience to and dependence on external capital investments, which invariably lead to these vulnerable states making excessive concessions to multinational and transnational corporations through attractive tax breaks, obsequious labor environments, and an overall relaxed regulatory framework (Farnsworth, 2006). Transnational corporations, many with economies larger than that of most SIDS, and a few whose CEOs have personal wealth well beyond that of the combined wealth of significant factions of the world's populations, are the shapers of the global economy (UNCTAD, 1995). In 2000, the top 100 of the 65,000 non-financial TNCs were responsible for 11% of global foreign assets and 14% of world employment (UNCTAD, 2002).

Data evidencing the exploitation of labor and the human rights of workers in the developing world by TNCs are not only convincing but overwhelming (UNCTAD, 2004). The workfare of neoliberalism is unrelenting in its quest to lower wages at the behest of extracting maximum value from labor with little regard for social consequences (McNally, 2009). Robertson (2007) clearly observes that by classifying labor into wages and non-wages
categories, globalizing forces driven by TNCs ensure the continued underdevelopment of large swaths of the globe. TNCs classify crucial aspects of employee welfare, such as retirement, vacation, and risk exposure as non-wages, and dissect wages into purchasing power and relative wages (World Bank, 2007), despite the fact that both are fundamental to meeting the basic needs of employees ((Fair Labor Association, 2008).

Hijzen and Swaim (2008) contend that the United Nations has a responsibility to directly support developing countries ensure that TNCs adhere to international labor standards. U.N pressure, bolstered by international NGO’s, should be a routine global strategy to monitor and punish TNCs that abuse workers (Hijzen and Swaim, 2008): so far, this type of collaboration has not materialized. In fact, the complicity of governments and intra-national interests in facilitating these labor exploitations appears to be the norm.

Ultimately, the multiple and multi-level influences of globalization and TNCs have made national and international concepts and delineations insufficient for understanding governmental policies (Milner, 1998). New challenges in the global economy have led to resounding calls for alternatives to liberalism for directing global governance (Held, 2003).

A Critical Globalism

Theorizing development is not a simple matter. Arguments over modernization and dependency have historically rooted theorizations of development into dichotomous relationships that frequently overvalue classical economics. Before Sen (1987) began extending conceptions of development, mainstream economists used income levels to rationalize wellbeing. Sen (1987) argued that development indices based on income obfuscate more compelling social indicators such as health, education and basic needs. After incorporating human capabilities, thresholds of
poverty, and freedom into the development matrix, Sen (1999) concluded that development is about people, their choices, capabilities, and freedoms, not just the existence of them but their distribution. Contemporary development scholars would extend this definition further to include some form of meaningful and durable change that promises more sustainable improvements in human conditions. The most frequently cited definition of sustainable development comes from the Brundtland Report, which notes that “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43).

More recent articulations of development, such as post-structuralism and postmodernism, although overstating discourses, have integrated more convincingly into the development debate social and cultural phenomena, centering core issues of power and knowledge (DuBois, 1991; Marglin and Marglin, 1990). Despite the openings produced by these new theories and the telling critiques that they unleashed on privileged theories of modernization, modernity has proven quite resilient, reincarnated into new strands, such as neomodernization or new modernity, that foreground risk factors and the legitimacy of market forces (Beck, 1992; Nederveen Pieterse, 1996).

Development theories generally tend to be teleological; (Schuurman, 2004): they conceive of nations as coherent units with prescribed designs (Booth 2004), moving from primitivism to some variant of capitalism. Teleological theorization downplays conflicts and complexities and overstates the effects of commonalities, leading to simplified conclusions (Bracarense, 2013).

In the last hundred years, two major development strategies have dominated efforts to improve Latin American and Caribbean societies: commodity export and domestic
industrialization (Joseph, 2008). Neither succeeded, forcing scholars from the region to theorize new ways of conceiving development (Kregel, 2008). The financialization of world markets and the neoliberalization of the global economy have also helped to displace much of development theory, almost framing it as a sort of unvarying bygone paradigm. The fact is development theory was never that coherent. Rejecting binaries and dichotomies in developmental thinking, Nederveen Pieterse (1996) argues that development theory was never homogenous, static, or periodical. He states that there were always and continues to be incongruities and dialectical strains mediating internal and external conceptions and theories of development (Nederveen Pieterse, 1996).

A more useful approach to understanding development in a research project would be to employ an interdisciplinary approach that explores more comprehensively multiple perspectives, which takes into account the valuable arguments from both weak and strong forces and players, a research posture that searches for nuanced and sophisticated nodes of knowledge along the spectrum of arguments prioritizing the nation-state on one hand and pushing globalization and free-market principles on the other (Scholte, 1993; Nederveen Pieterse, 1988).

Nederveen Pieterse (1996) describes this type of epistemology as a critical globalism, a way of “theorizing the entire field of forces in a way that takes into account not just market forces but also interstate relations, international agencies and civil society in its domestic as well as transnational manifestations” (p. 554). By inculcating this epistemic stance towards theorizing development, researchers could avoid clichés and the recycling of old arguments, placing the critique center stage.

Subjecting to critical globalism means abstinence from essentialism, adopting an engaging rather than a dismissive posture. For scholars from developing countries who are
investigating policy dynamics, this suggests a progressive engagement with the processes of globalization, selecting and deselecting various aspects of capital flows, financial interactions and technological evolutions that address varied forms of inequality and pinpoint even the most inconspicuous interacting interests (Nederven Pieterse, 1996). Along the lines of critical globalism, Bracarense (2013) also proposes a decentered approach to researching development, where power relations and frames of references continually undergo reconfiguration and interrogation.

Small Island Developing States

Defining SIDS is complicated. Some of its members are not small, some are not really islands, and some are barely on the brink of being classified as developing nations, and a few contentiously define themselves as states (Fry, 2005). Despite these contradictions, most SIDS share conspicuously distinctive similarities and challenges. Perhaps to offset some of these inconsistencies, SIDS also coalesce under the umbrella of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) in a number of key international initiatives, especially for lobbying and negotiations at the United Nations. The AOS has 42 members and affiliates (Fry, 2005). Not all members of the AOS are SIDS or UN members (UN-OHRLLS, 2013).

In this study, I avoid confusion over a definition of SIDS by deferring to the classification offered by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). UNDESA identifies 52 countries as members of SIDS, categorizing them geographically into three separate regions: the Caribbean; the Pacific; and Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS). Each region has a regional body representing its interests: for the Caribbean that organization is the Caribbean Community, CARICOM (UN-OHRLLS, 2013).
In the 1970s, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was one of the most active proponents of the establishment and legitimization of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as a formal negotiating entity (Campling, 2006). Deliberations on the New International Economic Order in 1974, which saw strategic political alliances among many Third World countries in critiquing imbalances in international trade, also raised global awareness of the unique challenges facing SIDS (UNCTAD, 1971). Eventually, the crux of the debates settled on the vulnerability of the economies and environments of these small countries, producing a handful of powerful supporting countries and a majority of developed countries as detractors. Few developed countries were sympathetic to the SIDS cause, because while these small economies were extremely dependent on the global economy, their economic and political potential to seriously impact the economies of developed countries was inconsequential (Campling, 2006).

It was the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in June 1992 that first formally recognized SIDS as an amalgamation of small developing countries (UN-OHRLLS, 2013). Subsequently, the United Nations provided significant support for the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) initiated in 1994, which provided the foundation for the maturity of the SIDS case.

BPOA not only significantly intensified cooperation among SIDS, but it also elevated their peculiarities and challenges in international discourses on development (Campling, 2006). The BPOA was a comprehensive action plan covering a wide range of issues pertinent to the needs of SIDS, from environmental preservation to tourism, energy, institutional building, science and technology, and trade and commerce (Fry, 2005). Unfortunately, little came out of the BOPA, because of the apathy of the international community to the proposed actions (Fry,
2005). In most cases, the situation of the SIDS is even direr today. Since the BOPA initiative, the institutionalization of the WTO, and the proliferation of neoliberal policies globally, the international community has cut its development assistance to SIDS by half, even as threats to the survival of these small nations escalate (Fry, 2005). Today, UNCTAD and the Commonwealth are two of only a few high-profile non-SIDS-administered international institutions advocating for special concessions to SIDS in international trade and economic negotiations.

The Commonwealth first endorsed and supported the validity of small island states’ vulnerabilities at the 1977 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting (CFMM) in Barbados. With 25 of its 54 members classified as SIDs, the Commonwealth Secretariat is relentless in arguing the SIDs case, consistently producing a number of seminal studies on the economic challenges of small states. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation incurs 60% of its cost on assistance to small states (Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States, 2000).

Several prominent Western scholars have claimed that there is not a convincing economic case for differentiating SIDS from their landlocked counterparts in the Small Developing Economies (SDEs) group of nations (Biagini and Hoyle, 1999; Faye et al., 2004; Read, 2004; Selwyn, 1980). Highlighting environmental, navigational, and spatial challenges, Campling (2006) counters that SIDS in the Caribbean, Atlantic, and Indian regions share more in common than other SDEs or even with their larger neighbors.

Territorial remoteness and isolation present unique challenges for the governance and development of SIDS (Koonjul, 2004). Additionally, SIDS countries have exceptionally fragile ecosystems and are extremely susceptible to natural disasters (Koonjul, 2004). The direct and
immediate implications of global neoliberalism's assault on ecological systems are as obvious nowhere else than in the poorest SIDS (Shiva, 2005). In these countries, ecological movements are not simply political performances but desperate acts of survival.

Small Island Developing States (SIDs) are continuously disadvantaged by insufficient technical expertise, poor staffing, inadequate institutional resources, and insufficient market clout to seriously impact trade negotiations (“Small developing countries struggle in WTO,” 2010). For SIDS, clearly one of the most destructive policies of the World Bank and the IMF is their over-reliance and stipulation of orthodox liberal policies, most conspicuous through the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) as the core of its strategy for stimulating economic development in Less Developed Countries (Wade, 2011).

The current global economic order does not accommodate kindly the single-commodity specialization of the economies of SIDS, which is embedded in a peculiar history of colonization, imperialism, and external domination (Koonjul, 2004). Neither the IMF nor the WTO recognizes the need to provide special remedies for the economic peculiarities of small island states. The logic of these institutions is heavily embedded in orthodox liberal theory, which holds that each country can leverage its competitive advantage if it surrenders to the market. The reality is that most SIDS members remain unsuccessful at implementing export-led development strategies, because multilateral institutions, including the most powerful IGOs, are bending their arms, insisting that they improve their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a condition for tangible and meaningful assistance (Koonjul, 2004).

Troubled by the reluctance of many powerful nations and multilateral agencies to recognize SIDS, member governments mobilized a number of different United Nations mechanisms to implement high-profile meetings as follow-ups to BOPA, which emerged out of
the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS. The most notable of these initiatives were the UN General Assembly 22nd special session in 1999, the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, held at the United Nations headquarters; the World Summit on Sustainable Development, convened in Johannesburg in 2002; and the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, hosted by Mauritius in 2005 (Fry, 2005).

None of these initiatives brought any significant victories for SIDS, although they produced slight glimpses of progress. The UN General Assembly Special Session called on the WTO to provide preferential trading conditions to SIDS that would insure against their economic collapse (Halvorssen, 1999), and the Mauritius Strategy signaled progress on a number of environmental issues and further legitimized some key SIDS concerns ("The Mauritius Strategy," 2005). Also, in 2001, the United Nations General Assembly formally emphasized its commitment towards advancing BPOA negotiations and assisting small states lobby the international community by establishing the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States ("The Mauritius Strategy," 2005).

Negotiating at the Mauritius meeting under the assemblage of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), SIDS pushed a number of bold initiatives at the Mauritius meeting; however, while they received notable support from the G77 and China, they were totally baulked by the United States and its OPEC allies (Fry, 2005; MacKay, 2004). All participating countries, except the United States, adopted the AOSIS position paper: Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States as the foundation for negotiations.
More importantly, the United States ensured that SIDS made no progress in their efforts to secure concessions in international trade ("U.S. Government," 2004). It insisted that any trade negotiations should be referred to the WTO. The United States position came against the backdrop of its negotiation of the North America Free Agreement outside the instruments of the WTO (Fry, 2005). The SIDS' persistent requests for a meeting to endorse a petition for the WTO to grant SIDS preferential conditions received an unequivocal rejection from a few countries, with the United States at the fore ("The Mauritius Strategy," 2005). One of their most critical and desperate objectives of the meeting fell flat on its face.

The extension of the WTO into new spheres of control and its increasingly inflexible neoliberal regulatory system continue to create hardships for SIDS classified as non-least developed countries, because the most influential multilateral institutions refuse to offer them any exemptions or protections in the global trading regime (Campling, 2006). Following persistent and unified pressure from small countries, there are some indications that the WTO may be caving in. These countries lobby for the establishment of Small Economies Work Programme within the WTO, which calls for members whose trade accounts for 0.06% or less of WTO trade to qualify for special treatment in international trading agreements (Campling, 2006). Notwithstanding intense and protracted negotiations, the proposal is yet to receive the endorsement of any of the most influential WTO members (Campling, 2006).

The position of the European Commission and the World Bank on SIDS straddles a precarious scale, with UNCTAD and the Commonwealth Secretariat on one end and the IMF and WTO on the other. Although the European Union provides one third of all SIDS foreign aid, the European Commission policies, which clarify SIDS as Less Developed Countries, qualifying them for exceptions and exemptions in trading agreements, are not indicative of a unified
European Union position. Some of the wealthiest European Nations, including the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France and Germany do not recognize SIDS as a special trading group (Campling, 2006). The World Bank remains fixed on its position that any intervention into the challenges of SIDS would follow the model that encourages them to exploit their comparative advantage (Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank, 2000).

Twenty-three Caribbean territories are members of the 52-member SIDS grouping. All but one CARICOM nation-state, Suriname, are SIDS. Additionally, the United Nations recognizes two of the five CARICOM associate members as SIDS (UN-OHRLLS, 2013). A discussion about the political economy of SIDS is invariably a discussion about the Caribbean's, and more specifically CARICOM,'s political and economic challenges. In this study, I use Caribbean to mean CARICOM. CARICOM is a regional community of fifteen full-fledge member nations, and five associate nations belonging to the archipelago along the Caribbean Sea. CARICOM was established and revised by treaty to facilitate the implement and management of a common market, and to facilitate country-level representation on a number of trade and developmental issues (CARICOM, 2013).

Skelton (2004) provides four dimensions for explaining the Pan Caribbean concept: geographic, economic, political, and socio-cultural. The geographic map accommodates the lands sharing the Caribbean Sea. The economic framing highlights countries sharing the economic imperatives of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the socio-cultural space points to the commonalities in history, demography, culture, language, and identity of people from the region.

The expansion of global neoliberalism and the growth of economic regionalism have further constrained CARICOM from competing on the global market (Ramsaran & Hosein,
Like most of its SIDS partners, the Caribbean countries are slow to find niche opportunities in the global economic system for developing their economies: sporadic and antiquated policy measures exacerbate this lethargy (Nurse et al., 2009). With the looming expiration of their few remaining preferential arrangements on the international market, these countries are now desperately exploring new forms of economic activity to buffer their already felt disadvantages, making them even more susceptible to gilded and untested economic investment opportunities (Mohammed, 2008).

Few SIDS are as economically vulnerable as CARICOM countries. Their specialization in only a few commodities makes them unprotected from major shocks on the global market (Mohammed, 2008). Since the tourism and financial sectors are among the most lucrative in the world economy, these islands continue to target them for niche opportunities (Bernal, 2006). While the region continues to show tremendous promise for growing its tourism sectors, it is aware of the corresponding environmental implications that threaten its sustainable development (Gossling and Wall, 2007).

Although developed nations and IGOs continue to pressure Caribbean nations to diversify their economies, their economic exploits remain constantly under the external surveillance and control of many members of the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). When some CARICOM members instituted bold measures to develop their offshore financial services, the OECD countries decided to rein them in with the Harmful Tax Competition Initiative. The main purpose of this instrument was to force these countries to abandon their low tax policies and financial privacy systems (Mitchell, 2004; Vlcek’s (2007). Ironically, while the United States found these financial provisions unacceptable, it continues to encourage these countries to grant gratuitous tax incentives and exemptions to Hollywood film
productions.

History shows that SIDS countries are continually entrapped into acquiescing to legally binding arrangements that are not in their best interest (Frye, 2005). Often these countries have little choice to negotiate far-reaching agreements, other than appeal to the moral sensibilities and humanitarian consciousness of influential sections of the citizenry of their powerful global trading partners (Campling, 2006). Moreover, the tensions between the national state and civil society are uniquely complex for SIDS. Even such states with a flourishing multi-party system find it difficult to execute legitimate forms of popular democracy (Peters, 1992). In these countries, the bourgeoisie or economic elites control the plans and activities of political parties either through their influence on finances or administration. Additionally, the unique spatial configuration and the nurturing of relationships delimited by shared use of limited physical places facilitate cronyism and clientalism, and remain a constant thorn to the development of civil society (Read, 2004). The uniqueness of island life interconnects partisan politics, interpersonal bonds, and kinship into a web of political alliances that threaten the integrity of policy decisions and public debates (Wood, 1967).

Ruling elites are the biggest beneficiaries of SIDS’ encounters with the global trading regime. As facilitators of neoliberalism, they enrich themselves, families, and cronies and suppress democratic ideals and progressive public and social policies (Clapham, 1999) For islanders to transform their societies form cyclical phases of underdevelopment that mark their historical identity, they ought to invest heavily in democratic processes of policy formation and articulation that represent their will and social agenda (Cheru, 2000). Campling (2006) believes that SIDS can only achieve sustainable development when they engage their citizens in inter-island democratic processes of national decision-making, and extend these experiences and
structures to tangible forms of cooperation and coordination with other SIDS members.

A vibrant civil society is crucial for the effective governance of SIDS. Beasley-Murray (2010) charges that liberal and neoliberal principles have hijacked civil society theory and practices, making the concept slippery and difficult to delimit. Touraine (1982) offers useful insights into civil society, but Cohen and Arato (1994) present one of the clearest expositions of the overarching theory (p. 89). They conceptualize civil society as an intermediate sphere “of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere, the sphere associate, social movements, and forms of public communication” (p. ix)

For Cohen & Arato (1994), society constitutes a partially rationalized lifeworld: a rational-bureaucratic system comprising the state, the market, and other sociopolitical subsystems; and civil society, which has to defend the lifeworld from instrumentality. Civil society is only useful as long as it is able to rationalize the lifeworld. Whenever it attempts to separate civil and political society it enters the realm of fundamentalism and takes the path of anarchy (Beasley-Murray, 2010). Colas (1997) notes that the term civil society is often measured against a perceived fanaticism (p.25). Today, civil society theory validates fanaticism as a part of modernity through conceptions of “democratic fundamentalism” (Colas, 1997, p.96).

Other scholars have relied on civil society theory to analyze power tensions in society. International political economists sometimes refer to civil society as the Third Sector to describe the spaces of the public sphere involving volunteerism, community activism, and citizenship, behind business as the Second, and the State as the First (Etzioni, 1973). Poulantzas (2000) notes that in a capitalist system, the state manages contradictions and challenges in its dealings with civil society by establishing strategic alliances with a range of power brokers who do not threaten its hegemonic control. Garcia Canclini (1995) uses Cohen and Arato’s (1994) theory to
argue that subaltern resistance is useless, because the market will inevitably overpower their frayed challenge. He argues that only social groups with the capacity and politics to negotiate are legitimate participants of civil society.

Multilevel governmental policies and practices predicated on neoliberal principles have penetrated civil society in almost every country across the globe, a trend most acutely and devastatingly reflected in the sustained pressure on developing countries to embrace financialization (Ayers, 2008). The preponderance of contemporary research on international political economy reason that globalization, mainly through the efforts of multinational corporations, has stripped governments in developing countries of autonomy to develop national policies. This field of research defines the relationship between states and MNCs as interdependent and cooperative (Dunning, 1991; Luo, 2001; Stopford et al., 1991).

Questioning one of the main arguments of this theory, which makes extinct the notion of the state/firm competitive relationship, Haslam (2007) examined cases in two Latin American countries that exposed its precariousness. While his research supported the validity of the imbalanced power relationship between MNCs and underdeveloped states, it found no evidence that the state viewed foreign investment as necessarily synchronous with its developmental goals; neither did it find that these types of negotiations were strictly the domain of international systems and structures.

Numerous studies have documented the malleability and dexterity of multinational corporations in undermining public policies and government regulations in developing countries to facilitate their business interests (Beamish, 1988; Biersteker, 1987; Grosse, 1989; Kennedy, 1992). Ultimately, Haslam's (2007) research concludes that the state continues to retain significant agency in such transactions. His study points to the importance of intra-governmental
relationships and politics in the state's development of investment policies and strategies. These relationships interface with alliances between multinational corporations and domestic elites to present a complex web of relational forces with the state at the epicenter. Governments in developing countries routinely frame economic policies in narratives that stress public interests; yet, frequently, behind this veil, is an unequivocal representation of private interests (Shiva, 2005).

Environmental Vulnerability of SIDS

Thirty percent of the world’s biodiversity hotspots and 50% of its marine tropical diversity, including the majority of rare species are located in island ecosystems (Gerlach, 2008). Islands are typically victims of global resource exploitation (Cinner et al., 2005), and nowhere else is this truism more profound than in SIDS. Despite the fact that developed countries experience 15% of the globe’s extreme weather hazards, they suffer only 2% of its associative deaths. Contrastingly, developing countries face 11% of these extreme natural disasters, but their residents account for 53% of the deaths that they cause (UNDP, 2004).

The United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) notes in a 2009 report, “It is an irony that SIDS and LDCs contribute little to the problem of climate change but are impacted most severely, hence suffering disproportionate damage” (p. 11). The biodiversity of SIDS, such as coral reefs and tropical flora and fauna, depends on an in-tact ecosystem for its survival. Specific climatic conditions impacted by ocean-atmosphere and rainfall impact a fragile environmental balance. Disruptions of these ecosystems by rises in sea levels and storm surges threaten the very existence of these islands (UN-OHRLLS, 2009).
The Caribbean’s reality typifies this phenomenon. Between 1971 and 2004, the climate in the Caribbean has warmed 0°C to 0.5°C every decade, with more frequent occurrences of extreme temperatures, both warm and cold (Peterson et al., 2002). Extreme climatic changes crudely affect the Caribbean islands because of their size, geology and topography. One of the most visible examples of this is the changing patterns in water availability and rainfall levels. For example, Dominica depends entirely on surface water and streams for its water supply (UN-OHRLLS, 2009).

Increases in sea levels are particularly threatening to Caribbean islands. They cause erosion and flooding and undermine vital resources along coastlines. Over half of the population of the Caribbean lives within 1.5 km from the sea shore (UN-OHRLLS, 2009). Human actions within and without the borders of these islands threaten their ecology. Over-fishing, sedimentation, and pollution have eroded 80% of the coral cover of reefs in the Caribbean in the last three decades. The cost of containment is high and adjustments financially prohibitive for these cash-strapped governments. For instance, experts projected that it will cost Jamaica US$462 million to protect its coasts from a one-meter rise in sea-level (Government of Jamaica, 1999). For Antigua and St. Kitts, the figure stands at around US$50 million (UN-OHRLLS, 2009).

Most members of SIDS are barely struggling to keep their economies afloat, a challenge that global trade and disappearing preferential markets are making even more difficult. Their lack of resources and their economic fragility have made them ineffective in adapting to the environmental challenges brought on by climate change. Governments in the region are in a conundrum, because they are hard-pressed to grow their economies amidst their competitive disadvantages on the global market, making them easy prey to unscrupulous enterprises (Pelling
The competition for coastal land is especially intense in SIDS nations. Tourism and agriculture compete heavily for these prime locations with both emphasizing their economic potential, but infrastructural development, over population, and industrialization make them more susceptible to natural disasters (Wright, 2013). Although tourism is the mainstay of the economies of many SIDS, international trends and governmental policy have established a typical tourism model that depends on coastal zone infrastructural construction favoring the business interests of multinational companies and signature hotel chains (Wright, 2013). Frequently, these development projects destroy natural buffers that are often the most effective protection against coastal hazards.

In this economic model, local communities become inheritors of the environmental risks of these private investments, since government policy, legislation and regulations are too obsequious to big-business to afford any real protections. Wright (2013) warns, “With profit maximisation the ultimate goal for the vast majority of corporations, private investors are likely to continue making decisions based on financial considerations, such as different timescales regarding the Return on Investment (ROI), rather than sustainability outcomes” (p. 1).

Although most SIDS nations have some form of legislation requiring Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for certain types of investment projects, these studies are not mandated in many circumstances, leaving their requirement to the regulatory discretion of public authorities; furthermore, SIDS are notorious for lax enforcement of regulations and inadequate monitoring (Wright, 2013). Countries with poor governance and weak public institutions tend to be more vulnerable to disaster risk (UN-OHRLLS, 2009). Faced with anemic economic growth and crippling debt commitments, necessity has forced Caribbean nations to consolidate their
scarce resources to pursue sustainable development practices that address economic needs as well as climate change threats (United Nations, 2013).

*Cross-Border Film Production and the Hollywood Business Model*

Arsenault and Castell (2008) argue that corporate and technological conventions marked by globalization, digitization, networking, and cultural differentiation have reconfigured international media operations, most evident by the transnationalization of operations and the localization of content. Cross-border film productions are becoming increasingly popular alongside the trajectories of Kraidy’s (2005) “corporate transculturalism,” a type of discourse reasoning that nations, communities, and borders acquire economic progress as long as they serve global capital,” a normative type of economic formula “that respects no borders and harbors no prejudice toward cultural and ethnic difference that can be harnessed for growth” (p. 90).

To maximize profitability, transnational media entities establish synergies, characterized by webs of partnerships and cross investments that depend on the brokerage of partnerships with finance, technology, cultural industries, social networks, and political institutions. They insure these relationships by a number of strategies, the most obvious of which is their consolidation of resources through different forms of integration and their sharing of high level executives (Arsenault & Castells, 2008; Bagdikian, 2000).

When attempting to understand the politics and economics driving international media activities, Almiron (2010) encourages media scholars to scrutinize the financial logics underpinning cultural industries. Owners of media conglomerates use communication and information facilities and platforms to manipulate non-media international financial assets by
synchronizing a powerful network of capitalist actors to maximize financial objectives, effecting
telling implications for the global economy (Almiron, 2010).

This crude financialization of the global economy subjects cultural industries to an
oligopolistic dogma that standardizes cultural processes and products, enslaving them to
indelicate models of profitability and the insatiability of financial investors (Almiron, 2010).
IGOS, such as The World Band and the IMF, remain particularly influential in shaping the
contemporary international media landscape through their policies and dictates of deregulation,
liberalization, and privatization (Artz, 2007; Sterling, 2000). This codified international
economic model has given corporations unprecedented cultural, political, and economic power
over entire societies, reconfiguring the role of the media within limited corporate paradigms
rather than within wider societal and developmental responsibilities (Arsenault & Castells,
2008).

It is exactly the widespread adoption of neoliberal economics around the world,
proliferated by deregulation and trade agreements, that has created the concentrated and over-
commercialized global media system (McChesney, 2010). The expansive commercialization of
the media blends with the proliferation of processes of information digitization that is
dynamically reshaping global business. The world’s largest media businesses are therefore
grappling for shares of several different markets.

Arsenault & Castells (2008) identify four major trends in the evolution of the
contemporary global media: concentration of media ownership, diversification and integration of
products and platforms, the customization and segmentation of audiences, and the emphasis on
optimizing synergistic economies. In addition to these trends, they identify four corollary
currents that are transforming the global communications environment: a compact nexus of
mergers, partnerships, and cross-investments; the dominance of vertically integrated businesses; the manipulation of content to maximize advertising revenue; and the merging of old and new media to diversify investment (Arsenault and Castells, 2008).

Many scholars remain disappointed that the technological advancements and increased access ushered in by new media have provided some of the most potent arguments for media conglomerates and their political cronies to advance aggressive deregulatory agendas (Holt, 2008; McChesney, 2008). Despite all the political and commercial rhetoric of the capacity of these new media to advance global democratic processes and systems, little has changed. McChesney (2008) observes, "The market has weeded down the crowd pretty quickly." (p. 42).

The increasing consolidation and concentration of media empires continue to displace even the most secure media players, forcing them to fall in line with the current trend (McChesney, 2008; Noam, 2006). Thussu (2000) also argues that the radical improvements and availability of communication technologies make it more feasible and lucrative for media empires to claim large swaths of the global media market, creating a more anti-competitive media environment. When new media began to show promise for more diverse media participation, the entrenched media giants hassled and bullied the U.S. government into enacting intellectual property legislation and adopting restrictive regulatory frameworks into new frontiers that all but guaranteed their continued survival, if not their free-wheeling inflation (Cohen, 2004).

Rose (2008) agrees, noting that contemporary intellectual property regimes are undemocratic and serve mainly to facilitate the interests of a few media conglomerates and transnational corporations at unprecedented levels. The expansion of intellectual property control has not only restrained new media, but has inadvertently extended the capacities of old media to capitalize new areas of culture (Benkler, 2006). It has not only rearrange many economic processes
and structures, but has also further facilitated the global expansion of Western capitalist interests and subverted democratic and journalistic values to excessive consumerism, financial superstructures, and materialism (Rose, 2008).

It is important to examine cross-border film production in the context of the expanding role of intellectual property rights and wider international economic activities, especially against the background of the intensifying encroachment of neoliberal principles into the deepest recesses of the public sphere (Benkler, 2006). Attention to the neoliberal trend toward deepening the reach of intellectual property and copyrights is not only important for exploring the operations of media entities, but more importantly, it is crucial for exploring the shrinking of the commons, the suppression of civic engagement, the stifling of democracy, and the contraction of sovereign rights (Lessig, 2006). From 1995, when the WTO ratified the Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), it significantly dismantled restrictions on private ownership to almost limitless levels (Shiva, 2005). This radical policy shift continues to portend tremendous implications for the scope and boundaries of public goods and the commons in almost every corner of the earth.

Arguably, instead of the new global media environment advancing democracy, it has advanced a more indiscriminate model of capitalism that undermines the rights of citizens worldwide and reconstitutes notions of cultural and political agency (Klaehn, 2010; McChesney, 2008). Herman & McChesney (1997) argue that the mass media institutions that have emerged as transnational structures are powerful hegemonic tools used by capitalism to promote and facilitate consumerism and commercialization throughout the world. They further add that these transnational media institutions package cultures and traditions into commodities that are reoffered to specific cultural audiences (Herman & McChesney, 1997).

Research projects examining the way that capital commoditize culture and manipulates
the public sphere are crucial for understanding modern society (Habermas, 1987). Scholars of the political economy of communication believe that production economics and their related structures shape public discourses by creating hierarchies of cultural forms. By tracking the financing and organization of cultural industries, we are able to appreciate how transformations in public discourses and cultural representations follow particular prescriptive patterns.

Habermas’ (1964) explications of the public sphere during the embryonic phases of his theorization, lamented the increasing impact of consumerism on public reason and the degeneration of critical public debate; however, they brushed over, if not ignored, the role of the media in developing and nurturing public discourse. Inexplicably, despite implicitly correcting this omission, Habermas remains reticent in incorporating film into his theorization of the public sphere (Modisane, 2010).

Garnham (1995) argues that in Western capitalist systems, the notion of the public sphere presents an inevitable contradiction between economic capitalist models and political ideology grounded in democracy. He points to a murky zone where market forces and democratic values intersect to define the public sphere. Garnham (1995) adds that the mass media offer tremendous opportunities for examining the contradictions between capitalism and the public sphere.

When referring to Hollywood, I avoid the temptation to self-restrict my inquiry to issues only related to theatrical releases, for Hollywood is as much about television production as it is about theatrical films (Hozic, 2001). Furthermore, from Garnham’s (1986) perspective, we can view contemporary Hollywood as both a commercial and political system. His dissecting of Hollywood is bittersweet for readings of “public sphere” expressions. There is scarcely any other industry that has so obviously and dramatically assimilated global cultural and economic phenomena into a venerable behemoth of power as Hollywood (Scott, 2005). Hollywood is one
of the most powerful players in the global media system, dominated by multinational corporations (MNCs) and transnational corporations (TNCs) (Chalaby, 2005). Epstein (2005) argues that today’s Hollywood, like the studios of the pre-Paramount era, remains predominantly capitalist. This new paradigm serves the public interest by making films more affordable and accessible, while blocking out competition and alternative voices that give more multivariate representations of the society (p. 93). One of the underlying myths of the breakup of the studio system was the belief that the major studios would no longer wield substantial control of the American film industry; however, as Storper (1993) notes, their power in film financing, negotiations, and distribution is unsurpassed and little threatened.

From a political perspective, McChesney (2008) argues that the two most important contributions of media to free societies are facilitating debate on war and election coverage. If we agree with Habermas (1964) and McChesney (2008) that public participation and public representation are central to the public sphere argument, we should concede that the pre-Paramount studio system was deficient, but what of contemporary Hollywood? The corporate structure of Hollywood remains an oligopoly (Askoy & Robins, 1992), although external competition and technological advancements have slightly slackened its grip over certain aspects of the US film industry, notably distribution and exhibition (Epstein, 2005). In fact, several projects have highlighted the continued weight of the studios in Hollywood (Balio, 1998; Gomery, 1998).

Hollywood serves the interests of the American public little more today than yesteryear. If anything, it is now more subtle in the ways it manipulates the public into acquiescing and subscribing to its own interests (Holt, 2008). Whereas studio heads controlled the pre-Paramount Hollywood, today it is a community of studio chiefs, celebrities, financial institutions, and a
select clique of artists who control Hollywood, in the form of a loyal community (Epstein, 2005).

This extensive power of Hollywood studios leads to the most potentially dangerous impact of the new Hollywood model on the concept of public sphere (Holt, 2008). Whereas in the pre-Paramount system, studio executives mainly owned different aspects of the movie business, today’s studio chiefs are heavily involved in cross-ownership: they own different media platforms, allowing them even greater power to leverage their Hollywood agenda on the public (Rice, 2008). Nepotism and cronyism continue to dominate Hollywood’s management, administration, and production (Epstein, 2005). The Hollywood system is therefore antithetical to some of the most profound precepts of public sphere theory, that of the sacrosanctity of democracy, transparency and accountability.

Hollywood does provide few openings for advancing the public’s interest: for example, due to the influence of revered stars, directors, and producers, the industry sometimes tends to present films to the public with more cultural and political value than commercial value (Epstein, 2005, p.270). “In addition to their desire to offer a product that will appeal to financiers, merchandisers, and licensees, studio executives need to preserve and nourish their relationship with stars, directors, producers, and agents,” Epstein (2005) writes (p.130).

This anomalous practice is predicated on the importance of cooperation and harmony of community in nurturing the Hollywood paradigm. In order to secure the services of highly valued industry players, studio executives make allowances for accommodating the artistic and ideological preferences and preoccupations of select stars and directors (Miller et al. 2005). These concessions often allow openings for Hollywood to attend to themes and concepts that filter through the public sphere, however, these moments of rupture are not always innocent and unproblematic, since they remain conditioned and controlled by a corrupt Hollywood system.
Epstein (2005) explains that corruption in Hollywood is regularized by the shared interests of community members and a complicit media.

McChesney’s (2008) analysis of the dialectic tension between media conglomerates’ agenda to dominate markets and politics presents a reasonable explanation of the Hollywood paradigm. Drezner (2000) explicitly states that trade deregulation and cross-border investments make it much easier for multinational and transnational corporations to exploit locations around the world to achieve the highest levels of profit. It is insufficient to speak of corporate social responsibility to capture obligations that multinational corporations have to the people and places defining their targeted locations. Such a debate must embrace the concept of global justice that chastises the neoliberal maxim, which argues that corporations have a moral obligation to maximize profits (Wettstein, 2009). The standard must be an unequivocal respect for human rights.

Zooming in closer, Miller et al.’s (2005) influential study on the New International Division of Cultural Labor (NICL) opens windows into the blatant ways into which Hollywood reconfigures labor practices around the world to create hardships for workers. For example, in the production of the film, *The Mexican* construction workers received a meager US$12 per day (Pfister, 2000). This wage rate is strikingly low taking into account that a 1999 comparison of labor rates for a union carpenter in the United States was US$216 for an eight-hour day compared to US$216 for fifty-five hours for a union carpenter in Mexico (Riley, 1999).

Despite the aggressive workings and growing power of transnational businesses in controlling much of the current global film industry, the role of the nation-state has not diffused, but illuminated, because of the increasing role of lobbyists and regulatory instruments in shaping the relationship between the film industry and the state (Wasko, 2003). The UNESCO debates
over cultural industries endorse this observation. The Hollywood business model was at the heart of the inflamed UNESCO discussions on the regulations of cultural industries (Thussu, 2006). Article 6 of the provision authorizes countries to institute regulations to promote their cultural industries and Article 8 gives them sweeping powers to deploy appropriate measures for protecting cultural expressions that are on the brink of extinction (Segrave, 1997). No wonder many countries resisted vociferously (Falicov, 2000; Jin, 2008).

When most of the world opposed the insularity of U.S. policies at UNESCO, it withdrew from the institution in protest; however, the U.S. later returned when the world refused to budge (Jin, 2008). On October 20, 2005, 148 members at the 33rd session of the UNESCO General Conference voted to adopt the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Graber, 2006). This UNESCO convention recognizes the rights of nations to protect and promote indigenous cultural expressions and absolves them from litigation by international trade tribunals (UNESCO, 2005).

Notwithstanding, the United States has usurped many of these multilateral agreements by initiating Free Trade Agreements and bilateral arrangements parallel to the UNESCO agreements. FTAs give the United States a legitimate channel to facilitate expansion of U.S. business interests without adversely interrupting its connections with individual states and its commitments to the global economic system (Jin, 2008). For instance, despite Mexico’s membership of the tripartite economic treaty, NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), its ability to benefit from the United States’ lucrative film industry remains marginal, unlike its other treaty partner, Canada, which continues to be one of the major foreign beneficiaries (García Canclini & Juan Moneta, 1999). Canada, which was in a much stronger negotiating position than Mexico, insisted that the United States honored the UNESCO agreement and that the NAFTA
treaty exempted Canadian cultural industries (García Canclini, & Juan Moneta, 1999).

Backed assiduously by the U.S. government, Hollywood and the Motion Picture of Association of America (MPAA) appear bent on rigidly adhering to free-market principles, as long as market conditions are in their favor (Jin, 2011). Conspicuously represented by high-profile and powerful U.S. politicians, these industries remain locked in bitter disputes with governments in Asia, Europe, and Latin America on a range of regulatory disagreements (Falicov, 2000). The United States has placed its full weight at international treaty negotiations, including the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), to negotiate agreements that overwhelmingly benefit Hollywood and the American film industry (Wasko, 2003).

Pellow and Park (2002) frame the U.S. Government’s role in constructing the global film industry as reflective of a new type of imperialism, which subordinates the sovereignty of weaker countries to the interests of powerful corporations. While the U.S. virtually strong-arms weaker nations, through a wide range of international instruments, to liberalize their cultural industries in the interest of facilitating the Hollywood business model, national bureaucrats and politicians rationalize their timid resistance in benign rhetoric that moot the reality as an inevitable outcome of advancement and progress (Sinclair, 1995; Jin, 2011).

Business models and institutional practices often preoccupy political economists, because they are constantly searching for insights into structures and processes of institutions and corporations and their relationships, both internal and external, to the different facets of the particular enterprise, the larger industry and the wider society. They are curious and suspicious of how the configuration of structures and processes function to meet business objectives, goals, and responsibilities. In defining this field of scholarship, Mosco (2009) highlights this
interconnection between analyses of business models and political economy theories.

Regardless of the fact that scholars have developed varied definitions of the business model, their explications seem to share some common characteristics, which highlight the ways enterprises use methods and strategies to attract and keep consumers and generate revenue. Magretta (2002) frames this concept succinctly when she wrote, “They are, at heart, stories - stories that explain how enterprises work. A good business model answers Peter Drucker’s age-old questions: Who is the customer? And what does the customer value?” (p. 87). Magretta (2002) adds that a business model explains the enterprise’s strategy for making money, the fundamental economic logic guiding the business’ relationship with its customers, and the approaches adopted to meet business objectives. Implicit in Magretta’s (2002) definitional questions is the concept of the business’ organizational structure and how it functions to acquire and maintain some type of market advantage or benefit.

Indeed, Hollywood owes much of its unmatched dominance domestically and international to decades of tax credit schemes, unprecedented U.S. Government representation and diplomacy, discriminatory copyright laws and regulations, oligopolistic manipulation of the market, and even specific federal aid programs like the Informational Media Guaranty Program (Miller et al, 2005). Hollywood did not only enter foreign countries to expand its audiences, but it also searched for new locations outside the U.S. where it could set up new production bases that exploited low productions costs and where the tax and regulatory systems were pliant to Hollywood’s every desire. Miller et al. (2005), reflecting on this practice, point out that Hollywood was increasingly taking its productions away from the U.S. to usurp a domestic tax regime that had guaranteed their growth if not insured their survival.

Historically, Hollywood has routinely scouted for new locations outside the U.S. where it
could set up new production bases that exploited low productions costs and where tax and regulatory systems pandered to its bottom-line (Miller et al., 2005); however, the contemporary mode of subsidizing the “new Hollywood” structure and model that emerged from the 1980s, making the classical studio production system obsolete and the spatial decentralization of film production the norm is unprecedented in depth and scope (Storper and Christopherson, 1987; Scott, 2002).

Globalization and improvements in information communication and computerized technologies have made the transformation of the Hollywood business model not only seamless but profitable for a handful of conglomerates (Weinstein and Clower, 2000). The major Hollywood studios are all part of larger conglomerates who dominate several other industries (Scott, 2005). Although this new model does not seriously disturb the oligopolistic nature of the industry, since the major studios are mostly still the financiers and distributors, it does provide a greater degree of flexibility for contracted film production companies to explore cheaper methods in highly competitive offshore markets (Scott and Pope, 2007). Ultimately, this hyper-prioritization of profit leads them away from Southern California and even other U.S. territories in search for locations that offer the most cost-effective labor and the most receptive business environment (Weinstein & Clower, 2000).

Mosco (2009) urges scholars of international media to move beyond a critique of corporations’ control over sovereign entities and public authorities and explore how these contending powers merge to create a "transnationalization of political authority (p.108). One of the most significant ways in which the Hollywood business model has taken advantage of capitalist expansion into foreign countries is through the exploitation of cheap labor, by dictating the terms of the “New International Division of Cultural Labor” (Miller et al, 2005, p.52).
Political economists draw from their Marxist influence to contend that the organization of labor in the production of capital produces power hierarchies. Such studies on Hollywood have yielded deep insights into the industry’s approach to labor.

Massey (1984) explains that Hollywood grants certain labor the power over capital production and distribution, while it makes others easily dispensable. Hollywood differentiates both in value and benefits two markets of labor: the primary and secondary markets. Barnatt and Starkey (1994) explain, “In the primary market, employment may be relatively regular and workers receive benefits and pensions. In the secondary market, peripheral employees are caught in perennial uncertainty and lack anything beyond contingent wages” (p. 252). Scott (2005) writes, “The Hollywood labor market can be described as a pyramid, with a bloated mass of workers at the bottom, and a few lavishly paid writers, producers, directors, actors, and other highly skilled professionals at the top” (p. 127).

The distributive benefits of this dual categorization of film workers relate closely to Hollywood’s classifications of production cost. Miller et al. (2005) write:

Hollywood distinguishes between ‘above-the-line’ and ‘below-the-line’ costs. The former lies within the key sector of budgets and includes supposedly ‘proactive’ workers, such as writers, producers, stars, and directors, while the latter term covers ‘reactive’ workers, or proletarians such as make-up artists, carpenters, costumers, set designers and electricians (p. 55).

Hollywood’s business model therefore relies on a network of independent firms and freelance workers from diverse locations and regions to provide most of its production needs (Scott, 2005). Jones (2002) notes, “In 2002, there were 3,500 film and television companies in Southern California. (p.11). In 2001, The Los Angeles County Economic Development
Corporation reported, “Perhaps 0.1 percent of these firms hire over a thousand people, while about 75 per cent have no more than four employees” (p.4). This division of labor is unique to Hollywood. The Hollywood model allows for the shooting of a film in one country, its digitization in another, and postproduction in a next. Ultimately, an intricate network of transnational film professionals collaborates synchronously on the production of a typical Hollywood film (Hozic, 2001: Miller et al., 2005).

The business strategy of contemporary Hollywood has striking resemblances to the era of the studio system, although the major studios are extensively more reliant on independent production companies and external suppliers for a wide range of services. Today's studios, which are really modest components of vast multimedia conglomerates, are mostly into the film distribution business. Scott (2005) identifies three levels of production structures in Hollywood: majors, subsidiaries or majors and independent partners of majors, and independent production companies. This new structure is part of the industry's risk mitigation strategy, which increasingly allows it to explore more boldly new business opportunities (Hirsch, 2000).

The Hollywood business model is unique in its approach to risk tolerance and the buffers that it creates to mitigate losses. Miller et al. (2005) note, “First, the risk reduction strategy of the slate finds the studios making vast numbers of pictures, predicated on the correct assumption that they know nothing about audience tastes and that approximately 95% of films will fail abysmally” (p. 261). This economic logic is unique to Hollywood and few if any other industries could survive with such lax actuarial policies.

De Vany (2004) argues that nobody knows what will make a hit movie: blockbusters emerge out of an “information cascade,” which is inherently uncontrollable (p.28). According to De Vany (2004), audiences create hits, and even then they do so unwittingly, since the process of
making a financially successful film is an ongoing discovery. He relies on the Bose-Einstein
distribution model to conclude that the movie business is similar to many other entertainment
industries, which utilize marketing models and complex contracts to manipulate information
dynamics as a method of developing “extraordinary motion pictures,” maximizing their returns
through supply and demand (p.47).

De Vany’s (2004) point is that the Hollywood business model is irrational, relying
heavily on stars as risk mitigators and profit drivers. Like Epstein (2005), De Vany (2004)
reasons that movie stars do not guarantee hits; rather, he suggests that the star model presents
greater risks to a movie’s success. He debunks the myth that there is a formula for making a hit
movie. Furthermore, he argues that Hollywood’s ignorance over a template for a successful film
is one of the main reasons behind the exorbitant salaries that it pays to its executives. He chides
this practice by declaring, “The answer is simple: there is no formula. No one knows what a
movie will gross. No one knows anything” (De Vany, 2004, p. 66).

Despite De Vany’s (2004) post-modern cynicism, there is an economic logic to
Hollywood’s behavior and Epstein (2005) recognizes it. Hollywood is concerned less with
launching new products than it is about replicating successes, which normally surfaces through
the high value given to franchise films. Epstein (2005) writes, “The performance records for
franchise films can be reliably consistent even when the stars change” (p.142). Moreover,
Hollywood pays close attention to the historical performance of genre films to develop new
strategies for exploiting the niche audiences of these films.

This argument leads to the skewed reasoning behind the value placed on film production
executives. As Epstein explains (2005), the contemporary Hollywood studio has diverse business
interests and is mainly focused on leveraging the intellectual property of its products to
maximize profits. So while De Vany (2004) overemphasizes box office performance, studio executives also examine other potential revenues for movie products; for example, the potential for tie-ins, DVD sales and branded consumer items. Epstein (2005) explains, “Before making a green light decision, the studios can also usually ascertain whether or not films will qualify for advertising support from major merchandise tie-in partners” (p.143).


He must also take into account the less quantifiable value of a possible “hit,” which, even if it does not earn back its costs, can nevertheless generate a high level of attention for the studio within the industry, community, and press (p.145).

It is reasonable to argue this particular guideline falls within the territory of known phenomena, although on a larger epistemological and philosophical level, it remains questionable.

Notwithstanding Epstein’s (2005) rational, the waste in the Hollywood model is undeniable. That Hollywood is able to engage in such frivolous financing may be largely due to extensive state subsidies and protection seems plausible. This predisposition to excess is Hollywood’s major advantage in stifling competition in film distribution (Epstein, 2005). Their monopolistic and anti-competitive practices stream through all phases of their business, but perhaps most visible at the distribution level. By engaging in block booking, these Hollywood magnates force their expensive films onto exhibitors. “You only get the Spielberg film if you take the Jean-Claude Van Damme movie” Miller et al. (2005) outline (p.261).
The FCC’s implementation of the Financial Interest and Syndication Rules in the 1970’s, which made it illegal for Television Networks to own film studios, opened the floodgates for Hollywood products domestically, which today guarantees its dominance (Miller et al., 2005). Five conglomerates control Hollywood: Time Warner, News Corp, Disney, Viacom, and NBC Universal. Holt (2008) adds, “Six studios, all with yearly production budgets that hover around the $1 billion mark, often account for 90% of the box office, and four corporations control 90% of what is seen on television” (p. 105).

The Hollywood business model exploits this monopoly through a carefully structured and managed distribution process that guarantees income at every level, including a percentage of box office receipts and film rentals. Miller et al. (2005) describe this system of operation as “creative accounting,” a highly secretive method of allocating fees and reporting profits (p. 296). Hollywood supplements its dominance of the US domestic market with unparalleled monopolization of the international film distribution system. The United States lobbies for international protection arrangements for Hollywood that the U.S. judicial system would likely find illegal domestically (Miller, et al., 2005).

The Hollywood’s business model also employs an aggressive and sophisticated marketing strategy that uses varied types of surveys, audience-monitoring systems, and theories of behavioral science to match products with audiences. Endicott (2000) notes that the Hollywood expenditure on marketing activities is almost double that of other comparable aspects of the value chain (p. 261). Miller et al. (2005) summarize Hollywood’s marketing system in three processes: positioning, playability and marketability. Positioning addresses the narratives and aesthetics of the film. Playability refers to the processes of predicting audience satisfaction, and marketability focuses on developing demand in the market.
The main interests of the Hollywood oligopoly are commercial not artistic or cultural. Film exhibitors are a cartel of businesses, which are into selling refreshments and showing films to drive traffic to their multiplexes. Epstein (2005) recalls that by 2002 only five cinematic chains controlled more than two thirds of the multiplexes exhibiting films. The films that these exhibitors routinely give high priority are not necessarily the films that represent the public’s interests, but films that successfully guarantee customers, customers that the studios’ advertising and publicity campaigns have manufactured.

_Hollywood Runaways_

A *New York Times* study, which examined over 150,000 incentive awards to businesses by public bodies in the United States found that American taxpayers are providing annual subsides of $80 billion to private companies, with dubious if at all substantial returns (Story et al., 2012). A significant contribution of the extensive *New York Times* investigation was its conclusion that many of the agents of the public trust granting these incentives were uninformed, doubtful, and even suspicious of the actual impact of this practice. Even those who exercised more prudent oversight admitted that they were unsure whether the aid had produced the promised outcomes (Story et al., 2012).

More telling were admissions by desperate mayors and governors of commonplace hand-wringing by multinational corporations earmarked for the benefits. These powerful conglomerates influenced the decisions of policymakers by threatening to sabotage their careers, even if it meant instigating a hemorrhage of jobs from their constituencies. When these powerful companies refrained from such direct threats, they unleashed their superior institutional and financial resources to produce research that public agencies were unable to verify or counter,
thus manipulating industry and public opinion on contentious policy issues (Story et al., 2012). Frequently, local and regional authorities do little more than simply rubberstamp the request of these profit-driven, public incentive seekers of public welfare (Story et al., 2012).

According to the 2012 *New York Times* research, Hollywood is the fourth largest beneficiary of U.S. domestic tax incentives, behind mining, gas, and oil. Since 2000, when only three states offered them, film incentives climbed steeply in popularity over the next decade, with 40 U.S. states featuring them in their investment strategies (Luther, 2010). Film incentives take several forms: they may materialize as grants, loans, tax breaks, tax credits, free services, special property access, or user-fee abatement. Available records reveal a clear contention between industry and non-industry studies about the efficacy and impact of film incentives as an economic development strategy. Industry sources argue that these incentives are hardly costly to governments, while inducing economic activity that sprawls across a cross-section of local economies (Henchman, 2011). Alternatively, David and Robyn (2012) conclude that apart from studies funded by economic development entities and trade organizations, the literature overwhelmingly shows that these incentives return less than 30 cents on the dollar.

Decades earlier, Guback (1987) had hinted at the underlying attributes of film incentive programs, when he described film tax credits to Hollywood as a form of welfare. Despite such scathing attacks, Hollywood’s defense of the public hand-outs that it receives is chronic, even when it seems hypocritical to do so. For instance, the Oliver Stone’s 2010 sequel to Wall Street leveled a poignant critique of corporate greed at the same time that it was receiving $10 million in tax breaks from New York City where it was shot. Likewise, in public statements, iconoclastic Stone appears at ease in crashing his anvil on subsides to banking and agriculture, while cuddling those to Hollywood (Story et al., 2012).
A critique that emphasizes simply the market implications of tax incentives to big-business misses the crux of the problem. The popular misconception over the profitability of film incentives has much to do with its capacity to distort economic performance, mainly by transferring economic activity and employment across different sections of a local economy (David & Robyn, 2012). Ultimately, while production companies and business elites profit from them, taxpayers foot the bill, as policymakers customarily try to recoup these inherent losses by either contracting public services or raising taxes.

When public authorities use financial subsidies to embolden wealthy, buoyant corporations, they ultimately deny citizens access to critical resources for maintaining or improving the quality of their lives. The implications are far-reaching, including the weakening of a range of public services including health, education, and safety that rest at the heart of citizen welfare. A case in point: a study by the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research revealed that New York’s expenditure for film credits was enough to employ 5,000 public-school teachers (Story et al., 2012).

This New York City fiscal policy hardly received any significant opposition, signaling an unprecedented tolerance for substantial reductions in public services that parallel spikes in corporate welfare: the muted tension between neoliberalism and civic society is jarring. In 2010, while the state of New York was in a heated debate over correcting its $9 billion budget deficit, none of its political leaders challenged the state’s $70 million increase in tax incentives to Hollywood, which amounted to an annual allocation of $420 million (Barro, 2010). The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reported that between 1997 and 2012, U.S. states cut public services by $290 billion (McNichol, 2012). In 2011 alone, these states slashed public services by $156 billion. Synchronously, in 2010, U.S. states granted $1.5 billion in subsidies to Hollywood
California and New York remain the major U.S. enclaves for Hollywood businesses. California, though home to Hollywood, was late to enter the derby of states offering hefty entertainment tax incentives to nab film and television productions. But the state’s five-year, $500 million program of 20% to 25% tax credits to film productions kicked in full throttle in July 2009 (Goldrich, 2009). Astonishingly, California’s annual $100 million film credit program that covers up to 25% of production expenditure is not currently among the nation’s highest (Verrier, 2012). While the state’s withering local economy has baulked its capacity to match the bait of new entrants, its main rival, New York, has retaliated and was the only state to expand its program at the height of the economic recession.

Some states, like Louisiana, Michigan, and New Mexico are challenging traditional dominance of these major players, fueling an intense domestic competition that feeds Hollywood production companies with potential tax credits of up to 42% (Householder, 2011). Thirty-eight of the 50 states now offer film incentives (Story et al., 2012). Struggling to cope with a staggering U.S. economy, these states are pursuing Hollywood projects hoping to reverse dwindling revenue and plummeting employment rates.

Proponents of public incentives to Hollywood as an investment strategy eulogize Louisiana’s film incentive program as an effective economic model (Bailey, 2008; Kent, 2008). It is no surprise then that Louisiana has emerged as one of the most favored production centers for Hollywood films, frequently upstaging traditional heavyweights, California and New York. Despite Louisiana’s drift in securing Hollywood business, recent data compiled by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) identified it as the fifth poorest U.S. state (Handley, 2011).

Understandably, such a contradiction is fodder for public policy advocates and media
critics. Near inciting citizenry rebellion against the state’s film incentive program, Mayer and Goldman (2010) reject the popular narrative of a Louisiana boon allegedly infused by Hollywood-controlled activities. They decry the neoliberal governance of the program that appears to subjugate the state’s public interest to big-business, at the behest of short-term political objectives, while praising big-budget Hollywood producers as the procurers of the welfare of Louisianans. They likened the state’s film tax credits to a political economic mechanism that encourages the movement of capital among elites.

Mayer & Goldman (2010) charge that the state’s film program mostly relegates the engagement of its promoted beneficiaries, Louisiana workers, to unsecured, devalued, and misappropriated resources. If the 2009 Supreme Court decision is an indication of legal trends mediating civic challenges to the fiscal intemperance of governmental entities, taxpayers appear to have little recourse but public advocacy and the ballot. In DaimlerChrysler Corp. v. Cuno (2006), the Supreme Court ruled that taxpayers have no legal standing in the federal courts to contest a state’s tax action. The story does not get better for U.S. taxpayers who fund film incentives. Most of these film tax credit programs have a little reported loophole that permits their transference. If underutilized on the approved project, many such programs allow recipients to sell these credits to other businesses or use them to cover unrelated personal or corporate taxes (Puig, 2010).

Unfortunately, such indiscretions do little to stutter the growing popularity of film incentives. With an incentive program that offers a 42% potential tax relief for film and digital media producers, the Michigan Film and Digital Media Production Incentive Program established indubitably one of the most aggressive film programs ever to grovel for Hollywood runaway dollars. In September 2010, a Senate Fiscal Agency commissioned report noted that the
Michigan Film Incentives Program was not viable and unworthy of taxpayer funding (Zin, 2010). The report notes that for every dollar that the state invests in the program it only gets 10 cents in return, and the typical job that it generates only last 23 days (Zin, 2010). To justify its critique of the program, the report pointed to 2009 figures, which showed that the program spent $68.7 million on film tax credits but received only $7.5 million on film tax revenue, a loss of $61.2 million (Zin, 2010).

Five months following the Senate Fiscal Agency’s damning report on the Michigan Film Incentives Program, the international accounting firm Ernst & Young submitted a report commissioned by the visitor bureaus of Detroit Metro, Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, and Traverse City that reached conclusions antithetical to the Senate Fiscal Agency’s report. The Ernst & Young report entitled, “Economic and Fiscal Impacts of the Michigan Film Tax Credit” concluded that $1 of film tax credit produced $6 of economic activity in the state and contributed $2 to the income of workers. According to the report, this meant that from spending $127 million on the program since 2008, the Michigan State experienced an economic return of $812 million.

Not everyone was convinced. When new Michigan Governor Rick Snyder announced his 2012 budget in mid-February 2011, he eliminated the current film tax credits and established a funding scaling for new film incentives. He capped the state’s film incentives to a mere $25 million per year for both the 2012 and 2013 fiscal years.

Many public authorities are beginning to openly doubt the benefits of this corporate largesse, resulting in many states reeling back their lavish film incentive programs. New Jersey, Iowa, New Mexico, and Michigan are among the states significantly scaling back their film incentive programs (Cieply, 2011; Longwell, 2011). After years of flaunting a bounteous film incentive scheme, New Mexico reigned in its program to offer a 25% tax credit with a
competitive $50 million annual limit (Longwell, 2011).

The main case made for film incentives to big-budget films centers on its capacity for localized job creation and interrelated economic stimulation. While most scholars acquiesce to the existence of a multiplier effect, few investigate, and more are far less certain of the extent and scale of these multipliers and their contribution to real development (Newman, 2008). An offshoot of this theory, and one more relevant to small developing states, is the tourism multiplier effect. Lundberg et al. (1995) describe the concept as the different processes and intensities in which the tourism dollar stimulates extended economic activity in the local economy.

Internationally, many countries are obsequiously courting Hollywood to their shores and the industry is obliging. Between 2000 and 2006, offshore film productions have stripped the U.S. Economy of 47,000 jobs, each year costing the country an estimated $23 billion (Katz, 2006). According to a 2005 report from the Center for Entertainment Industry Data and Research, the money that Hollywood spent producing films in the U.S. declined by 17% during 1998 to 2005, from $3,109 million in 1998 to $2,570 million (CEIDR, 2006). Contrastingly, Hollywood increased its financing of film production outside the U.S. by 85%, from $1,045 million to $1,935. Resenting the loss of business from these offshore film projects, the American film industry coined the term “runaway productions” to describe them (Monitor Company, 1999, p.3). U.S. film industry officials have distinguished two types of runaways: the creative runaways, whose characteristics inherently demand a specific foreign location; and economic runaways, whose primary motive for migration is cost reduction.

The Canadian Tax Incentive Model initiated in 1998 laid the foundation for the explosion of Hollywood cross-border film production, since many countries rushed to emulate it (CEIDR,
The model was responsible for increasing Canada's revenue from foreign film production by 144% between 1999 and 2001. This initiative also had a positive impact on local film productions in Canada, which rose by 14% (CEIDR, 2006). In 2003 and 2004, Canada earned $2 billion in annual revenues from Hollywood productions (Leung & McClearn, 2009).

The CEIDR (2006) argues that since there were no notable changes in exchange rates or labor wages during the related period, the drastic increase in foreign film production in Canada has to be attributed to the effects of the country's aggressive film incentives and subsidies. The world took notice and many countries attempted to emulate Canada's success. Between 1998 and 2005, cross-border film productions expenditures worldwide increased by 30% (CEIDR, 2006). During that same period, Hollywood’s offshore production in the UK and Ireland also increased by 66%. In Australia and New Zealand the increase was an astounding 531%, and in Eastern Europe 927% (CEIDR, 2006).

The preeminence of Canada and the United Kingdom in hosting Hollywood films is notable; however, with an estimated 57 countries around the world featuring some type of film incentive program their stranglehold is loosening (Tunick, 2002). The Czech Republic, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Australia, and Spain are some of the countries that have developed popular incentive programs. Over the past decade, New Zealand’s taxpayers spent over $500 million subsidizing Hollywood productions in the country (“Hollywood moguls press Key for bigger NZ subsidies,” 2012). China is gearing up for game too. Chinese media tycoon Bruno Wu is investing in infrastructure targeted at enticing Hollywood co-productions (Pfanner, 2012).

The European Audiovisual Observatory, which monitors film transactions on the continent, bemoans the lack of transparency of film tax incentives in the Euro zone (Carvajal,

Hollywood producers are attracted to locations that offer them freedom to do as they please. One of the reasons that Mexico fell from grace with Hollywood was its frustrating public bureaucracy (Berg, 1992). Many countries in turn weary of fallout with Hollywood. When foreign film productions began to dry up, the Mexican government developed procedures and policies that overtly favored Hollywood big business, even at times to the chagrin of its citizenry.

In March 2010, Mexican President Felipe Calderon announced a new 20 million tax-incentive program for film investors that offered up to 17.5% tax rebates for foreign film productions and promised Mexicans that their country would become “the capital of Latin American Cinema” (MPAA, 2010). Mexico’s aggressive film incentives program is consistent with the global trend, conspicuous in U.S. States and international destinations like Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, South African, and the United Kingdom, a brand of incentives that morphs film and economic policies into novel configurations to produce relief to Hollywood in exceptional proportions (Leung & McClearn, 2009).

Unlike many of its competitors, Mexico offers no infrastructural credit and restricts most of its tax refunds to VAT subjected expenditure (COMEFILM, 2009). Fund ProAv provides up to 17.5% disbursements on production expenses incurred in Mexico by recipients of the country’s film incentives, inclusive of VAT refunds. The VAT law of IVA and the VAT regulation note that qualified applicants can earn up to a 16% refund on VAT monthly. Mexico’s
film incentives program does not justify the levels of its tax relief for film related income on employment numbers, but on total annual income (COMEFILM, 2009). While its 17.5% tax credit is capped and falls below the average of its top competitors, the potential maximum tax relief that a single production can receive is above that of the leading competitors. Conversely, the rising economic giant of Latin America, Brazil, unlike its influential Latin American neighbor, Mexico, does not offer tax incentives to foreign productions, although it has a vibrant film commission and domestic film industry (Variety, 2011).

There are two main reasons accounting for the decentralization of film production: realistic backdrops, and cost reduction (Scott, 2005). Hollywood’s obsession with finding the cheapest means of producing films feeds its increasing appetite for runaway productions, a characteristic heavily embedded in its historical struggles with concepts of location authenticity in film productions (Monitor Company, 1999; Shohat & Stam, 1994). Arguably, Hollywood’s emphasis on manipulating film locations is partly responsible for its geographic decentralization (Christopherson & Storper, 1986; Scott, 2002; Storper & Christopherson, 1987).

Mosco (2009) observes that the new runaway model of film production contributes to the creation of the New International Division of Cultural Labor by deploying Machiavellian-like tactics to exploit organized labor in these offshore locations. Christopherson (2005) agrees, noting that these fragmentations of labor pit regional and national labor into direct competition against each other, nourishing the wrenching grip of Hollywood conglomerates on labor markets globally. Another embedded strategy of Hollywood in disrupting organized labor in these satellite locations is its project-oriented approach to production and its dissection of labor into above-the-line and below-the line production workers, a system in which the former is highly
valued and remunerated and the latter easily fragmented and undercompensated (Wasko, 2003, p. 47).

Beck's (2008) conception of 'risk society' provides a fitting platform for examining the potential risk to places from Hollywood's international film production activities. An overemphasis on economic formulas that promise economic growth frequently ignores the inherent ecological and cultural risks involved in the pursuit of such projects (Lash and Wynne, 1992); however, risks are not unhinged from pursuits of wealth and prosperity. Beck (1992) prescribes a reflexive approach to modernity that critiques institutional and individual engagement in developmental projects.

Although the IMF has argued that tax incentives ought not to be the stimulant for foreign direct investment in developing countries (“Tax incentives not key to greater foreign investment — IMF official,” 2012), both it and the World Bank remain relatively reticent on the role of film incentive programs in struggling economies. In fact, while the organization was in protracted and tense negotiations with Hungary on economic reconstruction, the country was handing out production incentives to Hollywood, which saw the fifth Die Hard film receive a 20% rebate on government taxes (Nadler, 2012). Neither did the IMF publicly comment when the Greek Parliament was deliberating a 30% tax credits to film productions at the eve of the country’s economic collapse (Carvajal, 2005).

The loud reticence and absence of policy analyses from these IGOs on international film incentives have direct implications for developing countries, particularly SIDS, whose national economic policies remain interlocked with advisory and technical support from these agencies. Poorer, underdeveloped countries are featuring more prominently in international film
production mainly because of their lower wages, especially as many are actively exploring their capacity to offer a wide range of quality adjunct services to Hollywood producers (Scott, 2005).

Puerto Rico has the most aggressive film incentive program in the Caribbean, including non-CARICOM states (Ysaguirre, 2012). From 2009 to 2011, more than 60 major international film projects exploited the island’s 40% film tax credit on their payments to Puerto Ricans. After the Dominican Republic implemented a 25% film tax credit, Puerto Rico added a 20% tax credit on non-resident salaries, and reduced the minimum limit for local expenditure from $1 million to $100,000. Notably, Puerto Rico does not require that applicants conduct most of the shooting in the country (Longwell, 2011).

Policy Studies

Since policies are an integral component of the functions and operations of organizations and institutions, and economic systems, policy research is important for understanding social structures, relations, and interactions (McPhee & Canary, 2008). Actions and practices deriving out of interpretations of policies are as important as the language describing them (Fairclough, 2003; Yanow, 1996). The tensions between policy declarations and organizational interactions are also important for appreciating policy meanings and their impact on organizational practices (Kirby and Krone, 2002). Critical communication scholars are particularly intrigued by public policy, because of its role in organizing and facilitating a wide range of power brokers and determining processes of social interaction.

An examination of policy also possibly leads the researcher to insights into the multidimensional influences of institutional structures and interactions and their contributions towards the construction of knowledge (Blackler, 1995; Kuhn & Jackson, 2008). Though often
clearly articulated or presumed, polices are rarely, if ever, static (Yanow, 2003). Forever susceptible to ambiguity, policies acquire significance based on the interpretive practices and values (Stein, 2004) and the communicative skill of their audiences (Elmore (1979).

The articulation of policy is multilayered and multifaceted. While policy and analysis predominantly prioritize formal organizational structures and processes, there are frequently less conspicuous, but equally legitimate articulations that require their attention. For instance, Lipsky (1980) reasons that because of the inherent agency involved in the execution of their duties, grounded-agents performing the ordinarily routine activities of organizations are crucial shapers of policy.

The foreign investment strategy of attracting international film production demonstrates the unique political economy paradigms inherent in communications policy, which address the ways public authorities use laws, regulations, and market rules to define, develop, administer, and manage goals and objectives of their media and communications industries (van Cuilenburgh & McQuail, 2003). Also relevant is Garnham’s (1998) triadic dissection of communications policies that examine public authorities’ practices in shaping media sectors; the reasons, objectives, and beneficiaries of these policies; and the impact that they have on their various constituencies (p.210).

Critical media and cultural studies scholars examining cross-border film productions in developing countries ought to be suspicious of the integrity of public policy that governments employ in courting Hollywood. For those with a developmental ethos or a grassroots perspective, such a transactional focus is not necessarily a starting point or an inevitable end; rather, these scholars are wont to emphasize the depth and breadth of a wide range of location interests, perpetually engaging with concepts of sustainability and agency in their analyses (Goldsmith &
O’Regan, 2008).

Such an agenda is important, because Pellow & Park (2002) conclude that the global economic system facilitates habitual practices of big-budget film producers and executives that subordinate the economies, cultures, and sovereignties of less developed countries, often at the bequest of powerful nations and multinational corporations. Furthermore, foreign filmmakers shooting films in underdeveloped countries routinely participate in corrupt and unethical practices that facilitate their production objectives: sometimes to the extent of openly allocating significant portions of their budgets for such transactions (Macnab, 2012). This problem is further compounded by the fact that local beneficiaries of international film productions are less likely to complain about its negative impacts (Ko and Stewart, 2002; Lee et al., 2010).

Perhaps the most obvious impact of neoliberal reforms on film policies globally is its radical transformation of the Welfare Model of managing film activities, which considered film a public good, into a Growth Model, which mainly appreciates film production for its potential to add market value (Potts and Cunningham, 2008). Despite enduring questions of sustainability and profitability, the general agreement by scholars is that international film productions attract tourists to and mobilize economic opportunities for host locations (Beeton, 2005; Busby and Klug, 2001; Couldry, 1998).

Cross-border film production is a form of niche tourism for many host countries. It can either be a type of long-stay business tourism or a mega-event requiring extensive tourism resources and attention (Ward & O'Regan, 2009). The thriving global film production industry and the cluttered, competitive international tourism market make film-induced tourism a major component of destination marketing. The concept of film-induced tourism proffers that international film productions provide short-term employment, economic stimulation, and
publicity for the shooting locations, but may also provide extended tourism opportunities with benefits beyond the production period (Tetley, 1997). Inculcating these theories, developing countries go out of their way to accommodate big-budget or high-profile film producers.

The political and economic debates surrounding the integrity of film incentive programs have inspired extensive academic and industry research examining the role of foreign film productions in developing local economies (Coe, 2001; Turok, 2003; Weinstein and Clower, 2000). Ward, & O'Regan’s (2009) conception of film-incentive programs as a niche component of tourism that is a derivative of business tourism seems a more appropriate perspective from which to develop policy guidelines on international film policy for struggling SIDS. While I also see value in their framing of location shooting as a mega-tourist event, with extensive recreational and entertainment potential, I consider this model particularly unsuitable for the Caribbean, because of the region’s limited access to the resources and institutional capacity to develop or sustain such a model. Apart from the economic ambiguity of the model, the attendant risks and threats, ranging from short-term to permanent, also pose serious challenges for the region’s fragile ecology (Buchmann et al., 2010; Busby and Klug, 2001).

One of the attendant short-term problems associated with this economic activity is the potential for increased traffic that these sites are unaccustomed to and normally unable to manage (Stynes, 1994). For SIDS, this could mean more than traffic-jams and often produces undesired invasion, disruption and blockages of human interaction in communities and neighborhoods, with profound implications for public comfort and national productivity (Beeton, 2008; Connell, 2005; Croy and Buchmann, 2009). These aforementioned problems, along with the limited infrastructural capacity of SIDS also mean that such activities would also likely produce public safety concerns, the most obvious of which is overcrowding (Riley et al., 1998).
There are more insidious risks associated with film incentive programs, such as threats to the integrity of governance and public accountability. Hollywood is not a saint in compromising public authorities. It is no secret that Hollywood producers routinely pay bribes to public officials to expedite their agenda while shooting in non-U.S. locations (Bunting, 2007; Fritz, 2009; Gardner, 2008). During the shooting of the Titanic in Mexico, Hollywood producers rallied with government insiders to infiltrate unions in order to diffuse protests over worker exploitation (Miller et al., 2005).

Washington knows it too. The Securities and Exchange Commission is currently investigating serious allegations of corruption by three Hollywood studios in China. A whistleblower has accused Walt Disney, 20th Century Fox, and DreamWorks of paying bribes to Chinese officials for expediting their production and distribution interests in that country (Cieply and Barboza, 2012). At the U.S. state level, the situation is hardly any different: a film commissioner in Louisiana was convicted for accepting bribes from Hollywood producers (Russell, 2007) and an audit of Iowa’s film incentive program found gross improprieties (Longwell, 2011).

One of the most long-lasting impacts of international film production on offshore locations is the implication of their interaction with the physical environment, a consequence that the Thais know all too well, having initiated a lawsuit against 20th Century Fox for extensive beach damage (“Fears for DiCaprio’s Beach,” 2000). Hollywood has an unenviable track record of leaving behind devastating trails of accidents, disasters, pollution and waste in foreign location sites long after production has wrapped (Beeton, 2000; Felchner, 2012): environmental journalists have even labeled the industry as one of the worst polluters in the world (Aftab, 2007). Any territory considering hosting Hollywood cross-border productions cannot avoid
wrestling with these risks. Poignantly, McCurdy (2011) insists that there are “no free locations” (p. 63).

It is alarming that most studies that I have come across examining the relationship between film policies and economic development have excluded analyses of the functions and strategies of film commissions, which are the major proponents and architects of film incentives and film tax credits (Hudson & Wing Sun Tung, 2010). The Caribbean is ripe for such a study; hence, my interest in focusing on this region in pursuing dissertation research on the subject. Christopherson (2005) posits that the main advantage of film commissions in attracting foreign film production is their emphasis on cost benefits and their capacity to lobby governments to implement supportive regulations and fiscal inducements. Additionally, Goldsmith and O’Regan (2005) point out that a major strategy of film commissions is to highlight unique features of their territories, ranging from facilities and natural features to culture.

Christopherson (2005) notes that most film commissions identify cost benefits as their advantage in attracting foreign film productions and lobby heavily for their governments to provide relevant legislative and financial inducements. Goldsmith and O’Regan (2005) note that a major strategy of film commissions is to highlight unique features of their services. In highly competitive markets, product differentiation surfaces as a viable strategy for players to establish a peculiar advantage or particular niche (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990). For instance, the Australian Film Commission has adopted the jungle location brand for Queensland, the southern states in the United States promote historic federal buildings and the Bahamas specializes in underwater production (Hudson & Wing Sun Tung, 2010).

The Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) is the global industry representative for film commissions. AFCI helps facilitate the realization of the common goal of
all its members to lure filmmakers and videographers to their locations by providing attractive services that are difficult for them to refuse (AFCI, 2012). AFCI members are mostly state or government entities, who not only market their destinations but also assist in negotiating, monitoring, and facilitating local regulations, laws, and procedures to significantly reduce bureaucracies, bottlenecks, and challenges for foreign producers. Even when governments publicly endorse the independence and autonomy of film commissions, they tend to consistently reflect government policies: therefore, it is reasonable to consider film commissions an extension of governmental administration (Skilling, 2010).

Film commissions are neoliberal structures, overburdened with the mandate to facilitate economic growth, foreign investment, and business opportunities (Blomkamp, 2011). There is rationality and reciprocity behind the relationship between Hollywood and film commissions (de Bruin, 2005). Despite all the perceived setbacks associated with such locations in developing countries, these governments keep pursuing Hollywood producers, because cross-border productions provide them with financial liquidity that otherwise would be unattainable. Monies earned from production expenditure circulate in the local economy, potentially spurring entrepreneurship and employment (de Bruin, 2005).

Public policymakers and politicians functioning within a neoliberal climate are likely to find these economic indices too attractive to bypass the film incentive wagon train, even if they are fleeting and concentrated (King, 2010). The mainstream narratives on the economic indicators of cross-border film production present a façade of economic development and advancement in host locations that increases the visibility and popularity of a government or political party subscribing to the model. These governments create entities, such as film commissions, to position their countries advantageously in the global competition for big-budget
film productions.

The research of Hudson & Wing Sun Tung's, (2010) is one of the rare examinations of the approaches of film commissions in marketing foreign locations to Hollywood. They concluded that film commissions use three strategic marketing approaches: product differentiation, service differentiation, and cost differentiation, providing valuable insights into conventional practices of film location marketing. They also identified six distinctive promotional strategies of film commissions: advertising, sales promotions, joint promotions, PR, online marketing, and direct marketing (Hudson & Wing Sun Tung, 2010).

Film Policy in CARICOM

Since the sixteenth century, CARICOM territories were part of international trade, when European colonizers established the Caribbean islands as colonies with mono-crop agricultural economies. The laissez-faire economic approaches that these colonizers consistently took in managing these colonies continue to be thorns to the development of these now independent nations (Griffith, 2010). Most of these countries evolved primarily into agricultural economies, although recent transformations in global agricultural markets have produced significant drops in their agricultural exports, pushing them into alternative industries, including light manufacturing, offshore banking, and tourism (Freckleton & Karagiannis, 2004; Ramsaran & Hosein, 2008). While many of these islands are still dependent on their staggering agricultural sectors, tourism has emerged as the mainstay for most, with the Caribbean region experiencing real GDP growth over 6% from the 1990s to 2006 following the loss of preferential access to international agricultural markets (Craigwell and Moore, 2008; IMF, 2009).

The tourism sector was mainly responsible for the highest economic growth in the region
in over fifteen years (IMF, 2009); therefore, tourism displaced agriculture as the Caribbean’s most significant income earner. In 2002, the Caribbean’s share of the world tourism market was 3% (Poon, 2002). In 2004, tourism accounted for 14.8% of the Caribbean’s GDP and 15.5% of its total employment, with 2.4 million jobs (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2004).

Mainly, because of the lack of other lucrative alternatives, the Caribbean is four times more dependent than the rest of the world on tourism (King et al., 2000). In 2012, tourism was responsible for 12% of employment in the entire Caribbean, accounting for 14% of the region’s GDP (CTO, 2013). While the entire region experienced 5.4% growth in tourist arrivals from 2011, CARICOM lagged behind with an increase of only 0.9%. The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) trailed even further with a 0.4% decline (Nickolson-Doty, 2013). Overall though, the Caribbean earned an estimated US$27.5 billion from tourist expenditure in 2012, an increase of 3.6% from 2011 (Cándano, 2013).

The Caribbean’s abundance of the three S factors: sun, sea, and sand, makes it one of the most favored tourist destinations in the world (Duval, 2004). A few islands, like Guyana, Belize, and Dominica whose competitive advantages are their culture, flora, fauna, cascades, and marine-life have preferred the ecotourism profile rather than the three S factors. Overall, tourism continues to be the linchpin of economic growth strategies in SIDS (Craigwell and Moore (2008). Most of these countries earn three times more foreign exchange from tourism than they do from exporting goods.

Growth in regional tourism, however, conceals a much deeper problem. CARICOM governments have consistently instituted aggressive neoliberal policies to manage their economies, despite several recommendations from regional economists to temper this strategy with policies that stimulate economic and social activities, policies that are more protective of
local industries and realize more sustained development objectives (Freckleton & Karagiannis, 2004; Griffith, 2010). The global neoliberal agenda, marked by the influence of the Washington Consensus in the Caribbean from the late 1970s, and its related Structural Adjustment Policies have had a detrimental impact on the economies of SIDS, particularly the development of their cultural industries, up to this day.

Subsequently, the Caribbean has fallen deeply into the model of economic rationalism that became the crux of the development of film policy in most of the Western world (Cunningham, 2009). Throughout member islands, funding for indigenous film mostly becomes valid when it offers clear economic advantages. Individual island policy is part of the larger regional model, which implicitly states that the intrinsic value of cultural industries is not its importance in preserving heritage, defining cultural identity, and facilitating indigenous expression, but in its market value and potential for commoditization (Hazledine, 2000). Pressured by the IMF and World Bank and declining revenues, the Caribbean Governments sacrificed cultural development in favor of pro-market policies (Burke, 2007). Burke (2007) recalls, “The growing interest in the cultural industry sector meant that governments slowly began to shift their finite resources from arts that cost to the arts that pay” (p. 174).

In the 1990’s, cultural policy acquired renewed interest in the region, when governments recognized the income and employment generating capacity of some of the more established cultural institutions, such as music production and carnival celebrations. When the Jamaica reggae music industry recorded revenue of US$270 million in 1995 (Watson, 1995), and a year later Trinidad’s carnival festivities earned US$50 million (Henry & Nurse, 1996), regional governments began rethinking their approach to culture as a model for economic development. Subsequently, culture became both heritage and industry (Burke, 2007).
In 1997, CARICOM established the Regional Cultural Policy of the Caribbean (RCP) to facilitate the formation of national cultural policies in member countries. The problem was that the RCP was mainly a cultural development framework, whereas member countries were more attracted to a market-centered approach to culture (Burke, 2007). Many governments still lack the resources or the expertise to create a sustainable balance between the two perspectives; therefore, what has surfaced is the privileging of culture as industry rather than culture as development (Nurse et al., 2009).

Despite the persistent rhetoric of Caribbean governments centralizing cultural policies in their development plans, few of the English-speaking Caribbean have ratified and documented national cultural policy guidelines and there is no regional cultural policy ratified by CARICOM members (Burke, 2007; Shridath Ramphal Center, 2010). The mercurial programs and regulations of public sector agencies, like the ministries of culture that evolved from the post-independence era continue to represent cultural policy in many of these islands (Burke, 2007); therefore, the cultural frameworks are continually susceptible to the instabilities of partisan preferences.

Caribbean governments have for long tottered to find niches in the global economic system for growing their economies, but their marginal impact on global financial and trading practices and policies, coupled with their sporadic or antiquated policy mechanisms exacerbate their travail (Nurse et al., 2009). They consistently invest in cultural activities primarily for their capacity to create employment and generate foreign exchange (Burke, 2007). This economic reasoning locks cultural policy between levers of economic growth and negates its capacity to advance more durable and sustained development objectives (National Task Force on Cultural Industries, 2004).
Film policy falls within the larger field of cultural industries. Nurse et al. (2009) define the Caribbean cultural and creative industries as “the economic activities of artists, arts enterprises and cultural entrepreneurs, for-profit as well as not-for-profit, in the production, distribution and consumption of film, television, literature, music, theatre, dance, visual arts, masquerade, broadcasting, multimedia, animation, fashion and so on” (p. 4). A concept interconnected with cultural industry is the economy of culture, which places greater values on goods and services for the subjective meaning rather than their utility (Scott, 2005).

Despite such sustained neoliberal attitudes to culture, regional governments remain relatively ineffective in securing any substantial slice of the US$60 billion global film business (UNDP, 2004). The Caribbean earns a meager US$50 million annually from location revenue involving international film and digital video production in the region (Nurse et al., 2009). This under-performance registers despite a legacy of film policy in the Caribbean that fits Yeatman’s (1998) and Pitts (2008) critiques of the New Zealand Film Commission (NCFC), which regret the NZFC’s adoption of neoliberal principles that shift emphasis on developing local producers to facilitating international markets. Blomkamp’s (2011) observation that film policy in New Zealand targets the development of industry rather than culture largely reflects the Caribbean's reality.

Countries with goals for improving indigenous film creative capacities emphasize localized training by offering varied institutional subventions to film training programs (Goldsmith & O'Regan, 2008). One of the major reasons frequently touted by Caribbean governments for investing in projects targeted at luring international productions to their shores is the tourism multiplier effect (Lewis, 2012; Simon, 2012). Indirectly related to this rhetoric is the proposition of policy makers in SIDS that an unsung benefit of international tourism is its
potential to expose potential investors to different attributes of the island that would be influential in their investment decisions (Sanford and Dong, 2000).

The conflation of film and tourism policy in the Caribbean evolved out of the theory of place branding. Place branding is a specific type of tourism marketing that focuses on transforming unique characteristics and images of an area into market value. Zenker and Braun (2010) define place-brand as “a network of associations in the consumers’ mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioral expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place’s stakeholders and the overall place design” (p. 3). As a lead off from place-branding, conventional tourism models prioritize place marketing, which views places as products (Florek et al., 2006).

More in fitting with the Caribbean’s tourism profile is the concept of nation branding, which Anholt (2002) argues is less about marketing communication and more about public policy. The Caribbean has relied on destination branding as the core of its tourism strategy, from which it has developed its film-incentive programs. One of the most popular forms of conventional destination branding throughout the region is film-induced tourism. Hudson and Ritchie (2006) explain that film-induced tourism occurs out of “tourist visits to a destination or attraction as a result of the destination being featured on television, video, or the cinema screen” (p.317). Additionally, Beeton (2005) notes that films influence audiences’ perceptions of locations.

The unparalleled levels of institutional, legislative, regulatory, and policy frameworks addressing international film incentives programs throughout CARICOM remain a central debate among policy officials in the region. In 2008, in a major step towards addressing this problem, CARICOM countries established the Regional Task Force on Cultural Industries, an
intraregional stakeholder group mandated to develop policy guidelines for developing cultural industries throughout the region (Burke, 2007).

Film incentive programs in the Caribbean do not fit comfortably within the film-induced tourism model, partly because the locations used in the region usually represent fictional representations of other places. The authenticity of the location remains concealed in the film. Paddington & Warner (2009) write, “The use of the Caribbean to represent any tropical location is apparent throughout the history of film in the Caribbean” (p. 94). As the film commissioner of Puerto Rico, Mariella Perez Serran noted, “But most of the time the island has stood in for somewhere else, from Argentina in "Fast Five" to the Iraqi desert in 2009's "The Men Who Stare at Goats" (Longwell, 2011).

Whenever these runaway films reveal any remote verisimilitude of the locations, they are often negative. Paddington & Warner (2009) agree that film-induced tourism presents a quagmire for the Caribbean’s destination marketing. Tracing the hundreds of foreign films shot in the Caribbean since 1895, they argue that filmic representations of the region have not been flattering. They write, “When the Caribbean is identified in a film, it is usually as a visual backdrop for foreign stars who appear in films about such themes as voodoo, pirates, or drug trafficking” (p. 92). Ward & O’Regan’s (2009) position aligns with Paddington & Warner’s (2009) as far as it holds that film-induced tourism is somewhat unreliably and is difficult to successfully implement.

Another theoretical concept appropriate for considering Caribbean film policy is Goldsmith & O’Regan’s (2005) theorization of Greenfield Locations. They define Greenfield Locations as fledgling film and video production locations with new and emerging film production infrastructure and services, whose film industry operates in collaboration with its
tourism industry. Unlike many media scholars who may find the Caribbean an ideal example of this model, I posit that the relationship between film and tourism in the Caribbean only marginally reflects the most salient characteristics of this concept. Goldsmith and O’Regan’s (2005) Greenfield Locations almost entirely depend on film and television activities for their sustenance. This is hardly the case for any of the Caribbean destinations.

While the Caribbean region, like Greenfield Locations, does not have an internationally recognized domestic film industry, the main difference lies in the fact that it is yet to invest in the type of facilities and infrastructure that can adequately service large-budget international film productions. Greenfield Locations depend on international film producers to use their facilities (Ward & O’Regan, 2008): the Caribbean islands are mostly deficient in high-end film production equipment and facilities and skilled film professionals. Unless the Caribbean takes a regional approach to adopting this model, its members are unlikely ever to adopt the profile of Greenfield Locations. Only by nurturing a flourishing domestic film industry could the region seriously rationalize or justify heavy investment in film infrastructure, as a lull in international film production projects would result in extensive underutilization of these facilities, although defraying little the maintenance costs.

Considering the ubiquity of international film production projects, Partridge’s (1979) argument that big-budget film producers are mainly attracted to an offshore location because of its production infrastructure seems possibly outdated, or at least suspect, leaving contemporary media scholars opportunities to research the main factors contributing to the decision of Hollywood runaway producers to select an offshore production location. Goldsmith & O'Regan (2008) note that the most important factors considered by film executives in deciding on shooting locations are script needs, production logistics, and the financial bottom-line.
Ward & O’Regan (2009) suggest that a number of logistical matters influence these decisions: financial incentives, access to public spaces, and high-end production facilities, but Craft (2000) contends that personal comfort and preferences of the director and stars are equally important. Ward & O’Regan (2009) concur with Craft to the extent that they agree that production locations ought to offer vacation-style comfort for families accompanying these celebrities; yet, the Caribbean experience contradicts any of these generic templates, suggesting that international film producers attracted to these locations are willing to make significant compromises to satisfy the overriding priorities of their projects.

On-location shooting of international films in the Caribbean is nothing new. Since the earliest days of film production, Caribbean territories have served as locations for shooting foreign films (Paddington & Warner, 2009). The Caribbean’s physical and cultural geography forms the backdrop to a number of big-budget foreign films. In international films, the Caribbean aesthetic is at once othered and desired. Paddington & Warner (2009) write “The use of the Caribbean to depict an exotic location continues to the present day” p. 92). Hollywood’s emphasis on manipulating exotic film locations is partly responsible for its geographic decentralization into SIDS territories and the Caribbean holds a distinct and privileged place in that tradition (Christopherson & Storper, 1986; Scott, 2002; Storper & Christopherson, 1987).

Despite the popularity of the Caribbean as a film location destination, few nations in the archipelago have film commissions. Only nine Caribbean territories are members of ACI. Among them, only four are full CARICOM Members: Dominica, Bahamas, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. The CARICOM associate members, British Virgin Islands and the Cayman Islands join the Dominican Republic, the United States Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico in completing the Caribbean membership (AFCI, 2012). Even some islands with film
commissions or related bodies do not have film incentive programs.

While many CARICOM members have commission-styled offices or units, most are in reality part of the tangential services of tourism departments. Guyana, Haiti and Grenada do not have film commissions or any formalized framework for hosting international film productions (Government of Grenada, 2012; Jacobs, 2007; Pasad, 2012). Islands like Antigua, Dominica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent have some type of outfit dedicated to serving foreign film productions; however, the trend throughout the region leans towards developing more sophisticated and impressive frameworks. Countries in the Eastern Caribbean rely heavily on tax concessions for stimulating investment and activity in their economies. This policy features prominently at the core of their development agenda (Chai and Goyal, 2008). Although traditionally directed at manufacturing and offshore financial services, this propensity to splurge concessions to foreign investors is increasingly gaining steam in the film industry.

Although Jamaica has hosted major international film productions since the early 1900s, its government only began an organized and systematic program to attract big-budget film productions to the island in 1984, when it established the Jamaica Film Commission (Film Jamaica, 2012). The Jamaica Film Commission offers a comprehensive range of support services to foreign film producers on the island that takes them from the pre-production to production phases. Through its Motion Picture Industry Encouragement Act, the country provides up to nine years of income tax relief to foreign film productions shooting on the island. The Act also provides up to 70% investment financing for production facilities that these films build on the island (Price & Martin, 2009).

The Jamaican Film Commission is the most advanced and successful of its kind in CARICOM. The commission facilitates and monitors the production of more than 150 films
projects on the island annually. These productions generate an estimated US$14 million and employers over 2,000 residents (Price & Martin, 2009). In 2003, Jamaica earned US$858 million from international film productions shot on the island (Nurse et al., 2009). The Jamaican film industry benefits from JAMPRO’s participation in an average of ten major tradeshows annually. It was at a 2006 locations scouting show that JAMPRO convinced Warner Brothers to shoot *Licensed to Wed* in Jamaica, when producers had initially planned to film the movie in California. Free accommodation from local hotels and major discounts from Air Jamaica, helped sealed the deal that brought US$1.5 million to the Jamaican economy (Nurse et al., 2009).

In many respects, Trinidad and Tobago’s film policies follow the Jamaican model. In 2006, Trinidad and Tobago established the Trinidad and Tobago Film Company (TTFC) with the dual mandate of developing the local film industry and promoting the country as a premier production location for international films. Foreign film producers are eligible to receive rebates of up to 50% on their investment, not exceeding US$1 million in a local film production (Nurse et al., 2009).

Though not on the scale of Jamaica or Trinidad, the Bahamas has developed a tax incentive program geared at attracting foreign film productions. The Bahamian government reimburses foreign film productions with budgets on or greater than US$1 million and which spends 10 cents of every dollar on the island; however, beyond this, the government has also given special concessions to certain foreign film projects, like the $35,000 it contributed to Mariah Carey’s album, “Memoirs of an Imperfect Angel” and the $300,000 it forked up to accommodate a group of 14 UK filmmakers on the island (Lewis, 2012).

Currently, Belize does not offer any film incentives to foreign producers. The Belize Film Commission is currently lobbying legislators to enact regulations that would allow the country to
provide film incentives to foreign film producers that are so appealing that they would be comparable to the most competitive offered in the region. Belize has had a film commission since 2000, but for its first four years the entity remained relatively low-keyed. Since 2008, it has provided logistical support to an estimated 88 film companies that have shot films on the island, and have injected some US$1,979,864.00 into the local economy (Ysaguirre, 2012).

Barbados decided not to set up a film commission when a 2004 government study advised against it; consequently the private sector, through Film Barbados Inc. provides most of the services offered by film commissions in other islands (Nurse et al., 2009); however, the country, which has traditionally been among the most reserved in offering concessions to foreign film productions, is now turning on its axis to prepare for the establishment of a film commission and the requisite film incentives. In preparation for an overhaul of the island’s film policies, Barbadian film officials consulted with film commissioners in Trinidad and Tobago and the Dominican Republic on these countries’ tax credits and other related incentives (Goundry, 2012).

The Grenadian government recently announced plans to establish a film commission (Government of Grenada, 2012). The Government of Antigua also declared that it is restructuring its film policies to make them more attractive to big-budget film productions (Simon, 2012). The country is currently developing a film incentives package and its Minister of Finance went on record to state, “We have indicated, as a government, that we are prepared to offer an attractive package to ensure that Antigua & Barbuda is an attractive destination, whether it be Hollywood producers or others who wish to make motion pictures in an island setting” (Simon, 2012).

In summary, the literature suggests that an examination of cross-border film production in the Caribbean ought to remain cognizant of some key theoretical constructs, even if it utilizes
a grounded-theory approach. Since understanding of places and spaces of the Caribbean is impossible without an appreciation of the effects of colonialism and nationalism on these islands, a post-colonial sensibility is unavoidable. Even more crucial, is a keen understanding of how colonial projects and their relics that continue to affect the region resurface in the contemporary global environment. Additionally, empires that were instrumental in the early formations of these nations continue to influence their existence, frequently through imperialist and capitalist projects.

The historical struggles and identities of SIDS, especially the CARICOM members remain tethered to their agency on the global political scene. Their policies and developmental models reflect their challenges, insecurities, and disempowered locations, making them not only vulnerable to power articulations by developed nations, but also to transnational corporations’ insatiable desire to maximize profits. The extant literature on these circulating subjects cautions this research project to remain alert to many of the under-examined and silenced issues involved in Hollywood’s cross-border film productions in small, poor, and politically frail countries around the world. Finally, since cultural producers depend on local aesthetics, values, traditions, iconography, and social interactions to add value to their products (Scott, 2005), an analysis of international film production in the Caribbean ought to be attentive to both local and global phenomena.
CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Researcher's Philosophy

Although media and communication scholars have employed different interpretations of ontology in a wide range of projects, in this study, I use the term to mean the taken-for-granted, unproven assumptions that researchers have about some aspect of social reality. I understand ontology as addressing the nature of being, focusing on the qualities of human existence. I gravitate to Littlejohn’s (1996) indications of four key issues that underpin the essence of ontology: the nature of human choices, the binary of the state versus the trait of humanity, human experience as individual and social, and the context of human communication.

Littlejohn (1996) also dissects ontology into two opposing philosophical assumptions: the actional and nonactional. The nonactional assumption proffers that since external causes determine human behavior, humans tend to respond to biological and environmental stimuli instead of making real choices. This assumption does not align with my perspective of the world. Conversely, the actional view, which posits that humans are capable of making real choices dovetails with my academic and intellectual posture. It argues that by acting on their intentions and instincts, humans create meaning and practice freewill. Applied to media studies, the nonactional perspective embraces theories that depend on universal laws for their validity, such as mass-media effects research. Alternatively, scholars who work within the textual analysis model are more likely to comply with the actional perspective.

Generally, humanistic researchers tend to engage ontology from any of four major perspectives: radical constructionism, moderate constructionism, situationalism, and structuralism. Radical constructionism states that we can never truly discover knowledge, but we are continuously constructing it, that meaning is specific, situational and unstable. Summarily,
this means that humans construct the world through their own discourses (Burr, 1995).

Moderate constuctionism contends that meaning has some stable patterns on which people level their interpretations, cognitive forces, and cultural frames in engaging phenomena. It states that there is a definite relationship between “sociocognitive representations and the social and material reality” (Höijer, 2008). In order words, Höijer (2008) argues that history and context are critical facilitators of meaning creation.

The philosophy of situationalism aligns with radical constructionism as far as it subscribes to the notion that behavior, consumption, and interpretation are situational. It promotes the preeminence of particularism over generalizations, highlighting grounded localism and rejecting formal abstractions. It embraces the application of “thick description” rather than the conciseness of surveys (Ang, 1996). Structuralism takes a different path. It commits to the exploration of oblivious and subliminal structures. It generalizes these structures to present different theoretical arguments (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

While I find value in all four ontological perspectives, a customized blend of structuralism, situationalism, and radical constructionism forms the core of my approach to scholarship. I believe that the world is made up of both logical and illogical truths, and that patterns, relationships, and human interactions are as important to understanding the world as are models and formulas based on proven logic. For me, truth serves to confirm both logic and the unquantifiable and immeasurable realities of the human experience. My acceptance of relativism and the multilayered, multifaceted, and complex nature of reality shape my attitude towards investigating knowledge claims. It is my view that humans establish knowledge based on validated truths that help them make sense of their lives and their environment. I hold that this process is never static, since knowledge is not discovered but created and constructed through
human interaction and discourses.

As a Dominican migrant to North America with African ancestry, a colonial childhood, a post-independence youth, and a postcolonial adulthood, I remain suspicious of any research project about the Caribbean that ignores the influences of epochal moments on the region’s identity and challenges. Said (1993) cautions Third World academics to be astutely aware of the "prevailing Western consensus that have come to regard the Third World as an atrocious nuisance, a culturally and politically inferior place" (p. 28). More specifically, I am critical of global neoliberal generalizations that privilege a Eurocentric world-view. Spivak's (1988) charge that western-influenced academic projects function in the service of western economic interests is instructive for most scholars with ontological and epistemic commitments to research influencing the progress of developing countries. She bases her allegations of complicity on the uneven nature of colonial and post-colonial system of oppression (Spivak, 1990).

In this project, I do not presume to speak for or represent the subaltern or claim any predetermined authorial authenticity because of my identity, nor do I blindly negotiate the privileges of my position as a Caribbean intellectual partly conditioned by American higher-education. Instead, I embrace this inescapable intersectionality by encouraging more sophisticated and nuanced conversations and perspectives on examinations of issues highlighting these different relationships and power dynamics. Furthermore, Markham’s (2009) argument that the location of researchers has a profound impact on their interpretation of the world endears me.

Too often, academic studies of political economic phenomena in the Caribbean form part of larger Western projects that negate the unique historical and socio-political identity of the region. Said (1993) proposes a strategy of "countrapuntal reading" to avert such errors of interpretation (p. 66). Contrapuntal reading pays close attention not only to what is included in
the text but also what is excluded, not only to the processes of imperialism, but also to the processes of resistance (Said, 1993).

Overwhelmingly, Western studies of the developing world tend to be guilty of what Chilisa (2011) calls “colonization of the mind” (p. 7), projects that pursue knowledge creation, but invariably strip Caribbean peoples of their ancestral heritage. My postcolonial identity leads me to negotiate Chilisa’s (2011) “third-space methodologies,” which allow both researchers and subjects with a history of colonization and imperialism to reclaim and prioritize their cultural identities, while analyzing the systems and structures framing them (p. 25).

Although I empathize with Chilisa’s (2011) epistemology, I depart slightly from her critique of South/North relations by rejecting her ambivalence over the mobilization of postcolonial denotations. I draw stronger affinity to Thussu’s (2006) description of postcolonial studies as an interdisciplinary inquiry that focuses on theorizing problems of colonization and decolonization. Such an approach averts anxiety of the postcolonial as the historical past: I do not read the term to mean the end of colonialism in a practical sense, but rather view it in its varied transformative hues (Hall, 2006). A postcolonial study is not simply journalism of colonialism and its residual effects. Any research project devoid of political emancipation or shuns theories of interventionism and does not critique colonialism is without the postcolonial theoretical conscience (Shome and Hegde, 2010).

My postcolonial anxiety over popular, institutionalized research on the Caribbean explains my endorsement of Nettleford’s (1978) conviction that any valid exploration of the Caribbean must recognize loops of transformations marked by reconfigurations of identities, from slavery to colonialism, to constitutional independence, to economic dependence and to cultural imperialism. It is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to credibly engage the topic of this
research without cognizance of the Caribbean’s historical struggles. In fact, Markham (2009) asserts that critical qualitative research ought to ground history.

This tenet is particularly profound for studies on the Caribbean, since the colonial enterprise was never as abysmal and deep-rooted in any other part of the world (Delson, 1981). Furthermore, Sheller (2003) argues that since foreign cultural and material penetration remains inescapable for Caribbean people, they have engaged in a protracted and costly struggle to appropriate transnational products to create indigenous cultural agency. Couldry (2010) understood this when he wrote, “Neoliberal discourse emerges from an extreme generalization of the advantages of markets and the disadvantages of other modes of social and economic organization” (p. 6). The capacity of neoliberalism to create a “hegemonic rationality” (Couldry, 2010, p. 6) perpetuates a particular type of political culture that dismisses the realities or suppresses perspectives and realities of large sections of the world’s population. The search for voices is quite a compelling rationale for a study on international film production involving Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Any study of international film production in the Caribbean needs to address issues of power and historical contexts in assessing North and South relationships and interactions, paying as much attention to the discourses of the weaker social actors as those in positions of power. Attention to history and the everyday human experiences gives voice to those traditionally silenced or smothered. Couldry (2010) defines voice as “the process of articulating the world from a distinctive embodied position” (p. 8). For Couldry (2010), voice is not simply vocal constructions or sound, but exchangeable narratives that offer a form of agency, an expression of political conviction.

Heeding Ghandi’s (1998) advice, I research Hollywood runaway productions from a
Caribbean perspective that prioritizes postcolonial theory, inadvertently resurrecting particular texts and perspectives traditionally ignored by Anglo American scholarship. My project responds in its own minuscule way to Couldry’s (2010) complaint of the growing crisis of voice across the political, economic, and cultural domains of the globalized society. My conception of voice in this project is similar to Couldry’s (2010), a rupturing of the economic and political logics underpinning neoliberalism and popular developmental strategies.

Researchers may explore voice from an authorial standpoint. I believe that scholars have a responsibility to contribute not only to the development of new knowledge but to improving the world. I am convinced that researchers are not insulated from the implications of negating this duty, because while opportunities may not always be equitable, the rewards for the contribution that individuals make to humanity transcend their own mortality. Moreover, Goodhall (1991) considers the ethics and emotions of the researcher critical to textual construction and interpretation.

The concept of voice is relevant for studies of cultural industries, particularly Hollywood activities, because the widespread influence of Hollywood over political and economic institutions, social constructions and cultural expressions globally impact multiple dimensions of human interlocutions. Even in the conduct of research, the Hollywood political and propaganda machine has the potential to control voice. Caldwell (2006) argues that Hollywood is often reciprocal in its openness to academic research, often a willing participant as subject, but also a surreptitious and ingenious partner that shares authorship with the researcher by attempting to control and frame any analysis or critique targeting it.

Critical scholars are acutely aware of this type of politics. It is this axiological sensitivity to multiple readings and an unwavering commitment to the exploration of subterranean levels of
societal power that draw me to the critical tradition. I am fascinated by normalizations of the rights and wrongs of society and preoccupied with theories that claim to offer legitimate blueprints for improving them. I draw this intellectual posture from Habermas’ (1971) conception of praxis, which holds that sociological inquiries embrace opportunities to improve humanity, a possible explanation for my gravitation to a fusion of political economy and cultural studies.

I am unsympathetic to detractors of the critical tradition, such as Hammersley (1992), who charge that the critical paradigm is more concerned with politics than inquiry, because I am convinced that a political agenda is both unavoidable and necessary in useful research. Indeed, politics and inquiry are interconnected and inseparable (Creswell, 2003). Furthermore, the goal of the critical scholar ought to be a contribution to social justice (Madison, 2012).

Researchers ought to make their work relevant, so partly for this reason I am particularly sensitive to Madison’s (2012) caution to critical scholars to commit to finding the right balance between criticism and inspiration in reviewing the extant literature that inspires them to new insights. For me, research is primarily a creative process that produces collective meaning and facilitates the communication of shared experiences. One of the reasons that I find the grounded theory approach appealing is its potential for allowing researchers to attend to their instincts as they engage with research subjects. Scholars have argued that such an approach opens windows for new perspectives and more insightful analyses of the world (Markham, 2009).

The literary style and the emphasis on reflexivity essential to beneficial qualitative research appeal to me, particularly for the flexibility they allow to present a more nuanced Caribbean perspective, otherwise muted, on Hollywood’s engagement with the region. I also find the methodology’s appreciation for deep meanings of people’s everyday words, actions, and
accounts both fascinating and intriguing, because while official sources and data provide a fertile terrain for the critical researcher, the everyday discourses of average citizens potentially serve as a critical oasis.

Caldwell (2008) emphasizes that the issue of reflexivity is particularly important in studies of cultural industries. It brings into sharp focus authorial identity: the author as an insider or outsider. Either position brings inherent challenges. The author as insider may become susceptible to naive ethnography or textualism, whereas the author as outsider may fall prey to generalizations that ignore specificities. Ultimately, I am not interested in reaching sweeping generalizations in this research project, but rather contextual interpretations that highlight otherwise marginalized perspectives that are useful for understanding the nuances of international film production and the precariousness of the dialectics mediating economic development and social justice.

The approach that I adopt in this study aligns with Markham’s (2009) reflection on how reflexivity and internal and external conceptions of research designs are important for researchers to develop concepts of the “global” (p. 134). Further, reflecting on her experiences researching the Caribbean, Markham (2009) argues that qualitative research methods are most effective when they focus on analyzing local phenomenon (p. 139). Even more instructive to me is her conviction that a situated reflexivity is essential in developing qualitative methods for studying international media. Her framework of reflexivity places the local within the global, adopts a rhetorical analytical approach, and focuses on both the self and the object of the research. Appropriating her perspective to this study, I highlight the inextricable link between the location realities of international film production and the global systems and structures that permit them.
Theoretical Framework

Critical theory is the theoretical tradition most often used in qualitative research to examine how power, knowledge, and discourse function in historical and cultural struggles. Although critical theory assumes a chameleon character, there are two major aspects to the approach: modern and postmodern theory (Sim & Van Loon, 2001). The modernist tradition encapsulates research from the Frankfurt School and Jurgen Habermas, while the postmodern embodies a range of interrelated developments in global politics, economics, and sociology throughout the twentieth century (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Critical scholarship is ultimately about inquiries into modes of enslavement and emancipation (Gibson, 2007).

As a critical communication scholar of the modern tradition, I am constantly in search of new insights into the ways digital culture influences the everyday (Poster, 2006), what Lefebvre (1987) considers "a set of functions which connect and join together systems that might appear to be distinct" (p. 9). Critical theory abandons standardized and generic formulas for resolving research problems and instead considers such phenomena symptomatic of specific historical structures and experiences (Leysens, 2001). Tsie (2001) reminds critical scholars that to ask the right questions they must abandon orthodoxy to address not only what is emphasized but also what is excluded.

For the critical theorist, questions on the workings of global capitalism, imperialism, oppression, or inequity are not essentialist, but deeply rooted in history and ideology (Sim & Van Loon, 2001). Critical theory is not imprisoned by tenets of neutrality: it is political and emancipatory. This approach to scholarship is not hypocritical in the sense of feigning an objective reality, but is both reflexive and constitutive, more concern with historical transformation or continuity than it is about preoccupations with truth claims (Cox, 1986). It
claims no unquestioned allegiance to the status quo, but progressively proposes deviations or alternatives to the accepted order (Tsie, 2001).

The politics of critical theory favors the interests of the poor and the most disenfranchised, using concepts of "civil society' to illuminate resistant and revolutionary potential (Woods, 1995). For scholars exploring concepts involving the realities of marginalized groups or entities, such as SIDS, this research approach offers an appropriate platform for teasing out liberating and empowering alternatives. Unlike Dependency Theory or World System Theory, it gives some agency to its marginalized subjects (Campling, 2006). The critical scholar has an innate concern for ordinary people, never assuming that elite performances or interests correspond to the experiences or desires of the masses, never assuming a power balance, even in the most democratic climate (Richards, 1999).

Boltanski & Chiapello (2005) caution that analyses of the evolution and characteristics of the modern dimensions of global capitalism, which radically reconfigured the function and scope of markets from the Fordist model of capital accumulation, ought to intimately engage the nature and role of criticisms and counter-movements. Implicit in their thesis is the suggestion that social movements of the last two decades have been complicit in nurturing some of the main contradictions of contemporary capitalism.

One of the most significant characteristics of corporate globalization is its commitment to the enclosures of the commons, the transformation of an increasingly overwhelming proportion of human existence into commodities, and its colonization of economic and political spaces (Shiva, 2005). The enclosures caused by global neoliberalism and corporatization, which revere economic growth, exclude the majority of the world population from political participation and economic empowerment.
An inevitable outcome of turning over the commons to the market is the increased vulnerability of the politically weak and the arbitrary exploitation of the natural environment, invariably leading to serious threats to human existence (Shiva, 2005). Analyses of enclosure of the commons are not only important for understanding the historical colonial enterprise, it is also critical for tracing its vestiges. Corporate globalization exploits colonial footprints by contorting and exaggerating benefits of markets. Post-colonial developing countries can ill-afford to interlock their economies with merely nearsighted corporate forecasts or returns (Shiva, 2005).

Croteau and Hoynes (2006) propose two approaches to analyzing media: the market model and the public sphere model. As a critical project, this research belongs to the latter. The market model argues that the media best serve society when they belong to unregulated markets. Alternatively, the public sphere model contends that the market is imperfect and undemocratic and an unsuitable means of media control. The public sphere approach differentiates media from other industries by ascribing a significantly unique and important role for them in promoting citizenship and preserving democratic principles. The public sphere approach is of the critical school.

Scholars of political economy who appreciate the workings of global capitalism and its impact on media need not only focus on analyses of media content, but also the production process, moving beyond a preoccupation with dominance and engaging different points of subjectivity (Rudolph & Rudolph, 2003). Shiva (2005) argues that corporate globalization defines the world as property that remains susceptible to private ownership, noting that it understands markets simply in terms of profit. In this research project, I hurdle this conception of the world by opting to view the planet as a commons. An underlying principle of the commons is the highlighting of the inescapable commonalities and challenges of humanity and the disturbing
of the market as the pivot for globalization.

An examination of globalization simply from economic frameworks produces static and discomforting generalizations, devoid of nuanced understanding of cultures and human experiences (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005; Layard, 2005; Scitovsky, 1992). A significant problem with relying on economic growth theories for understanding development dynamics is that they generally ignore critical issues of regeneration and sustenance (Sen, 1987). Sen (1987) delivers a convincing exposition of economics’ discomfort with ethical issues, adding that the field’s over enthusiasm with rationality makes it an inappropriate platform for reasoning human experiences. The researcher of political economic phenomena who navel-gazes markets and financial systems runs the risk of missing the crucial turn to the path of enlightenment on key ecological and societal factors that are indispensable components of any such inquiry.


Wolf (2012) levels a scathing critique on capitalism by suggesting that from the onset it never facilitated democratic processes nor did it ever genuinely cared about citizens’ wellbeing. Almost predicting an inevitable implosion of the system with disastrous consequences, Wolf (2012) blames many of the social problems in Western industrial countries on the absence of sufficient economic democracy that is necessary for providing workers opportunities for
empowerment and self-determinacy. His thesis argues for the dismantling of large corporations and conglomerates, transforming them into sophisticated worker cooperatives.

One of the most lucid expositions on political economy that fascinates me is Mosco’s (2009) four components of the critical approach to political economy of media and communication. Mosco’s (2009) explanation of the constituent roles of social change and history, social totality, moral philosophy, and praxis registers the critical political economists’ attitude to scholarship lightly skewed to theorization, but equally focused on improving humanity. The focus is as much on effecting positive change as it is about generating intellectual insight.

Despite its chameleon history, the conventional political economy approach to studying media and communication, evolving out of a Marxist tradition, continues to maintain a critical posture as its most distinctive feature. Wasko (2005) explains, “It has previously been noted that the application of political economy to communication or media most always indicates a critical approach, compared to what has been called an administrative or mainstream approach in communication research” (p. 40). From this critical stance, the political economy of communication perceives culture, communication, and media as industries and commodities that convey meaning, subject to production, distribution, and consumption. It approaches production and consumption as separate phenomena, with distinctive hierarchical patterns mediating the two. McChesney (2008) highlights two trajectories in the political economy of Communication: the connection between media and communication systems and wider society and the focus on ownership, mechanisms, and policies regulating and governing the processes and productions of the media.

While political economists of media and communication disagree on a range of issues,
they find common ground on a few central themes. Most importantly, they agree that there is a
direct connection between the role of the media and communication technology and the quality
of modern democratic societies. McChesney (2008) explains, “In political terms, the
communication system may serve to enhance democracy or to deny it or some combination of
the two” (p. 305). Studies examining Hollywood's international film production activities have
considerable potential for deepening understanding of political economy issues, because media
systems serve as appropriate barometers for assessing economic and political structures and
processes in the wider society (Herman and McChesney, 1997).

My approach to studying Hollywood’s international productions in the Caribbean islands
relies primarily on a political economy framework, but also burrows extensively from cultural
studies. While I appreciate the strengths of the political economy, I am aware, like Markham
(2009), that it is untenable to study the Caribbean without a cultural lens. Furthermore, I consider
text and audiences as important as structures and systems in understanding cultural industries.
My model fits snugly with Garnham’s (1998) recommendation that political economy embraces
culture as a platform from which to analyze the structures, processes, and policies facilitating
media systems. Garnham (1998) considers communication policies, including programs, laws,
regulations, and initiatives crucial to understand media systems.

Although, the two traditions often ask different questions and different sites frequently
motivate their inquiries, they both share many common features, including a critical approach to
analyzing power relationships. My centrist position evolves from Garnham’s (1998)
recommendation that political economy integrates cultural studies theories into studies on
structures, processes, and policies constituting media and communication systems.

Grossberg’s (1995) clarification on the misunderstandings of the tensions between
political economy and cultural studies also inspires my framework. He observed that while the
two fields were never very intimate, they were never extremely at odds either. He writes, “They
were more like cousins who tolerated each other” (Grossberg, 1995, p. 627). Grossberg’s (1995)
framing of that historical relationship opens up doors for exploring options for their greater
intimacy that seems eventually inevitable. I recognize the legitimacy of the tensions as much as I
reject their irreconcilability to functional degrees. Furthermore, their integration, though
tentative, has yielded useful and inspiring results. Studies intersecting political economy and
cultural studies have mainly focused on examining how the economy works to commodify
culture (Golding & Murdock, 1997; Hamm & Smandych, 2005); however some scholars, like

Golding & Murdoch (1991) argue that one of the major advantages of cultural studies is
its capacity to produce in-depth and sophisticated analyses of discourses, its strengths in
highlighting relational power, agendas, and struggles. They recognize that many of the insights
provided by the cultural studies tradition are beneficial to investigations into the political
economy of communications. Grossberg (1995) asserts that it is erroneous to conceive of cultural
studies as incapable of exploring structures and systems. He is right to emphasize that what is
important is not the concessions on protracted scholarly feuds, “but rather the ways in which
questions of economics - and of contemporary capitalism in particular are to be articulated into
analyses of the politics of culture” (Grossberg, 1995, p. 655).

It is in recognition of Grossberg’s (1995) council and the urgency of contemporary media
and communication transformations that I develop my framework, which prioritizes political
economy, but risks being deficient without its cultural studies pillars. My political economic
framework incorporates the five distinct but interrelated perspectives: consciousness, value,
spacialization, standpoint, and meaning.

My notion of consciousness derives from Smyth’s (1981) definition that explains people’s awareness of their life conditions, which includes self-understanding and understanding of their individuality in relations with the range of social organizations. As Smyth (1981) notes, consciousness is processual and dynamic, evolving over an entire life cycle. Consciousness leads us into interpretations of sensory features, such as emotions, ideas, instincts and memory. Marx (1973) recognized the importance of consciousness to political economy, arguing that thought patterns link to explanations of political and economic phenomena.

Political economists of communication ought to be more comprehensive in their approach to value, especially since it holds as its main goal the challenge to social inequalities. Marx (1973) reminds us that in our explorations on the working of capital, value comes first, even before labor. By developing a clear ontological position on value, political economy would be able to establish more meaningful and less arbitrary boundaries for its engagement with culture.

Political economy could also benefit from a more inclusive and deliberative epistemic stance that moves beyond criticism and praxis, and the deconstruction of class. If its goal is social equity and justice, then it needs an epistemology that not only engages marginal perspectives, but also prioritizes them. It may possibly find such an approach in ethnic studies or feminist studies, which argue that the perspectives of marginalized or oppressed people offer opportunities for reaching more balanced and meaningful interpretations of the world (Allen, 1996; Buzzanell and Liu, 2003).

Political economy of media and communication has the capacity to be more comfortable with dealing with the multiple ways in which society creates meaning. We can begin this process
of transformation by examining Lemke’s (1995) concept of the Presentational, or the “aboutness” of meaning; the Attitudinal, or the evaluative aspects of meaning; and the Organizational, or how meanings derive coherence. From a more sophisticated and meaningful level, they political economy scholars must engage Hall’s (1973) theories of representation and reception. Hall (1973) makes the riveting point that culture is not simply an object of study but a site facilitating social action, whose engagement with media produces meaningful discourses with multiple interpretations dependent on perception. He notes that while meaning can sometimes be stable, it is never really fixed, constantly opened to interpretation.

My research posture also draws on Croteau & Hoynes’ (2006) suggestion to political economists studying media industries that they ought to remain open to concepts and studies from a wide range of disciplines, such as political science, sociology, economics, cultural studies, and communication. Considering that Caldwell (2006) has the same advice for cultural studies scholars, warning them that cultural research must involve a multidisciplinary approach, my ontological and epistemic model for researching Hollywood seems not only prescriptive but inescapable. Caldwell (2006) writes, “It is now impossible to talk about marketing or distribution or the global economy without also talking about how industries creatively produce semiotic and aesthetic forms of difference” (p. 116). He argues that the stark distinctions and artificial boundaries that scholars erect between the two fields are not only obsolete but counterintuitive, explaining that the deep-seated conflict lies more at the politics of scholarship involving dominance over critical knowledge, a phenomenon he calls “critical industrial practice” (p. 105).

My research framework also feeds on Caldwell’s (2006) caution to media scholars studying Hollywood runaway productions to consider the industry a site of cultural production that is often reciprocal in its engagement with academic research. While it is often the subject of
academic study, it also develops its own research projects that oftentimes are self-critical, but nonthreatening. He breaks convention by advocating the marriage of ethnography and textual analysis in studying cultural industries, implying that such an approach embraces key components of space, which either practice on its own is likely to miss. He recommends a methodology based on a critical spatial practice that examines “deep industrial texts” (p. 144).

Caldwell (2006) adds that critical scholarship’s assumption that textual deconstruction belongs to the subject and audience as a means of exposing ideological contradictions is obsolete. He posits that contemporary media “employ deconstruction, meta-critical textuality, and performativities of identity (racial, ethnic, sexual, hybrid, nomadic, and otherwise) (p.145). He points to a rift between cultural studies scholars and media industries based on the agenda of these industries to influence or even control critical knowledge about themselves (p.105).

“Surveying the littered trail of industry studies like these over the past half-century shows a repeated pattern: access granted, stories told, behind-the-scenes knowledge made available, scholar challenged or written off,” he laments (Caldwell, 2006, p.114).

I follow Caldwell’s (2006) recommendation to be reflexive in my research, always aware of the interactivity of systems and structures, which leaves me vulnerable to becoming their text as much as I make them mine. In my research, I depend heavily on industry sources and data, but balance these inquiries with cultural explorations that take me outside the Hollywood system or the study site’s established political structures. While I recognize that some scholars employ a cooperative approach that gifts their sources the opportunity to influence the outcome of the study, I collect industry data from a critical but engaging distance. Caldwell (2006) is critical of research that over-relied on the industry’s systems of access and sources for validation.

My involvement in advocating public policies that influence cultural industries in the
Caribbean establishes the foundation for my interest in studying Hollywood. Consistent with the concept of praxis in the political economy tradition, I intend to use my research to help influence how the Caribbean approaches both the invitation and reception of international film productions in the region. This agenda acknowledges Payne and Sutton’s (2001) proposition that the geopolitical, economic, and cultural connections between the United States and the Caribbean, though disturbingly uneven, are so profound that they warrant a new and distinct classification. They encapsulate those linkages in the term "Caribbean America" (Payne & Sutton, 2001, p. 241). Consistent financial, trading, and migratory patterns justify the special distinction of this structural relationship (Payne & Sutton, 2001).

Payne and Sutton's (2001) theory seems a more elaborate exposition of arguments made by several influential Caribbean literary figures, of which the most glaring is Barbadian novelist George Lamming. Lamming (1960) earlier argued for in-depth scholarly analyses of the business relationships between the Caribbean and the United States, most indelibly marked by agendas and ambitions of U.S. transnational corporations and the U.S. Government's security protocols.

Literary scholar Sean Goudie (2013) proposes a multidisciplinary framework for examining Caribbean issues by highlighting the dialectics of local and global influences and their historical roots in forming a "Caribbean American regionalism" (p. 87) He urges scholars engaged in studies of the region's cultural industries to explore issues of narration alongside inquiries into the complicities or resistances to "political and business leaders, laboring populations, and intellectuals and artists," and how they impact "US empire-building in the Caribbean from the last half of the nineteenth century to the present" (p. 88).

I am incorporate Goudie's (2013) epistemology for studying the Caribbean, because it allows for a simultaneous exploration of U.S. imperialist expansion and the region's expressions
of resistance. This fluid and open epistemology avoids overindulgence in binary arguments and permits more hybridized conceptions and interpretations of political and economic relations between the informal empire of the United States and the Caribbean (Goudie, 2013). It also promises greater potential to identify the configuration and realization of Nye's (2004) soft power and Louw's (2011) reflections of the Pax Americana in negotiating the spaces of these relationships.

Deliberations on movements towards regionalism are important in understanding relations between the United States and the Caribbean. Fearing the inevitable limitations of and their vulnerability to international protocols, such as the Doha Round, many regions, like the Caribbean, are increasingly turning to strategic regional trading agreements that serve their national interests. Although the current trend to trade regionalism is mostly prevalent among developing countries, developed countries are also choosing to engage in strategic trading partnerships that insulate them from the growing influence of international trade treaties, thus adding more nails in the coffin of multilateral trade as we currently know it. National courts, regional tribunals, and independent arbitration systems may begin to overlap IGOs in adjudicating international trading matters.

While greater trade regionalism may heighten, trade conflicts will not necessarily create outright chaos or uncontrollable disruption of global markets, since all trading players share some level of interest in maintaining the relative stability of the global economy. Plurilateral agreements may facilitate many commonly shared principles and values. These agreements may embrace issues such as financial regulation, clean energy, and climate change among others. Perhaps it is reasonable to expect more frequent shocks to the global economy that may arise out of the impact of the overlapping and maybe contradictory agenda and interests of the different
trading regimes and blocs.

I am unable to settle on a preference for regional trade over multilateral trade and vice versa, but I am convinced that the current model of global trade liberalization has hurt developing countries more than it has assisted them. The widening gap between rich and poor countries and the extensive indigence experienced by most of the world’s population evidence my position. Also, regional trade often privileges the agenda and ambitions of the stronger economic partners in the regional agreement. A clear example of this argument is the dominant role that Brazil and the United States play in decision-making of the Free Trade of the Americas (FTA), arguably the most expansive regional trade mechanism. For instance, the United States has increasingly insisted on maintaining unreasonable agricultural exemptions, yet has forced members, such as Chile to lower their agricultural tariffs.

Notwithstanding, regional blocs have offered many small economies the opportunity to develop sustainable responses to the debilitating impact of the free trade liberalization practices mobilized and managed by industrialized countries. It has also encouraged more equitable and mutually satisfying investment opportunities for private and public enterprises among neighbors; however, there is a legitimate concern that trade agreements undertaken by developing countries outside of the WTO are open to abuse by the powerful nations, because of the limited repercussions and rule enforcement associated with them.

I disagree with the realist cynics who suggest that the future expansion of regional trading relationships will lead to a return of global conflicts that marked the inter-war period, because the preeminence of multinational companies and the pervasiveness of cross-border integration make this theory less convincing (Cohn, 2010). Coming from a country that has signed to a number of regional trading instruments: the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, the
Caribbean Community, the Free Trade of the Americas etc., I reject Cohn’s (2010) negative framing of the collective decision making inherent in regional blocs as usurping the sovereignty of the member states. Rather, I consider the interdependence as a trade off to realizing goals otherwise unattainable, actually for smaller countries such arrangements provide them with increased institutional capacity to make more effective sovereign decisions. For example, were it not for the collective impact of bodies such as the Organization for Eastern Caribbean States, and CARICOM, many small islands in the Caribbean would have been rendered unsustainable by international trading regimes. Many of these countries align their economic integration to some level of political integration that facilities their shared political values (Esty, 2005).

As Hancock (2009) explains, regional integration assists weaker countries consolidate many functional challenges, such as transactional logistics, tariff regulation, domestic market stability, administrative costs, and foreign investment recruitment. Obviously, in such regional blocs, national loyalties oftentimes conflict with the collective interest, but considered in the wider context of trade negotiations, this tension is no different from the many compromises that these nations would have had to make as weaker individual players. Rather, it may be more useful to consider desperate efforts at regionalization in the developing world as part of strategies to develop a post-neoliberal paradigm.

Although post-neoliberalism is still a relatively embryonic theory (Kaltwasser, 2011), it has tremendous potential for its ability to progressively foreground key issues confronting the development of SIDS, especially those in the Caribbean region. Radcliff (2012) defines the evolving concept as "a shift in development thinking and delivery to stress a rights-based articulation of individual capacities and wellbeing, nature, and resource distribution” (p. 240). Riggirozzi (2010) understands it as a major thesis in arguments by many scholars and
developmentalists from the developing world that argues for a more empowered state in efforts to implement development projects and realize social stability. Latin American scholars have deployed the concept to engage analyses of the region’s destructive encounters with varied aspects of neoliberalism and its efforts to advance beyond the Washington Consensus (Brand and Sekler, 2009; Kaltwasser, 2011) Through this study, I hope that issues related to big-budget film productions by transnational corporations in developing countries would extend the post-neoliberalism debates, even if heuristically.

Research Design Strategy

Yin (2009) defines a qualitative research design as a logical framework that binds data collection and analysis to the research questions. Drawing from the interpretive tradition, I utilize a qualitative research methodological design. My approach matches Creswell’s (1994) definition of a qualitative study as “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (pp. 1-2). I highlight this definition to make clear distinctions between qualitative research and naturalistic inquiry or ethnography: key interpretive methodologies commonly transposed at the risk of distortion (Potter, 1996). While these approaches may sometimes correlate, they may not always correspond. A qualitative method, for instance, may not necessarily function to satisfy interpretive or naturalistic inquiry (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). It need not unfold in a natural setting, nor need it involve the protracted direct engagement of the researcher with a physical site.

The aim of qualitative research is to gain insight or understanding into some facet of social life, taking an inductive investigatory position from the point of departure. The qualitative
approach focuses on conversations and discourses and how they contribute to the creation of meaning. While numerical analyses can present impressive accounts of a wide range of phenomena, they often ignore key information with the potential for providing richer understanding (Snider, 2010). In contemporary research, well executed qualitative inquiries are as highly regarded as their quantitative counterparts in most fields of scholarship (Davis, 2007).

Here, I also find it imperative to clarify three key methodological concepts: site, field and scene. The site is a specific local or physical place where the research interacts with social actors. In this study, the island of Dominica is the main site. The field is simply the relationship between the topic and the space where the research unfolds. For the current project, this means exploring international film production from historical relationships defining American interaction with the Caribbean region. Finally, the scene is a construct that defines the social actors’ scope of action: in this research context, it addresses the connections and implications of film policies and developmental objectives of the island of Dominica and big-budget foreign film productions produced on the island (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Qualitative research does not conceive of design and method as static or rigid. Although exemplary qualitative researchers plan and design prior to field engagement, they cast few processes in stone. On the contrary, they continually refine their strategy to improve the integrity and reliability of their research. Jacobs (1987) notes that such researchers initially make choices on methods based on the questions that they pose or the hypotheses that they seek to test; however, he cautions that even the questions, hypotheses, issues, and topics remain susceptible to change as the researcher’s knowledge and understanding of the world undergo transformation.

In defiance of charges from many scholars unfamiliar with or unsympathetic to the rubrics of qualitative methodology, I posit that iteration in qualitative research is inconsistent
with slovenly method: it is an investment against it. Polkinghorne (2005) agrees, advocating for iteration even during sampling. He laments that far too many qualitative researchers adopt static sampling techniques that restrict their access to data loaded with the potential to deepen or expand their evolving description.

In this study, I avert the frequent error of any humanistic research that uses method and methodology interchangeably. While I recognize that both concepts share some common features, I concur with Noorderhaven (2004) that the distinction is not only significant as a conceptual framework, but also important for helping to relieve qualitative research of designs that are cluttered and incoherent. Additionally, I subscribe to his definition of methodology as “a system of ontological and epistemological assumptions on which research is to be based” (p. 91). Good qualitative research systematically develops samples that represent the community or subject under examination. The objective is not statistical representation, but representation that the researcher and participants believe is credible and indicative. In this sense, the research project evolves as a partnership.

Of the methodologies available to qualitative researchers, discourse analysis and grounded theory appeared the most appealing to me for this study based on my philosophical framework and preferred modes of inquiry. Possibly, discourse analysis could have served as an appropriate methodology in another context, but to answer the research questions that I am asking and for exploring the research site that I am engaged with grounded theory offers a more useful model. Discourse analysis, which analyzes language as social practice, is mainly concerned with examining verbal and textual materials to discover discursive constructions and their role in facilitating particular economic, social, and political functions (Blommaert, 2005; Chouliaraki and Fairclough 2010). Critical discourse analysis goes further to approach discourse
as a social construction that is contextual (van Dijk, 2001; Wetherell 2001).

Like much of grounded theory, critical discourse analysis is also interested in unpacking power relationships and ideological formations, making it quite an attractive methodology for addressing political economy questions (Gee, 2011; Teo, 2000). My anxiety over its fit for this project stems from the fact that critical discourse analysis prioritizes language and linguistic formulations, but traditionally information on the details of cross-border film production from the perspective of developing host countries are normally suppressed or inadequately documented. There are just not many institutional or public discourses in Dominica that feed possible answers to the research questions that I am asking. Discourse analysis works most effectively when issues crucial to addressing the research questions have captivated the public’s imagination and conversation. Additionally, by prioritizing the construction of discourses emerging from the data collection, I run the risk of ignoring some structural and systemic factors that may be more relevant focal points for analysis.

Conversely, grounded theory thrives on excavating the unknown, unreported, and undocumented, particularly human interactions and actions, but also structural formations and social practices, making it a better choice for this project. Two core concepts drive the practice of grounded theory: constant comparison and theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Constant comparison allows for the simultaneous collection and sampling of data, while theoretical sampling permits theory to guide decisions on the ongoing collection of data (Suddaby, 2006). Grounded theory is primarily a practice in interpretation that emphasizes how social actors produce meaning in real settings (Gephart, 2004). It is not about the preciseness of description; rather, it is an engagement in conceptual abstraction, emphasizing or reorganizing aspects or indicators of a phenomenon for deep analytical reasoning (Holton, 2007). The ultimate
The goal of a grounded theory project is to produce theory out of empirical data (Glaser, 1978). Denzin (2007) argues that grounded theory is an ideal mode of inquiry for the postcolonial scholar because of its capacity to produce decolonizing perspectives.

Several influential scholars of grounded theory recommend that researchers approach method as a distinct practice from traditional methodological paradigms, especially in qualitative research (Holton, 2007; Star, 2007). While I note this advice, I do not adopt a classical grounded theory approach. Instead, I employ a critical grounded theory methodology (Mathison, 1997), which allows me to constantly question my positionality and ideology throughout all phases of the research process. My approach syncs with Denzin's (2007) conception of the "post-pragmatist grounded theorist" (p. 460), who extracts meaning from the consequences of social interaction and representational politics rather than from an objective, neutral standpoint.

The misnomer among a particular branch of scholars that researchers ought to approach grounded theory purged from any theory or experiential knowledge on the subject of inquiry is pervasive (Suddaby, 2006). Critical scholars obviously reject this guideline, questioning the underlying assumption that it is possible for any researcher to acquire a blank sheet or neutral point of departure (Suddaby, 2006). Furthermore, Coase (1998) charges that it is illogical for a researcher to attempt the development of useful research without bringing research questions into intimate conversation with theory.

Actually, laudable examples of grounded theory projects reject the rational detachment of scientific epistemology, because implicit in the constant comparative method is not only the recognition of the researcher's subjectivity, but the encouragement of a close and interactive relationship between the researcher and the research site (Coase, 1998; Shank, 2006). Strauss & Corbin (1998) recommend that researchers of grounded theory emphasize their intersubjectivity.
and its impact on their analysis. Grounded theory researches should explain their positionality and maximize the quality of their contact with their empirical site (Suddaby, 2006). Charmaz (2005) charges that any grounded theory project that is sensitive to social justice ought to value four core principles: credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness. Grounded theory research can only meet these criteria when it is rooted in local sensibilities, cultures, and politics, when it contributes to local agency and empowerment.

*Data Collection Design*

Exemplary qualitative research adopts an emergent design; very little is cast in stone or prescribed in advance; rather, the methodology is contextual and emerges from the researcher’s engagement with rich sources of relevant data (Denzin, 1989). In this study, I use in-depth interviews, focus groups, documents reviews, and participatory observation. Interviews, observations and document analyses are the most popular types of qualitative data (Patton, 2002). The point of views or perspectives of participants expressed in a natural setting of an inquiry are treasure troves of a qualitative inquisition.

In applying these data collection techniques, I search for meaning from patterns and relationships that evolve out of the participants’ discourses and social interactions. The point of view of the participant is of paramount importance to the humanistic researcher. For a Caribbean-centered research project, this matters deeply. Becker (1996) writes, “Epistemologically, then, qualitative methods insist that we should not invent the viewpoint of the actor, and should only attribute to actors ideas about the world they actually hold, if we want to understand their actions, reasons, and motives” (p. 56).

Another key precept of the epistemological stance of qualitative research is the concept
of *quotidian*. The term, which originated from Alfred Schutz, emphasizes that researchers should focus on the everyday life, experiences, and practices of people in their quest to learn about society (Schutz, 1962). This concept points to one of the most significant gaps in research on international film production. Most are preoccupied with structures and systems and few attend to the varied levels of human interaction constituting the production processes. I hope to contribute to changing this pattern by bringing both into conversation.

One of the major epistemological challenges for humanistic researchers is the issue of generalization. Most humanistic scholars reason that objective generalization is irrelevant. Some have even called for its outright exclusion in qualitative methods and many textbooks on qualitative research even ignore it entirely. The moderate view contends that although it is not important in the way that interest quantitative researchers, degrees of generalizations are important to humanistic researchers.

Kvale (1996) presents two constructs for generalization in humanistic research: naturalistic and analytic generalizations. “The first, *naturalistic generalization*, is based on comprehensive personal knowledge. Secondly, in *analytical generalizations*, the researcher evaluates and concludes how the results from a specific study can be applicable to another case or situation” (Höijer, 2008). From this perspective, qualitative researchers use evidence and theoretical arguments to show similarities and differences between cases and situations.

Interviews, participant observation, ethnography, focus groups, and textual analysis are the most common forms of data collection in qualitative research. One of the most popular myths of qualitative research is that it rejects or ignores statistical or numerical data. While qualitative research methods are often discourse oriented, they frequently include varied applications of case studies, surveys, and document analyses. The major difference is not the application of numerical
methods, but the ways in which the research relies on them.

Qualitative researchers frequently use interviews as their main method of inquiry. Patton (2002) identifies three types of qualitative interviews: informal conversation interview, the general interview, and the open-ended interview. Each of these interview models requires different approaches. Although interviews should be as conversational as possible, they should be rigorous to ensure reliability and validity. They should utilize techniques that fall between the ranges of semi-structured and unstructured in order to facilitate reproducibility, credibility, and transparency (Kvale, 1996). In this study, I use open-ended interviews lasting between 20 minutes to 2 hours, since they are an efficient option that matches the grounded theory design.

While individual interviews are common, focus group discussions may be appropriate for some topics and are often used in grounded theory projects. Powell et al. (1996) explain that a focus group is a selection of individuals brought together by the researcher to comment personally and collectively on the subject of the research. The researcher supplies the topic and moderates the discussion but does not control the interaction of the discussants (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan 1997).

In academic inquiries of social phenomena, particularly media studies, focus groups are not normally the preferred data collection method, although market research uses it extensively (Morgan, 1988). While usually inadequate as a single method of inquiry, focus group research is often quite effective as a form of triangulation and as a method of extending the depths of the inquiry. Alongside other methods, it adds to the richness of analysis and brings context to otherwise disjointed and fragmented pieces of information. It is in this context that I use it in the study. I use focus groups to clarify and validate information garnered from documents and interviews to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of their meaning.
Apart from interviews and focus group discussions, qualitative researchers also use other forms of data collection such as the other two that I use in this study: documents and participant observation. Although Burawoy (2009) argues that face-to-face communication is the best way to investigate capitalism, socialism, and globalization, because it challenges many conceptions of space, place, and culture, I find it unfortunate that documents are underused as key sources of data in qualitative research (Hodder, 2003; Prior, 2003; Silverman, 2001). I find them highly valuable in this research, because they are the repositories of distinct human intervention and representations that may otherwise escape analysis. Documents are more than records of social activity; they are also tools for organizing social interaction (Prior, 2003; Smith, 1984), thus an important facility for understanding complex social arrangements (Strum & Latour, 1999).

In some cases, I rely on them as a significant strategy for data triangulation (Patton, 2002), but at other times, they surface as key data sources. Miller and Alvarado (2005) suggest that social research incorporating documents as part of its core data set offers three crucial points of distinction: it preserves traces of social interaction that transcends local contexts, it facilitates intertextuality (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997), and it references the extent of specialized knowledge and rules involved in communication exchanges.

The documents that I examine do not follow a specifically predetermined sampling rationale, for I am more concerned with comprehension than I am about representativeness. Jordanova (2000) advises researchers relying on documents as key data sources to select those that offer opportunities to provide the richest understanding of the phenomenon under study; therefore, a more important guide for the research is ensuring that the selected documents align with the goals of the research (Howell & Prevenier, 2001; Jordanova, 2000).

Before engaging the research site, I had no intention of employing participant
observation. This data collection strategy emerged organically out of my grounded theory approach and to remain honest to my methodology I incorporated it into my research design. While I was collecting data in Dominica, a renowned Hollywood producer from Los Angeles, California visited the island unexpectedly to pitch a movie to the Dominican government, therefore, I exploited the research value of this unexpected development by participating in the exoteric activities of the process as a passive observer. But as Emerson et al. (2001) observe, while passive participation is usually discreet and less intrusive, it limits the researcher’s ability for deeper immersion into the site and restricts the depth of relationships that they establish in the field, which may be valuable for quality observation.

Researchers use participant observation to acquire an intimate and familiar knowledge of a particular group, focusing primarily on their practices and interactions over a sufficient period of time (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Participant observation may take many different forms, such as informal interviews, direct observation, active participation, collective discussion, and review of personal documents, among others. DeWalt et al. (1998) describe participant observation as a method that involves the researcher participating in the daily activities, routines, and rituals of the subjects under study. It is the researcher’s interest, discipline and focus of inquiry that prioritize fields of observations leading to the resultant data (DeWalt et al., 1998); however, Geertz (1973) recommends that if researchers use participant observation, they should ensure that the description is extensive and full of “thick description” (p. 5-6).

Data Collection Means and Protocols

Qualitative researchers have a wide range of data collection procedures at their disposal: some may opt for observation, textual or document reviews, or interviewees. Whatever route
qualitative researchers choose, they must have an overall plan for collecting their data. While
these plans are open to change, they should facilitate a cogent and efficient method that embraces
academic rigor. Their data collection should include a data collection plan that outlines a data
collection strategy, a clear and transparent process of data analysis and synthesis, and a data
management program for not only protecting the integrity of the data, but also for insuring the
ethical standards of the research process and protecting the rights of research participants and
subjects.

For logistical and practical reasons, I collected data for this research project solely from
Dominica, as I believe the island adequately offers clues to the wider experiences and realities of
Caribbean members of SIDS. The French, Spanish and British fought numerous wars against
each other to control islands in the Caribbean, which they prized as plantation hot-spots and
strategic locations for exploiting the African slave trade (Stuart, 1993). Following a 1763 truce
with France, Great Britain declared Dominica one of its colonies in 1805. Dominica was the last
Caribbean island that the Europeans colonized (Lent, 1975). Britain remained the colonizer of all
the islands of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) until the mid-twentieth
century, when a deliberative and persistent wave of independence and national liberation
movements destabilized colonial authority in the region.

Dominica, with a land mass of 751 sq km, populated by just over 70 thousand inhabitants
achieved its independence from Britain on November 3, 1978, becoming a parliamentary
democracy. The island's biodiversity is so rich and its environment so lush that it has earned the
title of "The Nature Island of the Caribbean" (CIA, 2013). Two thirds of the island is covered by
tropical forests, which nourishes some 1,200 species of plants. The island’s more than 300 rivers
and dozen waterfalls are indicative of its lushness and appeal as an exotic location for foreign
Dominica has a multiparty political system that follows the British Westminster Model. The Prime Minister is the head of the executive branch of government, while the President is the head of state. The country has a unicameral legislature. The House of Assembly, which enacts laws in Dominica comprises of 21 elected representatives, 9 senators, and one ex-officio member. Citizens elect representatives from single member constituencies to the house every 5 years based on the single-majority system. There are no term limits on reelection and political parties appoint the 9 senators to the house. The Members of Cabinet, which are appointed by the House of Assembly develop and administer policies controlling government. The Prime Minister is the head of Cabinet and wields considerable power over it (Lawrence, 2007).

Requests for information on public policy in developing countries like Dominica invariably carry political implications, not the least being inadvertent or deliberate obstruction from bureaucratic gatekeepers and protocols that are often weary of organized, in-depth research inquiries into public administration and governance. I predetermined a list of 49 contact persons that I identified based on their perceived closeness to the topic, my expectations they would have some experience or connections with foreign films shot on the island, and the logistics of securing their cooperation.

Aware that this list of contact persons was tentative, I used it as a preliminary guide when I entered the site to collect data. In line with my grounded approach, I had no ceiling on the number of contacts that I intended to target, since I knew that the scope and nature of the research would lead to an appropriate number. I began recruitment through a process of snowball sampling. In this strategy, data collection is again iterative, until the researcher reaches a point of saturation or finds that despite assiduous and diligent exploration new information dries up or
new contacts add no new information of significance to the study (Quinn, 2002; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). When new sources provide repetitive data, the researcher becomes satisfied that the data collection method is sufficiently comprehensive.

My field work produced 59 primary sources of data and 158 sources of secondary data. The primary data comprised of 50 in-depth interviews, 6 focus groups, and 3 public events where I engaged in participant observation: the launching of the Audiovisual Association of Dominica, the slideshow of the Unburnable film project, and the panel discussion entitled Creating Opportunities for Collaboration and Partnership in the Audiovisual Sector. The secondary data constituted 109 news articles, 11 private and public administrative documents, 8 industry reports on the film industry in the OECS, 15 legal documents, 8 online articles of production notes from the Pirates of the Caribbean, 6 policy documents from the Government of Dominica, and 1 published historical essay.

The snowball sample and my preliminary review of documents produced a relatively diverse selection of interviewees. All but three of the interviewees resided in Dominica, representing an acceptable balance between public and private sector interests. The sectors most represented were the public service with 22 interviewees, and the media with 8. The cultural industries sector followed next with 7 affiliated interviewees. Forty-four percent of interview sources were government employees: of that amount 24% were public administrators and 20% were public officers who were not in charge of a department or major government project (See Figure 1).
Most interviewees were middle to upper-middle income earners by local standards, with 74% earning no more than US$35,000 per annum. On the extreme ends, 6 earned below US$20,000 a year and 7 earned above $50,000. The difference between the number of those who received direct compensation from foreign film productions in Dominica and the number of those who did not was not too significant: twenty-six of them were unpaid and 21 paid.

Seven of the interviewees had at the same time negotiated, organized, and worked for a foreign film shot in Dominica at least on one occasion. Nine only observed and 9 only worked, while 7 provided a service, with the rest having had at least one active role with foreign film productions on the island (See Figure 2). Of the sources interviewed, 34% had interacted with three or more foreign production crews filming in Dominica. Those who had experiences only working with the production of Pirates of the Caribbean in Dominica represented 24% of interviewees and those who had worked with both the Pirates of the Caribbean and the Pirate
Master TV series accounted for 14%, while only 10% had no direct involvement with the production of any foreign film shot on the island.

**Figure 2: Interviewees by Role on Foreign Films**

![Pie chart showing interviewees by role on foreign films](image)

Overall the group of interviewees was a highly educated pool of individuals, with 32% percent having a graduate college education and 37% a bachelor’s degree; a further 16% had some other form of professional training. Twenty percent of these interview subjects were trained in a media or communication field, and just below 20% of them had educational backgrounds in an area of business, economics, or finance.

Arguably, at least 16 of the persons interviewed had a direct role in shaping public policy on film production at either the national or regional level (with shortened title for brevity) by virtue of their institutional authority and professional duties, with others contributing in varied
ways to some form of advocacy or implementation (See Figure 3). I defined their capacity to impact public policy based on their intimacy or direct interaction with the processes and systems that generate and regulate these policies.

**Figure 3: Interviewees’ Influence on Public Policy**

The different levels of labor were fairly well represented. Interviewees came from different levels of the industry and labor hierarchy, although most had some management or supervisory responsibilities (See Figure 5). Thirty percent had no supervisory roles at their institution, while 26% were at the top rung. Mid-level supervisors accounted for 24% of interview subjects. Thirteen percent of the interviewees had multiple supervisory functions and reported directly to an executive body and 20% percent were directly in charge of a unit or department, although reporting to a higher level supervisor.
I also conducted six focus group discussions. These focus group discussions included two with Village Councils, two with government departments, one with taxi and bus operators, and one with local journalists. The largest group consisted of 14 members and the smallest four, with the average group composition being eight.

The two Village Councils: the Vieille Case Village Council and the Soufriere Village Council each hosted a part of the production of Pirates of the Caribbean II and III within their constituencies. Along with the elected Parliamentary Representatives, they serve as the local
public authorities in these rural areas. Some islands in the Eastern Caribbean established village councils as part of their local system of government. The Council manages several key municipal services within its physical boundaries, such as sanitation, education, postal services, and the upkeep of public spaces; however, it typically spends most of its budget on road maintenance.

Although the Dominican constitution does not provide for Village Councils, legislation and government regulation legitimize their authority and role, mainly through the Village Council Ordinance of 1954. Peters (1992) writes, “These village councils in theory were meant to provide a mechanism for decentralizing some of the government functions that were located primarily in the capital cities” (p. 195). The villagers elect five and the government appoints three of the eight members of the village council. Although constrained somewhat by governmental oversight, these councils have some level of autonomy that provides their constituents opportunities to participate in the management of their communities. Contrasting with the group of interview participants, less than 10% members of the focus groups with the village councils had received a college education. They were of modest means and just fewer than 90% earned less than US$20,000 a year.

The Ministry of Social Services and Community Development supervises the functions and operations of the village council through the staff of its local government department. The District Development Officer also audits these councils and Community Development Officers routinely supervise their work. These officers are a key part of the national government’s intelligence of the activities in rural communities; therefore, I also held a focus group discussion with them. Participants of these focus groups mostly represented the median salary scale of the public service: these were average public workers.

The other government department with which I held discussions was the Environmental
Health Department. The Environmental Health Services Act 1997, which stipulates provisions for environmental conservation and public health on the island, gives sweeping powers to the environmental health department through the responsible minister, to inspect, monitor, and supervise any activity on the island that poses a threat to the environment and public health.

Foreign film producers who visit the island routinely interact with taxi and bus operators and for many who engage in big-budget productions these service providers are integral to their success. In a small island with no public transportation, taxi and bus drivers are also keenly aware of some of the key issues dominating the public sphere, since they routinely interact with large numbers of the populace on a daily basis. Furthermore, archival research revealed that Pirates of the Caribbean had utilized large numbers of taxis, buses, and rental vehicles on the island, so I held a focus group discussion with some of these operators who worked on the film.

Talk-radio dominates the public sphere in Dominica, giving the island a unique media profile, even amidst the proliferation of new communication technologies. In 2010, Dominica had 718 internet hosts and just about 28,000 regular internet users, which was an estimated 32% of its population (International Telecommunication Union, 2011). Dominica lags behind most of the world in internet penetration, placing 182 among all countries (CIA, 2011). Alternatively 1997 data show that the island had 703 radios and 81 television sets per 1,000 in the population (Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2007). Six years later, official statistics confirmed this overall distribution, indicating that the island had 46,000 radio sets, but only 6,000 television sets (CIA, 2011). Radio is clearly the preferred mass medium on the island.

While the two local cable companies, SAT and Marpin 2k4, provide popular foreign programs, their local programming is so meager that few residents rely on them for local news and information. Dominica has no local television station, but it has four terrestrial radio stations:
DBC, owned and controlled by the state; Kairi FM and Q95, privately owned commercial operations; Voice of Life ZJBC, a nonprofit station owned by a protestant-based religious community; and Radio En Ba Mango, a privately-owned low-power community radio station providing niche local content. Talk-radio and radio magazine shows are so central to the island’s public sphere that they routinely serve as platforms for launching electoral careers and creating public personalities even of the most nondescript callers to these shows. As a result, I held a focus group discussion with radio journalists and talk-show hosts to find out their knowledge of and reactions to international film productions on the island.

Data Collection Procedures

After securing the Human Subject Review Board’s permission on June 2013, I wrote to the targeted research subjects, where they were already known, providing them a brief introduction of my project and formally requesting their participation. The day after arriving on the island on June 20, 2013, I immediately began the process of personally distributing the letters to the targeted individuals and organizations, piggybacking on an audience with them to engage in informal discussions that assisted in the recruitment of research participants. During the process, they also guided me to sources of archival documents. Whenever possible, I engaged in introductory conversations with these persons or their agents to address any ethical issues, such as informed consent, confidentiality, and data use to ensure that I maximized access while preserving the integrity of the data collection process.

Before commencing the interviews, I provided interviewees with a general overview of the topic and the process of conducting the interviews and requested that they sign a standardized inform consent formed approved by the Human Subjects Review Board of the Bowling Green
State University. All participants signed the document. Thereafter, I conducted audio-recorded, open-ended, semi-structured interviews with these interview subjects, using a high-quality, unobtrusive MP3 audio recording device, which remained visible to the interviewees at all times. I allowed the interviewees to introduce themselves and their connection to the topic. Through a number of open-ended questions, I encouraged them to speak about various aspects of international film production in Dominica, prodding with follow-up questions based on their comments. Before concluding the interview, I allowed participants to add any further information at their own desire and sought permission for future contact via telephone or email.

I also collected documents related to international film production from a range of archival sources. The National Documentation Center, the National Library Services, and the National Archive assisted me secure some relevant public documents, although in most cases the results were inadequate. Using my professional and cultural network, I gained access undisclosed documents from the various non-governmental entities interfacing with film international film producers and their activities on the island. I examined all the relevant documents that I was able to access, sifting them for their potential to attend to the research questions. I found it difficult gaining access to or simply confirming the existence of public documents that were integral to the research. This problem I attributed mainly to the self-censorship of their gatekeepers and a general discomfort in the public service with academic research on government processes and practices. My experience also endorsed Nurse et al. ’s (2009) previous report that archival systems on the island are poorly managed and financed.

Throughout the entire data collection process, I took reasonable measures to ensure that the data remained protected from unintended use. I transferred the audio recordings of the interviews and focus groups to a protected computer cachet within 24 hours of recording. I stored
the digitized audio on my personal laptop and secured them with pass codes. I restricted use of my computer by others and regularly monitored the effectiveness of the professional anti-virus and anti-spy-ware software securing it.

Data Analysis Procedures

On completing the data collection, the researcher proceeds to conduct analysis. The basic philosophical values of the qualitative researcher influence the method chosen for analyzing the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) present three concurrent processes of qualitative analysis: “data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification” (p. 10). The most successful researchers reduce and condense data and begin their search for meaning from the beginning of the study, continuing throughout the accumulation of data. Qualitative research analyses generally take two forms: content analysis, featuring sources as distinct and separate from the evidence, and context analysis that implicates sources in the production of the data (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997).

After completing the interviews and focus groups, I began the transcription of the ensuing data, which took three months to complete. I transcribed the digitized audio into text format with data processing software called Express Scribe. Heeding Lapadat's (2000) admonition to approach transcription prudently, I used the transcription model for conversation analysis that social scientists use routinely. More precisely, I followed Have's (2004) prescription of transcription conventions to reach a coherent method of transforming spoken words to text. Kvale (1988) observes that this switch in media opens up spaces for concern over accuracy, noting that the transcribers should not only focus on capturing the accuracy of the words, but their syntactic and semantic relationship to the context of the wider conversation.
In both interview and focus group transcriptions, I used my sobriquet, Bernard, as attribution to my dialogue in the interview conversations. For the interviewees, I used the respondents’ last name to identify their responses, while for the Focus Group discussions, I simply alphabetized participants. I used the 11 pt Calibri font in typing the transcriptions, single spacing and numbering each line of dialogue. Whenever respondents had similar last names, I used numerical numbers alongside the repeats to distinguish them. I numbered the interviewees in alphabetical order based on their Christian names to easily distinguish them when reporting my findings. I also numbered every line of dialogue in the interview transcript. I use these numbers and the last names of the interviewee participants to attribute my citation of direct speech and to reference my paraphrases.

The quality of data transcription and the trustworthiness of the resultant data are crucial for achieving high-quality qualitative research, since they do not only serve as the researchers' evidence (Duranti, 2007), but the credence of their analysis (Ashmore and Reed, 2000). Based on these imperatives, I find Davidson's (2009) regret over the lack of references to transcription processes in literature on qualitative research instructive.

In this study, I adopt grounded theory as my main methodological approach. Strauss and Corbin (1994) describe grounded theory as “a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed” (p. 273). The main benefit of grounded theory is that it allows the research to adapt, adopt, or jettison theories or hypotheses through honest and iterative interaction and interrogation of the evolving data.

I use grounded theory to review continuously my theoretical constructs, examining the relevant theories and academic literature to guide further inquiry. The unraveling concepts led me to develop a research protocol that outlined the aims and objectives, background, theoretical
constructs, methods, ethical issues, resources, timescale, and potential dissemination or publication of the resulting data. Grounded theory is an ideal method of analysis for examining phenomenon about which little is known. It is also useful as a platform for developing a theoretical framework, because of its capacity to generate concepts and themes indigenously. Grounded theory employs open coding to generate themes to be later transformed into categories through focused coding. The grounded theory researcher uses theoretical maps to examine the central ideas undergirding the evolving categories, reaching a level of synthesis through a process of iteration that eventually produces a thesis.

To organize the data, I use the NVivo 10 qualitative data analysis software produced by QSR International. The company claims that an estimate 1.5 million people use the software to analyze and organize data (QSR, 2013). Johnston (2006) notes that qualitative analysis software packages like NVivo have developed to a level of sophistication that makes them quite useful to contemporary scholars preparing research projects like dissertations. NVivo is simply a technological tool to help the research: it does not substitute the researcher’s own intuitive and informed analysis; however, using computer software to help data analysis can produce “more rigorous analysis” (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 3). NVivo provides five main advantages: ease of managing data, ease in managing ideas, a more efficient means of querying data, greater clarity in visualizing the data, and more sophisticated forms of data reporting (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

Despite its usefulness, researchers ought to guard against the dangers of relying too heavily on Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) in their analysis (Richards, 2002). Four major concerns dominate the use of QDAS: the possibility of computers distancing the researcher from the data, the subservience of other analytical methods to “code-and-retrieve
methods (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 7), the tendency of QDAS to be skewed to positivist research strategies, the myth that QDAS naturally syncs with the methodology that the researcher selects (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). While conceding to some of these risks, Gilbert (2002) argues that alternatively QDAS, when used properly, can avoid the researcher from being too overwhelmed by details, which may cause them to produce interpretation and analysis that are too myopic, averting the big picture. Bazeley & Jackson (2013) write that the improvements that QRS International has made to NVivo 10, particularly with memos, links, and models make it easier for the researcher to balance coding with reflection, making the process of analysis more iterative.

To mitigate the risks associated with using QDAS, I used NVivo alongside the traditional methods of offline note taking, mapping and clustering. I kept notes of my analytical observations in a separate notepad and consolidated them against the NVivo queries and analyses. Throughout the various phases of coding, I kept going back and forth between these hard notes and the unfolding results of coding and queries that I did in NVivo.

While coding is a crucial and indispensable aspect of grounded theory practice, researchers should be careful not to allow coding rules and templates to stifle the creative process of interpretation (Suddaby, 2006). Ultimately, the iterative decisions of the researcher are as important as the rigidity of the coding formulas. Glaser (1978) made this point when he stressed the importance of theoretical sensitivity as a strategy for mediating the tensions between rote coding and discernment.
Analytic Memo Organization

Producing memos throughout the data collection and analysis processes provided important contextual data that enhanced the overall quality of my data analysis. Holton (2007) understands memos in grounded theory as brief records of the researcher's observations and intuition of the data's trigger of concepts throughout coding and analysis. They provide useful guidelines to the researcher on follow-up research action and help in the formation of clusters that point to theory. As part of my analytical strategy, I prepared notes that mapped out my thoughts and observations during data collection and analysis to help feed my ongoing conceptualization and my theorization of the explanations to the research questions.

I handwrote most of these memos during the actual data collection activity, but also developed them further at the end of the activity when transferring them to soft copy and during the process of analysis. I prepared some of these notes within 24 hours of the particular data collection activity to ensure that I accurately captured the innate sensibilities and intuitions of the collection process that could assist in illuminating interpretation of the data.

These notes, which were typically no more than a couple paragraphs, written in a stream of consciousness format, focused on interrogating the emergent concepts and tracking thematic patterns. Primarily, they served as a critical referential tool for me, and perhaps even a reflexive marker, but ultimately they were useful as an appendage to the data findings, which helped in my analysis of the findings and my construction of conclusions. Memos are crucial for developing theories and grounded theory researchers who take memos lightly are susceptible to producing shallow theory (Holton, 2007).

The most useful memos are the ones that reflect the researcher's ongoing struggle to reason and establish the relationships between the emerging codes. They allow for ongoing
reflection and stimulate critical thinking on the significance of and connections between explanatory nodes, rising to the formation of core categories through sophisticated analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that memos enrich qualitative data analysis by aiding in extracting the essence of the data, by helping to formulate meaning, and by facilitating interpretation of the findings. Memos are particularly useful in reviewing interviews, focus groups, observations and documents.

Overview of Data Coding

The typical grounded theory study features two main forms of coding: substantive coding and theoretical coding. In substantive coding, the researcher uses open coding to directly examine the data, searching for a main category and key concepts through a process of comparison that eventually leads to theoretical sampling and selective coding on the way to a point of saturation. Theoretical codes bring the different substantive codes into contact with each other to produce hypotheses that define the emergent theory. Holton (2007) notes that the coding process is the core of classical grounded theory practice. Star (2007) explains that a code establishes the researcher's relationship with the data. In this study, I follow Holton’s (2007) recommendation to researchers practicing grounded theory to do their own coding.

After logging the data and deciding on the analytical approach, researchers normally develop a systematic coding scheme, starting by grouping topics into related categories. Charmaz (1983) notes that in qualitative research codes “serve as shorthand devices to label, separate, compile, and organize data” (p. 11). They apply these codes to the entire data, arranging them strategically to search for patterns and relationships that provide explanations to their research questions. This process of categorization, or organizing units of data by their
perceived meanings and other generic principles, follows the guidelines outlined in the researcher’s codebook, which is “a tool for the development and evolution of a coding system and is an important means for documenting the codes and the procedures for applying them” (Weston et al., 2001, p. 395).

The NVivo software represents codes as nodes (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013) and in this research project I use the terms interchangeably. As the first stage of analysis, I performed open coding simultaneously with data collection. Glaser (1998) instructs researchers performing open coding to continuously ask deep, meaningful questions throughout their reading of every line. By identifying similarity and differences in different aspects of the raw data, I looked for broad relationships. In NVivo 10, this meant creating a set of free nodes or open codes. When commonalities in codes or nodes pointing to relationships with the substantive inquiry began consistently evolving, I moved to axial coding. This step involved placing the categories and properties of the open codes into groups (Corbin & Strauss, 2007) that highlight their common relationships. Implementing this practice in NVivo 10 involved developing a hierarchical and thematic network based on parent nodes and child nodes, organizing them based on their thematic relationships.

The second phase of coding involved mainly fine-tuning and cleaning up the open codes, establishing more precise categories and sifting out the nodes on the margins. During this phase, I assiduously attempted to uncover thematic networks among the categories (Shank, 2006). After grasping the essence of the patterns, I then engaged in selective coding to provide a central or core category of the theoretical abstraction, finally placing each node under one of my three research questions. At this point, I became fully immersed in the interpretation and classification of the data, tracing detailed patterns to definitive theoretical constructs. Using the attributes,
classifications, and values in NVivo, I framed and captured the unique characteristics of the data that are useful for pursuing deeper queries. Through a process of constant comparison, a core category emerged, which I constantly revisited and substantiated through iterative coding (Holton, 2007).

After settling on a coherent interpretive pattern, qualitative researchers continue their iteration using several methods. When researchers become convinced of the core variable, they can begin the process of selective coding, deciding on data that contributes to further exploration of the core (Holton, 2007). As a result, when patterns began emerging, I interpreted them by translating analytical focal points into categories of meaning. In this process, the first-order concepts produce tentative interpretation. For van Maanan (1979) first-order concepts refer to, “the situationally, historically, and biographically mediated interpretations used by members---to account for a given descriptive property” (p.540). These descriptive markers helped me to develop clearly defined cases.

It may be useful to think of cases in Nvivo as units of analyses (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Schwandt (1997) writes, “Cases are generally characterized on the one hand by their concreteness and circumstantial specificity and on the other by their theoretical interest or generalizability (p. 12). Exploring these cases with different attributes and classifications, I was able to provide a body of quantitative data that deepened the meaning of the interpretation that evolved from my close qualitative analysis.

**Verification of Data Accuracy**

Although qualitative researchers approach and discuss data verification differently from their quantitative counterparts, they are equally committed to concepts of validity and reliability
as core principles for maximizing the quality of their studies (Patton, 2002). Many scholars are weary about transferring these terms to the qualitative approach, arguing for different language that more precisely captures the essence of the paradigm (Appleton 1995; Cutcliffe and McKenna, 1999; Leininger, 1994).

When qualitative researchers refer to validity and reliability, they are more specifically touching on issues of trustworthiness and credibility. Trustworthiness refers to the researcher’s capacity to present a logical and coherent explanation of the process followed in arriving at particular findings and interpretations (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). The concept of credibility in qualitative research addresses the extent to which research participants consider the results of the study believable (Nolan and Behi, 1995). Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that credibility is a crucial precondition for achieving trustworthiness.

Reflexivity is an important principle of trustworthiness and credibility in qualitative research. Schwandt (2001) defines reflexivity as “the process of critical self-reflection on one’s biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences and so forth” (p. 224). Explicit in this definition is the recognition and appreciation of the inevitable impact of the researcher’s individuality on the research process.

The theory of reflexivity is not without critics. Detractors contend that it is untraceable and unverifiable, an invalid form of verification (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). Hammersley (1992) disagrees, noting that qualitative researchers can make valid claims if such claims are representative of the phenomena under study. Researchers can circumvent the pitfalls of bias by developing auditing strategies to test evaluate their findings (Miller, 1997). These rigorous checks and confirmations ought to be diverse and may include peer reviews and member checks (Rodgers & Cowles, 1993). Additionally, Trochim (2000) suggests pattern matching, or fitting
the data with the theoretical conclusions, as a strategy for insuring trustworthiness and credibility in qualitative research.

Some scholars have expressed angst over critical scholars who practice grounded theory, noting the inescapable tension among ideology, preconception, and emergent theory (Glaser, 1992; Gibson, 2007). Alternatively, Madison (2012) cautions critical qualitative researchers to represent the populations that they study justly. She notes that issues of representation, advocacy, and voice are important components in the legitimacy of findings. Apart from addressing the ethical issues of confidentiality, informed consent, and anonymity where appropriate, she argues that the critical scholar should engage in critical self-reflection to ascertain that they have the right, informed, and authoritative data to reach a reasonable judgment on the particular phenomenon that they are studying (Sim and Van Loon, 2001).

One of the most effective ways in which I attempt to meet these responsibilities is by implementing several forms of triangulation. Lindlof & Taylor (2002) define triangulation as a process that “involves the comparison of two or more forms of evidence with respect to an object of research interest (p.240). They posit that the goal of triangulation is to assimilate different layers and shades of meaning into a coherent position. Triangulation is one of the most popular and effective methods for increasing the validity of findings in qualitative research. Through this process, researchers share their findings with the sources of the research, soliciting their feedback.

Kushner and Morrow (2003) have suggested that theoretical triangulation offers a means by which grounded theory could accommodate critical scholars. Bohman (1999) proposes an alternate, but equally valuable model from which critical scholars could embrace grounded theory. He suggests that critical researchers abandon projects driven by ambitions toward
comprehensive social theory, admonishing them to adopt a research practice that positions researchers and research subjects as mutual partners.

In this project, I also use a few validation techniques to ensure that the information collected adequately represented the views of the participants. I employed a technique called group-to-group validation to evaluate the amount of emphasis that I give to each emergent topic. I achieved this by creating connections among the number of participants bringing up a topic, the number of people in a group to mention that topic, and the amount of enthusiasm that topic generates among participants (Quinn, 2002). Additionally, through a consistent iterative process, I reconciled the information among the various sources of data, contacting some key sources on social media for clarification where necessary.

Ethical Issues

In this study, I am fully committed to academic rigor and integrity, ensuring that all decisions and actions that I take in its execution are independent and impartial. Every interviewee and focus group participant who participated in the research voluntarily signed an informed consent form approved by the Human Subjects Review Board of the Bowling Green State University. The form gave clear explanations of the nature of the study, the process of data collection, the conditions for participation, and the responsibilities of the researcher.

All the methods that I utilized to secure data were transparent. I pressured no one to contribute documents for analysis: all who provided secondary data for analysis contributed them on their own volition. Furthermore, my research methodology was submitted to the Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at Bowling Green State University and received approval. During the process of data collection, I adhered strictly to the recommendations and stipulations of the
ORC, and did not alter the nature of the study in any significant way other than to remain consistent to my grounded theory approach.
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Introduction to Results

During the course of my research, I found no source able to direct me to an official list of foreign films shot in Dominica. The website of the Dominica Film Commission (DFC) identifies nine foreign films shot on the island listed as follows: Columbus, by Rank Studio 1948), Seventh Sign by tri-star Picture (1987), Orchid House by BBC Channel 4 (1991), Wide Sargasso Sea by UWI, Once Upon a Sunday by the Rose Company (1965), Prenupt Challenge by Stonehenge Media (2005), Pirates of the Caribbean - Dead Man's Chest (2005) and Pirates of the Caribbean - At World's End (2007) by Disney, and Pirate Master by Mark Burnett Productions (2007).

From my own knowledge of film production on the island, I was aware that the list published on the Dominica Film Commission’s website was incomplete. Searching for a more complete list, I contacted officials at the Cultural Division, Discover Dominica Authority, Invest Dominica Authority, the Government Documentation Centre, and the Public Library all of which I reasonably expected to have the relevant records, but they provided me with no additional information. All the relevant government officials whom I contacted directed me to the former film commissioner, who although admitting that the DFC has records of other films shot in Dominica did not provide me with any document that referenced such information.

As a result, I took the decision to compile a more representative list on my own based on the documented evidence acquired throughout my data collection. To put my list together, I reconciled the various pieces of information that I received from the wide range of sources contributing to my research. They included public documents, local print media, the YouTube website, and the responses of participants.

My search produced 61 foreign films – celluloid and digital video- shot in Dominica, 56
of which took place between the years 2005 and 2013. Documentaries accounted for at least 29 of these productions, with television programs or episodes amounting to 12. Many Dominicans would likely be unaware of most of these productions, since they were mostly produced on a small, private scale with little coverage from the local or foreign media. The local print media reported on 23 of these films, with the Dominica News Online producing 18 news articles about them. I only found records of five feature films shot on the island, which matched the figure given on the DFC’s website.

The Forestry Division provided me an internal document, which indicated that between May 2008 and July 2013, the department issued 30 permits authorizing different foreign film and video projects to shoot in the island’s national parks. American-based productions received thirteen of these permits, while European documentary projects accounted for seven of them.

A search of the word Dominica in the locations section of the Internet Movie Database’s (IMDB) search engine produced 25 titles of films shot in Dominica. Five of these films were movie features, three of which were films based on Disney’s Pirates of the Caribbean franchise: the Curse of the Black Pearl shot in 2003, and Dead Man’s Chest and At World’s End shot simultaneously in 2005. The other feature film listed by IMDB as filmed in Dominica was Tri Star Pictures’ Seventh Sign, which was partly shot on the island in 1987.

Most Dominican residents with whom I spoke during the course of the data collection were surprised at the IMDB’s listing. Many were able to confirm the production of two of the films in the Pirates of the Caribbean franchise, but none could confirm local activities related to the production of the Curse of the Black Pearl in Dominica. After reviewing public documents and media archives, I found no documented record of that particular film being shot on the island. IMDB’s listing of foreign films shot in Dominica also included 12 television programs,
but 10 of those were actually episodes of the Pirate Master TV series shot on the island in 2007. The list also included 9 documentaries and one mini-series.

Despite the numerous foreign films shot in Dominica, I based the results of the study on the Seventh Sign, the Orchid House, Pirates of the Caribbean I and III, and the Pirates Master Television series, because they represent the big-budget productions out of the lot. The results of the study do not address the production of the feature film, Christopher Columbus shot on the island in 1948, because I focused on the foreign films hosted by Dominica from the time it gained its independence from Britain on November 3, 1978.

To layout the results, I organized the major findings into thematic categories, which I fit into one of the three research questions driving the study. The first research question, which sought to find out the ways that SIDS countries accommodate these films, produced 301 nodal references fed by 66 different sources combined into seven distinct categories of results: legislation and regulation, film policies, institutional framework: the DFC and the film commissioner, procedures for accommodating foreign film productions, negotiations with foreign film producers, the project management of big-budget film productions on the island, and the employment of local labor.

Research question two, which inquired about the implications of SIDS countries hosting big-budget film productions, yielded 525 relevant codes drawn from 94 sources. The second question drew the most intense and extensive analysis, producing fourteen thematic categories, namely: benefits of hosting big-budget film productions, local philanthropy, impact on economic performance, transparency and public information, challenges to public accountability and systems of local governance, incentives and concessions, the restoration of public spaces, the suppression of local wages and labor laws, environmental and public health threats, disposal of
imported goods, place and space, cultural tensions, and review and assessment.

The third research question, which explored the peculiar issues associated with SIDS, like Dominica, also produced a high number of codes, although they remained confined to a few thematic groupings. The question yielded 368 nodes that came from 87 different sources of information. Nine thematic categories emerged out of the data to highlight the uniqueness of Dominica’s encounters with foreign film productions. These categories are as follows: how Dominica’s experiences fit current theories, the centrality of the state, the influence of local elites, the mobilization of local labor, the development of a local film industry, the differences in business practices, the unique approach to film tourism, the flexibility in overcoming logistical challenges, and the indifference to Hollywood’s celebrity culture.

*RQ1. How do Small Island Developing States Facilitate the Production of Hollywood Films within their Borders?*

*Legislation and Regulation*

The only two pieces of legislation from the Laws of Dominica that directly pertain to film production are Chapter 20:06, the Cinematograph (Censorship) Act of 1954; and Chapter 20:11, the Motion Picture Film (Carriage and Storage) Act of 1952. I found no cases in which local authorities had cause to enforce either of these laws since the island became an independent nation. I should note though that the United Workers Party Government, during its 1991-2000 term of office, made attempts to activate the Cinematograph Act by appointing a Cinematograph Censorship Board on which I was invited to serve; however, it was never active.

The Cinematograph Act deals with the public exhibition of films in Dominica. The Act
requires anyone wishing to publicly exhibit any film, video, or photographic material to first seek written permission from the Chairman of the Board of Censors. If the chairman considers any such material unfit for public consumption then he could submit it to the board for final judgment.

The Motion Picture Film Act outlines protective and punitive measures for the fire risks associated with using old cinematographic film and photographic negatives. These types of film, manufactured before the mid 1950s, contain cellulose nitrate and are extremely flammable: fires involving them are not easily contained or extinguished. Interviewees Nos. 1 and 32 noted that since Dominica had a vibrant mobile cinema exhibition culture during that period, these laws were necessary.

Interviewees Nos. 7 and 26 explained that in the absence of adequate legislation and regulation governing film production in Dominica, public officers interacting with these projects extract applicable clauses from divergent laws and public regulations, such as the Planning Act, the Environmental Health Services Act, the Forestry Act, and the Employment Safety Act, among others, but perhaps the piece of legislation mostly consulted is the Companies Act, since under this law any foreign company doing business in Dominica must follow a set of prescribed rules and processes; however, these various laws and rules leave several gaps when applied to the intricacies and peculiarities of modern film production.

As early as 2001, a report produced by Anita Bully on the OECS film industry, although erroneously noting that no local legislation of film exists, called for the updating of the Laws of Dominica to cover contemporary film production practices. Bully (Interviewee No.3) recalled that procedures were arbitrary during that period:

What I did was I started putting in place procedures for filming, what we need to put in
place, because if you are coming to film you have to follow rules and regulations. You have to apply for a permit, once you are given a permit you have to be monitored. You have to make sure people don't just come in here and do what they want (Bully, lines 456-459).

One of the first government departments to implement regulations for foreign film production on the island was the Forestry Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries. Andre, a forestry officer (Interviewee No.27), said that the department instituted permits for persons wishing to film any sort of biodiversity within the island’s eco-sites. Bully (Interviewee No.3) said that the policy came about because of repeated problems:

BULLY: Now with Ministry of Agriculture we had a problem, because they would have this arbitrary film policy. They said people cannot go [to the national parks] to film and I said people have to be able to film. I mean if you are doing documentaries on hummingbirds for instance you have to go to the forest to film. So you need to devise [a plan], if you want to charge them for it you have to have procedures in place. So I said...

BERNARD: Although there's not a law, the regulation before was that people were not allowed to film in the parks?

BULLY: No, right now the regulation is that you are not allowed to film in the forest without a permit (Bully, lines 495-501).

Film Policies

Interviewee No.17 stated that Dominica does not have a documented national policy outlining an approach to foreign film production on the island. Nine interviewees, one focus group discussion, and one industry document advocated for a written policy. Interviewee No.13,
the highest ranking public officer in the Ministry of Tourism, under whose purview the hosting of foreign film productions falls, made the following observation:

I know that the Ministry does not have a written policy in place on negotiating with film companies and probably that is something we should put in place, but at the moment it doesn't exist so the companies really negotiate directly with the office of the Discover Dominica Authority (Bellot, lines 2-4).

Although hinting that a policy document may not be adequate enough, the executive director of Discover Dominica Authority, Interviewee No.17, noted that the absence of a standardized policy makes processes and procedures uncertain and fluid. He added, “Well, in the absence of policy, precedent becomes your de facto and I think that's kind of where we are” (Piper, lines 331-332).

As a result, Dominica’s engagement with international film production within its borders is episodic. The executive director of Invest Dominica Authority (IDA), Interviewee No.45, whose office works closely with the DDA on petitioning the Cabinet of Ministers for fiscal incentives for such projects supports a call for a standard document of not just policies but procedures. She argued that reinventing the wheel with every case is inefficient and unwieldy. Interviewee No.45 reported having worked with the film commissioner to prepare a draft of a national film policy for Cabinet’s consideration, which never surfaced for approval. She noted:

But I always felt, even when speaking to Mrs. Bully, I always tell her that it is important that we have a policy, because sometimes I would see letters come in copied to me from them, requesting waivers of Customs duties or personal equipment would be copied [to me] just for your information. I also felt and told her and I know that she had stated that it would be worthwhile to prepare a policy paper as to what it is we would want
government to consider, i.e. by the way of fiscal incentives. What is it we would be looking at in terms of the marketing? She felt that it was a good idea but wanted some help with it. We had started, not we, but I personally had to help her to do it and one of the things of the first draft I told her it had to go further, given that it is our specialty preparing a policy paper, but it just died there (Letang, lines 23-31).

Not all high-level public officials interviewed agreed that the government’s position on film production was ambiguous. Interviewee No.42, an advisor to the Prime Minister and Dominican Ambassador to the Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America (ALBA), Philbert Aaron, argued that the Dominican government has a clear policy on film:

BERNARD: What is the government's position on film?

AARON: That film is a priority. The development of audiovisual...

BERNARD: When did that come about?

AARON: That has been there for, for, I am looking for the policy statements on that, but that has been there for at least since the Labor Party Government came to office.

BERNARD: Quite interesting.

AARON: So it is a priority and it is expressed as such in a number of documents. It's there (Aaron, lines 203-209).

Unlike Ambassador Aaron, Interviewee No.17, who heads the office that is the main contact for foreign film producers visiting the island, was less confident that film is a priority for the government. He stated:

Because in the government’s Growth and Social Protection Plan, when it speaks to what the Ministry of Tourism intends to do or what the Ministry of Trade intends to do, under which the Invest Dominica Authority falls, I don't know that it speaks to the area of film
Interviewee No.17 emphasized that the Dominica Growth and Social Protection Plan (DGSPP) and the National Export Strategy of Dominica (NES) are the two overriding policy documents guiding the economic programs of the Government of Dominica. Both documents outline a key role for film in developing the island; however, the DGSPP, a 117 page document, mentions film only thrice. It states that the government pursues the development of film as part of an economic diversification strategy. The DGSPP document places film within the objectives of the National Export Strategy (see pages 61 and 62).

The program document of the NES places film within the organization’s larger commitment to the development of cultural industries and notes, “The strategy also seeks to strengthen linkages between the music industry and the film industry and with the tourism sector” (p. 93). Through its promise to ensure that cultural industries contribute more significantly to national employment, the NES has set a goal of creating 2,000 local jobs in music and film production by 2014 (p. 99).

**Institutional Framework: The DFC and the Film Commissioner**

Prior to the establishment of the Dominica Film Office in 2005, logistical support from the public sector to foreign film producers working in Dominica was provided by the Tourist Board, a branch of the National Development Corporation (NDC) in the Ministry of Tourism. At that time, the objective was to facilitate requests from producers of documentaries and advertisements for filming on the island. The focus was not on marketing the island internationally as a film production location or on accommodating the production of big-budget theatrical films. Interviewee No.39 reported that although Dominica hosted the production of
major scenes of a big-budget film, Seventh Sign, in 1987, the Tourist Board and the NDC were only marginally involved in negotiating or facilitating it. Interviewee No.49 noted:

So the Tourist Board was really the body that was providing that kind of support and then we saw the need now to organize a film office. Basically, that work in the early days was really to look at some guidelines in terms of when people come, what kind of support we can give them, where we direct them to, the need for them to work quickly to respond to requests and that kind of thing, and then obviously we actually began work on a manual, the film manual, and then in the middle of that we got this massive request to actually host the filming of Pirates of the Caribbean II and III (Esprit, lines 10-15).

Details on the evolution of the Dominica Film Office remains murky, but the appointment of the film commissioner occurred in 2004. The position emerged out of Dominica’s negotiations with Disney to host the production of Pirates of the Caribbean II and III. According to Interviewee No.3, since the National Development Corporation (NDC), which was responsible for attracting and accommodating foreign investment to the island, had no one on staff with the expertise to deal with film productions of that magnitude, it initially solicited pro bono support from Anita Bully, a Dominican who was lecturing arts management at the Edna Manley College of Visual and Performing Arts in Jamaica.

Bully (Interviewee No.3) stated that apart from her extensive business management experience and college teaching, she had worked on the renowned regional film, Women in Film and Television. She added that in 2004, while assisting the NDC, she lobbied government executives to appoint her as film commissioner and just months later the Prime Minister directly confirmed her appointment. Dominica’s first and only Film Commissioner (Interviewee No.3) recalled that her appointment was atypical and did not follow the normal process that the
government uses to employ public officers:

BERNARD: So that discussion took place with the Prime Minister or with?

BULLY: No, it took place with the Chairman of the Board. I think with NDC and the board took it to the PM and the PM gave me the letter.

BERNARD: What was the initial arrangement with you all?

BULLY: My role as film commissioner is [would be] to negotiate with companies and to sell Dominica as a location for companies coming in to film. And what I did after was is include within the mandate the development of the local industry, but that was not the intention of it (Bully, lines 444-450).

Despite having an office situated within the Discover Dominica Authority, located on the first floor of the Financial Center (AFCI, 2009), the government’s most modern administrative building, the film commissioner mostly operated from home on a relatively loose arrangement. Interviewee No.3 reported that she had no staff and a small budget, which began at EC$250,000 and ended at EC$100,000 by the end of her tenure; however, she did receive light administrative support from the DDA. She noted, “Well the thing is I was appointed film commissioner and I was getting an honorarium, ok. I was supposed to work. I didn't have days a week” (Bully, lines 680-681).

Even without any structure and a system of operation normally associated with an office of this type, the organization underwent a name change, from the Dominica Film Office to the Dominica Film Commission (DFC), which coincided with its increased participation at international film trade shows. Interviewee No.17 reported the majority of the budget for the commission was spent on compensating the film commissioner:

PIPER: We had a EC$4 million budget last year and last year we budgeted about
200,000.00 for film, so that's about, 10% would be 400,000, so that's 5%.

BERNARD: And most of that would have gone to what?

PIPER: Most of that would have gone to the salary of the film commissioner. It would have gone to trade shows: it would have gone to promotional [activities] (Piper, lines 349-353).

The film commissioner spearheaded the marketing of Dominica as a film-production location, representing the island at a number of international trade fairs and promotional events. Interviewees Nos. 17 and 49 noted that during the shooting of Pirates of the Caribbean II and III and the Prates Master television series she was one of the key local administrators interceding between the national government and the foreign producers. Bully (Interviewee No.3) added, she also designed and implemented several processes and procedures geared at improving the island’s ability to attract and host foreign film productions. She said that one of the hallmarks of her tenure was the development of a webpage for the DFC and the standardization of film-related forms and permits in the country. As Dominica’s first film commissioner, Bully also played a leading role in training local filmmakers and sensitizing the local population on the importance of building a vibrant local film industry alongside the marketing of the island as a production location for major feature films. Interviewee No.33 said that Bully featured as one of the pioneers of the recently established Audiovisual Association of Dominica.

Despite its notable achievements with meager resources, the future of the Dominica Film Commission currently appears uncertain. Interviewee No.17 reported that in 2013, the Discover Dominica Authority dissolved the commission, leaving the position of film commissioner in question:

BERNARD: Sorry, so although there is not a film desk, there remains a film
Piper: That is what is a little ambiguous right now, because we never appointed a film commissioner. That was appointed by the Prime Minister’s office, so I don't know whether the person who has been appointed, now that they do not have a physical structure that would be in the DDA, has either abdicated that position or what not. We are still operating as a shell of a film officer, because there needs to be a recipient for these requests (Piper, lines 354-359).

As of December 31, 2013, the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) still listed Anita Bully as the only contact for the Dominica Film Commission and the webpage of the commission is functional; however, tangible representations of its actual structure remain somewhat a specter. Interviewee No.3 said that the government has no official procedure or regulation requiring foreigners who shoot on the island to seek any type of authorization from the Dominica Film Commission.

In fact, the data indicate that the Government of Dominica is wrestling with framing the Dominica Film Commission and finding it a suitable home in the public service. Respondents who spoke about its usefulness also gave considerable attention to the government’s capacity to sustain it. The two governmental departments that appeared particularly concerned about a framework for accommodating it were the Invest Dominica Authority and the Discover Dominica Authority. The head of the Invest Dominica Authority, Rhoda Letang (Interviewee No.45), spent 33% of her interview on the issue, while the head of Discover Dominica Authority (Interviewee No. 17) spent 24% of his. Additionally, three mid-level public offices each used 12% of interview time to speak about the role of the DFC.

The DFC seems not only to have had a structural problem, but also a feeble public
relations strategy. While the DFC was engaged in international publicity, it seems to have had very little name recognition back home beyond the small circle of those involved in film or video production. For example, only one of the 15 villagers of the community of Soufriere participating in a Focus Group could identify the film commissioner or knew any basic information about the DFC. The focus group discussion in the community of Vieille Case produced similar results, with only one member vaguely remembering the role of the DFC in the production of Pirates of the Caribbean, identifying it through the activities of the film commissioner. My question to environmental health officers on the nature of their relationship with the DFC received the following response: “Is there a local film office [everyone laughs]? That should answer your question” (Environmental Health Officers Focus Group, Participant C, lines 447-448)!

Perhaps even more disconcerting, 10 of the 18 respondents who influenced national policy had a negative impression of the DFC. Eight of them who did were non-governmental advocates. Contrastingly, public officers either managing or implementing policy were mostly supportive of the local film office, with five of them being high-level officials. Half of those expressing some type of discontent with the film office indicated that they were not even aware that the organization existed, although they all identified the film commissioner by name as playing a major role in managing film productions on the island.

Five respondents commented that the local film office functioned more as a private than a public entity, charging that its activities were too individualized through the person of the film commissioner. When I asked the leading location scout on the island (Interviewee No.15) about the way the film office operated, he responded, “Bernard, boy, sometimes I feel it was more of a private interest, you know” (Johnson, line 414). Interviewee No.17 seemed to support that
perspective when he explained the retirement of the position of film commissioner by his institution:

A person was appointed as the film commissioner and operated as a sole entity for a while and then needed some sort of support and so our establishment agreed then to basically hire the person and put them under contract. Well it has come to the point where we can no longer do so, so the question is does that person still retain the role of the film commissioner despite the fact that there is not a film office housed (Piper, lines 205-210)?

Procedures for Accommodating Foreign Film Productions

I was unable to find any reliable sources that could provide me with a detailed account of the Dominican Government’s procedures or requirements for accommodating from foreign film producers that used the island before 2005. The Discover Dominica Authority did not honor my repeated requests to access the relevant public documents and public officers with inside knowledge advised me that the archival system is disorganized, so atop the normal bureaucratic hurdles, it would be difficult for me to access them. The National Development Corporation was dissolved in 2005 and that aspect of its operation transferred to the Discover Dominica Authority. Compounding these issues of access, many of the key negotiators of the two major films shot in Dominica before that period are deceased or have migrated; however, Interviewee No.15 noted that the island has made little progress since:

Set procedures are not put in place specifically for film. It's just things that you're asked to follow. So for instance they come in. They have to declare all their equipment to facilitate importation and re-export of the equipment. So those procedures are just
standard. So it's nothing that was set up for film (Johnson, lines 519-522).

From its inception, the DFC implemented an application process for foreign film producers desirous of engaging in production on the island. The process involves the completion of a form for the granting of a permit, which costs US$200. The permit requires producers to give basic information on the nature and schedule of the relevant film production. It also provides a number of conditions, frequently qualified by the phrase “wherever feasible.” It stipulates that barring cost prohibits, applicants should use local equipment, facilities, and personnel on the film project. Although it makes provisions for no direct censorship by local authorities, it requires the producers to state that the content of the production does not negatively represent the island and requests that the island receives promotion during the publicity of the film, among other minor requests. Despite these official documents that the Dominican Government requires foreign film producers to submit before they can film on the island, Interviewee No.15 said the procedure is not standardized nor is it strictly enforced:

BERNARD: So have you seen policies and procedures vary depending on the type of producer coming here?

JOHNSON: Yes, yes, yeah (Johnson, lines 514-516).

According to Interviewee No.3, once the DFC approves the film permit, it directs the applicant to a local coordinator and interfaces with other governmental departments that are crucial to the successful completion of the production. She said:

Anybody who is coming to shoot must hire a coordinator and a driver. Of course, sometimes we don't insist on it, because they come begging they don't have money and it's a small project and so, so you use your discretion, but they have to pay their filming in the national parks (Bully, lines 519-521).
Interviewee No.15 said that in compliance with local regulations and laws, the government frequently requires these productions to complete additional documents, such as those related to liability insurance and local company registration. Additionally, Interviewee No.3 said that different government departments, such as the Forestry Division, the Inland Revenue Department, and the Fisheries Division also issue their own permits, which are separate and independent from that of the DFC. For big-budget, foreign film productions the process is more complicated and less routine. Interviewee No.17 said that in such cases, the role of the DFC is relatively diminished and high-level government officials have more authority:

PIPER: Well if someone came to me and said that they have a big budget Hollywood film. I know number one that they are going to require fiscal incentives.

BERNARD: That's the key?

PIPER: Yeah, right, because they can go elsewhere and get them, so we know that there is going to be that. We have to give to get. I know that and I know that the agency involved is the IDA and I know that Cabinet has to be involved. Because there is no official policy to say XYZ, that means then that you have to sit down with the people, put it together, right, and IDA has to quote the appropriate Acts and what not so Cabinet could make the decision (Piper, lines 131-138).

These types of negotiations normally involve multiple meetings with public officers at different levels. Ultimately, those at the highest rung of government make the most important decisions, since only Cabinet has the authority to grant fiscal concessions. Interviewee No.20 said that it is usually at this stage that local authorities bargain with the film producers, hoping to secure benefits for the island. She adds that talks are not transparent and a tiered level of information sharing occurs even among senior public servants. Interviewees Nos. 3, 20, and 51
noted that these producers of big-budget films who engage with satellite locations demand high levels of secrecy and confidentiality from local authorities, particularly during negotiations.

Interviewee No.20 explained:

So too, when they come into a destination and negotiate a location they require top confidence and there are some things you just cannot talk about until you are at the point where it’s a done deal, then you can talk about it. So bring in the public at a certain time? No way (Thomas, lines 210-212)!

Since Dominica does not have any freedom of information laws that guarantee the public access to such information, the government’s public disclosure on its activities and decisions are largely discretionairy. Even when Cabinet takes a decision and action taken on it, the public may still be ignorant of the underlying arrangements. Cabinet decisions are usually kept confidential from unauthorized parties and are not officially referenced in the public until published in the Dominica Official Gazette, a practice required by law; moreover, the Government has traditionally not published its decisions on concessions to foreign film producers.

To verify this, I reviewed the Dominica Official Gazette publications from the years 1986 to 2013 and found no reference of any concessions granted to foreign film productions. Contrastingly, on December 8, 2005, just six months after the shooting of Pirates of the Caribbean on the island, the government published its approval of fiscal concessions to the Jungle Bay Resort and Spa, and Petite Coulibre Guest Cottages Inc, prominent hotels on the island.

**Negotiations with Foreign Film Producers**

Interviewees No.13 and No.3 reported that Dominica does not have a film incentive
program. Interviewees Nos. 45 and 26 explained that the government grants foreign film productions concessions through the Fiscal Incentives Act, Chapter 84:51 of the Laws of Dominica. Interviewee No.45 stated that foreign film companies seeking fiscal incentives would normally petition the Dominica Film Commission first. She added that the commission would work through the Discover Dominica Authority and the Invest Dominica Authority (IDA) to prepare a Cabinet Paper. Interviewees No.17 and 26 noted that the Cabinet Paper would serve as a written proposal formerly outlining their requests. They stated that the IDA, through the relevant minister, petitions the Cabinet of Ministers on behalf of the applicant. Interviewee No.17 said that on completion of the Cabinet Paper, the Permanent Secretary spearheads the Minister’s preparation to submit the document to Cabinet.

The entire process is extremely confidential and very little information about the transaction circulates outside the parties directly involved, even long after the project has ended. If the awareness of prominent media personalities can reasonably serve as a litmus test for public knowledge of the concessions that the island gives to foreign film producers, then the Dominican public is largely ignorant of them. More than seven years after the fact, a focus group comprising mainstream journalists and talk-show hosts was clueless about the government’s provision of concessions to Pirates of the Caribbean:

BERNARD: Do you think those people pay a lot in taxes?

PARTICIPANT D: Yeah man. Oh yeah [mumbling].

BERNARD: I was asking what type of taxes these productions paid.

PARTICIPANT B: Do we know how much taxes they paid [to colleagues]?

PARTICIPANT D: I have no idea.

PARTICIPANT B: So how can we say they paid a lot when we don't even know what the
figures are?

BERNARD: What concession did the government grant to Pirates of the Caribbean?

PARTICIPANT B: I have no knowledge of that.

BERNARD: Anybody knows the types of concessions?

ALL: No!

PARTICIPANT B: I have no knowledge of that

BERNARD: Do you think that any concessions were granted?

PARTICIPANT A: Yes, I believe there would have been.

PARTICIPANT B: I believe there were.

BERNARD: A lot? A little [Quizzical look from participants]?

PARTICIPANT C: A whole lot.

PARTICIPANT A: I would expect a lot (Media Focus Group, lines 362-378).

In fact, the only local newspaper article that I came across on the government’s negotiations with Pirates of the Caribbean, published on January 21, 2005 paraphrased the Chairman of the Dominica Hotel and Tourism Association’s argument that Dominica gave up little to secure the production (George, 2005, p.2b). Although high-level public officers and key industry personnel were generally unable or unwilling to grant me access to key official documents, my formal and informal discussions with them revealed that on several occasions the Government of Dominica has granted incentives to foreign film productions that shoot on the island. Moreover, the majority of interview respondents questioned the excessiveness of the incentives given to these foreign film productions, although they showed little consensus on what they thought would be an appropriate scale.

I found no documented evidence or statements from respondents about the government’s
granting of fiscal incentives to either The Seventh Sign or the Orchid House, but I found compelling evidence outlining concessions made to the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean. Interviewee No.3 emphasized that the foreign film productions to conspicuously receive the most extensive set of concessions from the Government of Dominica were Pirates of the Caribbean II and III. She added that because of the island’s inexperience with a film production of that size, the Dominican negotiators consulted their counterparts in the sister Caribbean island of St. Vincent, which was also their main competitor for hosting the project, to gauge the depth and extent of incentives that they should offer. A review by the island’s film commissioner notes, “By January 25 a decision was taken by Cabinet to grant a number of waivers and concessions and by February 3, the Production Company’s lawyers were informed of the waivers and concessions granted subject to some basic conditions” (Bully, 2005, p 20).

Through Decision #56 the Cabinet of Ministers outlined eight terms and conditions in its agreement with Pirates of the Caribbean. First, the agreement indemnified the Government of Dominica from legal action by the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean for any reason related to the films’ production on the island. Second, it called for the island’s conspicuous mention in the films’ credits. Third, it called for the producers to make reasonable efforts to mention Dominica in promoting the films. Fourth, it placed the onus on the film producers to take measures to lessen the negative environmental impacts from their activities on the island.

The fifth clause seemed rather anticipatory: it stipulated that the producers of the film had to return to their original condition all the playing fields used during production. Clause c6 required the producers of the film to seek the approval of the Comptroller of Customs before disposing of any item that qualified for fiscal concession. To reinforce clause c6, clause c7 clearly stated that any imported item that received fiscal incentives that the producers donate to
anyone locally remain subject to Customs duties and taxes. Finally, the Government of Dominica used clause c8 to stipulate that the Laws of Dominica and the Dominican judiciary are the applicable interpretive legal frameworks for settling disputes under the agreement.

_The Project Management of Big-Budget Film Productions on the Island_

Interviewee No.32 reported that in order to shoot scenes from the Seventh Sign in Dominica, Tri Star Pictures recruited a group of well-connected local elites, led by the former cabinet secretary, Patricia Frampton, to negotiate with the government and facilitate the local logistics. The film, which was referred to locally as “The Boarder” was managed by Boarder Productions, a subsidiary of Tri Star Productions (Chronicle, 1987).

Following my request for registration documents pertaining to the production in Dominica, the clerks of the Registrar of Companies, who normally archive and retrieve such information found no listing of any registration documents associated with the production of a film on the island five years prior or two years after the film was shot on the island. They searched for “Boarder” and for “Seventh Sign.” Additionally, the Invest Dominica Authority and the Discover Dominica Authority were unable to provide me any written documentation of the government’s negotiation or agreement with the producers of the Seventh Sign.

Interviewee No.39 said that while the government facilitated the shooting of the film on the island, it made very little demands of the film producers and basically gave them free reign over the island, with some fragmented though crucial caveats. He noted:

The discussions were let’s say informal and more of a verbal agreement. I should have known better but then again it was the first major film being shot in DA and being part of it took precedence over the contractual or legal focus. We met at the Layou River Hotel,
in the lobby area, and just went over what they wanted regarding extras and villagers. I recall at that meeting was the police in charge of the St. Joe station, the chairman of the village council, and a Catholic priest. We were all given an overview of what they wanted and our roles (Francis, lines 166-170).

He added that it was the St. Joseph Village Council, within whose local government jurisdiction the majority of the shooting took place, which did most of the substantive negotiations:

BERNARD: Did the council insist on anything?

FRANCIS: Yeah that carpenters and other skilled labor be used in building sets. For example, there was a scene shot on the spring bridge but repairs had to be done. They wanted the St. Joe and Layou people to be the ones to do them. Also very funny, they wanted the snacks to be made by the St. Joe people. Looking back, I would say the village council did a better job negotiating than the government officials.

BERNARD: What type of documentation was made of that agreement?

FRANCIS: None from what I recall. There was a meeting and the chairman simply made his requests and that was it. I guess since it was not monetary the producers had no issue with the requests.

BERNARD: So it was a verbal agreement?

FRANCIS: Yeah, it was.

BERNARD: Any public sector negotiators or lawyers were at that meeting?

FRANCIS: Not that I recall.

BERNARD: Who was responsible from the Dominican end to ensure that the agreement was carried out?
FRANCIS: As it related to a certain number of extras and snacks unfortunately that was me. In terms of skilled labor that was left to the chairman dealing directly with the set designer (Francis, lines 96-110).

While I remain unsure as to whether or not the Government of Dominica granted any fiscal incentives to the producers of Seventh Sign, I am relatively certain, having worked on that production, that neither local extras and below-the-line workers nor non-resident workers paid income tax (PAYE) or made Social Security contributions as required by law. The film’s accountants paid local labor in cash, which they received in small envelopes handed to them by trusted local agents. Interviewee No.39 recalled, “We got paid in cash in a small brown envelope. Who was going to collect income tax or social security payments on that?” (Francis, lines 193-194).

When the BBC and Picture Palace came to the island to shoot The Orchid House for Channel 4, the situation was little different, other than the fact that the local population took a more active interest in the film because of its cultural significance. Interviewee No.32 who worked as a consultant on the film and whose mother worked as the production secretary said that the government gave no fiscal concessions to the producers of the Orchid House, despite the fact that the entire film was based on the classic novel and life of a Dominican cultural legend, Phyllis Shand Allfrey (Honychurch, 1991) and that it was the first epic television serial to be shot in the Caribbean (Augustine, 1991).

Interviewees Nos. 3, 42, and 51 reported that initially, local private interests heavily drove the courting of Pirates of the Caribbean II and III to Dominica. They noted that since the island had no film commission at the time that producers of Pirates of the Caribbean indicated interest in using Dominica as a location for the film, the government temporarily established the
Fast Track Team (FTT), which comprised of public officials from the National Development Corporation and the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Enterprise Development, charging it with the responsibility of facilitating the production of the film on the island. Interviewee No.3 said that luring the film to the island was so important to the government that the Cabinet of Ministers asked the highest ranking public servant in the Ministry of Tourism, Permanent Secretary Irwin Larocque to chair the team, assigning him Principal Liaison Official for the project.

Although the island had previously hosted the production of foreign feature films, it was the first time that the government was attempting to pitch the island to a major film producer. Interviewee No.32 stated that the producers of The Orchid House and The Seventh Sign had chosen to use Dominica without any local persuasion.

Largely due to disorganization and unprofessionalism, the island had also lost at least two other opportunities to host major feature film productions. Although Dominica was the main production location for the 1942 film, Christopher Columbus by Rank Studio/ Gainsborough (Napier, 1949), Interviewee No.3 and 32 claimed that at the turn of the millennium the island lost out on hosting the shooting of two foreign feature films about Columbus’ arrival in the Americas, despite visits to the island by location scouts working with these films.

Interviewee No.32 said that in 1992 a scout for the film Christopher Columbus: The Discovery visited the island to perform a logistical assessment, but his report was so unflattering that producers opted instead to use the island of St. Thomas in the U.S Virgin Islands. He chided that local tourism authorities were mostly unaware or indifferent to his visit. Interviewee No.3 said that same year the island missed out on being the location for the shooting of the Gaumont Film Company’s feature film 1492: Conquest of Paradise. She said that the producers rejected the island as the main site for producing the film when they concluded that there was inadequate
hotel infrastructure on the north of the island to accommodate the cast and crew. Additionally, Interviewee No.15 reported that other major film productions, like the Survivor television series and The Thomas Crown Affair, had scouted the island seriously, but had eventually opted out and chosen other locations.

Interviewee No.51 stated that one of the missed foreign investment opportunities most hotly debated by the Dominican public was the production of the first film in the Pirates of the Caribbean franchise: Curse of the Black Pearl, which was shot in St. Vincent. Interviewee No.41, the local location manager for Pirates of the Caribbean II and III, recounted the island’s encounter with the scout sent by the film producers in 2002 to assess the island’s capacity to host the production:

TOULON: Unofficially, Pirates sent down a gentleman by the name of Tom. Who came down we believe, but behind the scenes. He didn't really inform the government. He came kind of sneakingly down here and...

BERNARD: Sneakingly?

TOULON: Yeah, in a sneak way, because his presence was not made to the authorities in Dominica. He met with my former partner in this business, who unfortunately isn't here. He died in a motorbike accident (Toulon, lines 2-11).

He added that without having formal discussions with businesses or individuals working in the tourism or film industries on the island, Hayslip left the island. Interviewee No.41 said, “Tom Hayslip came down, that was in reference to Pirates I. He just came to say that it can't be done here. St. Vincent is the way to go and he disappeared, ok” (Toulon, lines 3-23).

Hayslip’s first visit stayed virtually unknown to the Dominican public until the film’s release, when St. Vincent began using it as part of its tourism promotion. Amidst continued
anxiety of Dominica’s struggling tourism industry and spiraling local unemployment, key public personalities took their concerns to the media. Media workers participating in this study’s focus group discussion reported extensive public discussion on the issue. Participant B noted:

But I think what caused a lot of the talk is that Dominica had been struggling to get that movie for a while so I think the conversation was a lot about that. So finally, we got it. There was a lot of talk of we messed up several times before so you know there was pressure on the government, on the policy makers to get this done because it had slipped through Dominica’s hands before (Media Focus Group, Participant B, lines 120-124).

Interviewee No.41 recalled that after the incident Hayslip had revisited Dominica on multiple occasions and had again discouraged his superiors from using the island, citing its lack of proper logistics and infrastructure. He further explained that when Michael Meehan, the supervising locations manager, contacted Anita Bully and the NDC, indicating that he would be willing to take a second look at Dominica, the government was determined to make a more compelling overture to the producers. Interviewees Nos. 3 and 41 reported that Meehan wrote a convincing report to his superiors, recommending the island as a main production site for the sequels, which prompted a follow-up visit to the island by a more powerful executive team, referred to in the film industry as the grownups. They said that the team included Executive Producer, Bruce Hendrix; Director, Gore Verbinski; and Director of Photography, Dariusz Wolski.

Larocque recruited a small group of local experts to conduct a professional tour for the executive team scheduled to visit the island. Interviewee No.3 said that the NDC had developed a proposal that secured local private sector funding, some of which was used to finance the services of Anita Bully as a major consultant on the project. She added that when asked, other
local stakeholders volunteered their services:

There are no offices, no forms. There is no document to file, there is nothing. It didn't exist, so we had to make it as we went along and we had the real support of the Prime Minister and the real support of Larocque. Larocque was on 24-hour service. We were on 24-hour service, so it wasn't really a money thing to say it is my company, because we were not even sure we were getting paid (Toulon, lines 174-177).

It was obvious that the government was desperate to secure a deal with the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean and it implemented an aggressive publicity campaign to convince them, taking unprecedented moves in committing a wide range of already stressed public services to the cause. Interviewee No.41 said that the sole purpose of the tour was to convince the producers to use the island as a location for the production of the film:

TOULON: He said guys, whatever you need make it happen.

BERNARD: And you got that directive?

TOULON: Straight from him, whatever it is. You want coast guard, you have coast guard. You want to see different look, whatever it is, you know (Toulon, lines 156-159).

According to Interviewee No.3, when the grownups came to the island they were only searching for a couple backdrops, but the local welcoming party successfully pitched several other sites to them:

They were able to see some locations and they got sold, and that's when Gore, the head man Bruce Hendrix, when they came down here, [they said] Paul show me what you got and that's how it went from one location to 2 locations confirmed. I mean you are hearing 1 location confirmed, 2 locations confirmed, 3 locations confirmed, 4, we ended up with 9 locations (Toulon, lines 122-126).
Interviewee Nos. 3 and 41 said that when the grownups finally agreed to use the island, they compensated the local touring party for its services. After the Dominican Government and the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean had settled on an agreement for producing the film on the island, the Fast Track Team spearheaded local preparation and planning, with some specific instructions directly from Cabinet.

The Cabinet directed core government departments, including the police, fire, and port services, to prioritize the project. It also instructed the Physical Planning Division to accelerate the processes for approving the film’s civil works, encouraging it to be especially accommodating of the production. Apart from encouraging the Customs and Excise unit to temporarily review its operations to expedite the project, Cabinet directed the Comptroller of Customs to temporarily declare an unsanctioned dock an “Approved Wharf” for the purpose of facilitating the production of Pirates of the Caribbean in Dominica. Cabinet also instructed the Chief Veterinary Officer to engage in “special arrangements” with the producers of Pirates for safeguarding public health regarding the importation and care of plants and livestock. Furthermore, the Government of Dominica declared a temporary halting of mining at the Blenheim Quarry to facilitate the shooting of Pirates of the Caribbean. There could be no doubt that successfully accommodating the production of the Pirates of Caribbean on the island was a top government priority.

In addition to these extensive tax exemptions and unusual procedural accommodations, the government also agreed to give the film producers a rebate on their expenditure on the island. Interviewee No.3 explained talks on rebates this way:

BERNARD: So Disney didn't come saying hey I need you to give me that?

BULLY: 20%, no, no, no, no, no, no.
BERNARD: So whatever concession was made by government was voluntary?

BULLY: No! We had to find a way to give them something in return.

BERNARD: So I am asking, did they not ask for something?

BULLY: Well, they asked for a rebate and we found that was the only way we could do it, was the 15%

BERNARD: Did they give a number for the rebate or did they just leave it open to us?

BULLY: They left it open. We told them what we could do and they would come back and we discussed it and come back and we discussed it until it was finally approved (Bully, lines 821-829).

Armed with full Cabinet support, the Fast Track Team and paid agents of Pirates of the Caribbean held consultative meetings with a number of stakeholders on the island. Interviewees Nos. 15, 20, and 51 told me that while the different local stakeholders raised a number of issues with the producers and the government, there was very little room for negotiations. The President of the Dominica and Hotel Tourism Association remembered the tensions during these discussions:

I remember we went to a few meetings with the people from Disney who were the advanced team and so forth, but the conversation, the exchange that sticks out it my mind is this: people were in the audience and the guys were saying what they are going to do and 2 or 3 questions kept coming back in succession: how can Dominica benefit from this? How can you make sure that Dominica benefits? And I could see that the guy was trying to ignore it and eventually he just looked the audience in its eye and said that's for you to decide. I am here to make a move. How you benefit from this, what I do depends on what you want and how you go after it. There was dead silence in the room. He threw
the challenge right back at us, and I remember the corridor conversations afterward: people cursing Disney and so on, and a few of us were the ones who said, you know, Disney leveled with you. They told you directly, look, I don't worry about you, you know. You happen to have a nice location which I am going to use to make my multimillion dollar piece, you know, that's why I am here, I don't have time or interest in making sure that what I do is done in a way that benefits you. What we do must achieve one objective: make a Disney film that is going to be a success. That's all (Martin, lines 195-208).

Although the Company Act of 1994 requires foreign film companies shooting large scale film productions on the island to either register a local company or operate through a registered local agent, the Registrar’s Office only provided two cases where producers of foreign films on the island had registered local subsidiaries. Disney used an independent motion picture company called Second Mate Productions Inc. to produce Pirates of the Caribbean in Dominica. The company, which was incorporated in the State of California on March 19, 2004, was registered as an external company in Dominica on January 19, 2005, receiving the local company number 1407. The company presented two accountants as its directors: Donald Mink and Amy Rabins, who gave their address as Burbank, California. I found no mention of either of these directors in the listing of the credits for Pirates of the Caribbean II or III. Second Mates Production Inc. also secured the services of the Alick Lawrence legal chambers as its local power of attorney.

To produce the Pirate Master Television Series on the island, Mark Burnett Productions registered a local company on December 21, 2006 called Red Sky Night Productions. Red Sky Night Production listed three directors: Page Feldman as the president, Elizabeth Schulze as the secretary, and Rebecca Taylor as the treasure. The company recruited the services of a local
attorney of law, Laurina Vidal as its incorporator.

Before commencing production, these foreign film productions co-opted the services of highly connected and influential locals who had adequate knowledge of the local film production environment and the challenges confronting it. They appointed local location managers and relied on them not only for their logistical direction but also for lobbying and mediation.

Interviewee No.40 said that when the producers of Seventh Sign came to Dominica they did not interact with the National Development Corporation, which routinely handled Foreign Direct Investments into the island. They negotiated mostly with a single public servant, Patricia Frampton, who had the responsibility of assisting film producers interested in doing work on the island. Before Seventh Sign, she mostly dealt with sporadic requests by producers of television advertisements and short documentaries, since the production of the Seventh Sign was the first feature film shot in Dominica as an independent nation. Interviewee No.40 added that the production of the Seventh Sign overwhelmed the government’s institutional capacity and exposed the island’s naiveté about such projects.

The government did not consider the production of the film on the island a major investment activity and it mostly left the producers free to arrange private alliances and agreements that best suited their business interests. Interviewee No.39 recalled that planning meetings for the production took place among a group of mostly private individuals amalgamated for their disparate skills and local connections. Interviewee No.40 stated that Frampton made arrangements that hurdled over the island’s bureaucracy and secured the support of the police and local government, but she remained isolated from the logistical and production activities on the ground. Interviewee No.39 supported this view, noting:

I would have to say that there was a lack of a definite government process at those
meetings. I remember finding it strange that no government official was present. The director and crew seemed to have been given full reigns as to what was about to happen to the village of St. Joe/Layou, including the manner in which we were paid (Francis, lines 172-175)

Although the producers of the Seventh Sign made extensive use of the island’s beaches, rivers, and historical sites, no government entity expressly negotiated the use of these spaces. Interviewees Nos. 7 and 8 emphasized that the Fisheries Division, the Forestry Division, and the Environmental Health Department had little to no influence on how the film producers used those spaces.

Throughout two-and-a-half months of shooting, the producers of The Orchid House established temporary production centers in six different locations on the island: Roseau, Portsmouth, Soufriere, Pointe Baptiste, Trafalgar and the Emerald Pool. Although the film’s budget remains undisclosed, the producers of the film told the Dominican media that the production would have tremendous benefits for the island in terms of employment generation and revenue for the local hospitality sector (Augustine, 1991)

Unlike with the Seventh Sign, the Forestry Division was alert at stipulating conditions for the use of public spaces during the shooting of The Orchid House. Apart from the Forestry Division, no other government department was actively involved in organizing any aspect of the production. Interviewee No.8 noted that although the department of forestry had no organized framework for accommodating such productions, it developed a tailored program that guaranteed some form of compensation through permits that allowed the film producers to use public lands under its control:

JAMES: We had to grant permission to shut down the Emerald Pool (laughs), because
they filmed a scene at the Emerald Pool, and although in those days we didn't have that many cruise ships coming in at the time, we had to give them special permission, because they had to run cables all the way into the pool for their lights and stuff like that, basically they had the place almost to themselves for 3 days.

BERNARD: Did they compensate the island?

JAMES: Yeah, yeah! I mean they had to pay. Well, for all of these permits that are granted even before we had the formal form, they had to pay a location fee, ok. I cannot remember how much we charged them, because the thing is nobody could have had access to the Emerald Pool for those days (James, lines 131-141).

Even today, the government does no systemic or comprehensive monitoring of the production of these foreign films on the island. When asked, none of the respondents reported any organized monitoring of any of these productions, although 80% reported some type of ad-hoc procedure for accommodating these productions. Institutions and authorities that routinely take up different roles in monitoring the activities of foreign companies on the island are generally isolated from or indifferent to large projects involving big-budget or large-scale filming on the island.

The Environmental Health Department, whose duties are guided by several pieces of legislation, including the Planning Act, the Environmental Health Services Act and the Employment Safety Act have never monitored production activities of any of the major films shot on the island. A mid-level supervisor summarized the department’s involvement in the production of Pirates of the Caribbean by noting, “So we were not involved in the aspect of permission being given. We were not involved in monitoring them while they were here, and we are not involved in evaluation after the fact” (Environmental Health Officers Focus Group,
Local laws do not mandate foreign companies doing business on the island to have insurance coverage, which sometimes leave local workers vulnerable. Interviewee No.39, a prominent local facilitator of the filming of the Seventh Sign on the island, noted:

“Local insurance? What’s that? Well, I guess I was the insurer [sarcastically] because if anything went wrong, it’s me they came to, the locals. Seriously though, there was no insurance plan put in place in case of accidents or stuff like that” (Francis, lines 202-204).

Interviewees Nos. 15 and 46 observed that more recently foreign film companies typically acquire liability insurance coverage whether through a foreign broker that subcontracts the services to a local insurance agent or directly through a local insurance broker. Interviewee No.46 said that in such cases, local workers received substantial coverage, especially when endorsed by a local broker. He added that local laws prohibit foreign companies from having external insurance if the same is available on island:

A lot of those international companies would actually have insurance out of Dominica however going forward based on the Insurance Act of Dominica you cannot have insurance off island if it can't be provided here locally so if the person supposed to have insurance it has to be registered locally (Tongue, lines 53-56).

Adequate insurance coverage is particularly important for foreign film production on the island. Interviewees Nos. 23 and 32 discussed the impact of the historical disaster during the first shooting of a foreign film on the island. Napier (1949) wrote that twenty-three Kalinago women and children who served as extras on the production of Christopher Columbus in 1948 got seriously injured. Interviewee No. 32, the island’s foremost historian, said that they never received any compensation.
From the moment that the foreign film producers decide to shoot on the island, the local location managers whom they hire become very influential. These well-compensated residents have tremendous sway over decisions on which locals receive the best jobs and contracts related to the production. Additionally, locals who are able to develop social relationships with key decision makers on the films are also instrumental in professional recruitment. These relationships usually procure lucrative deals for local entrepreneurs that frequently run into the hundreds of thousands in areas such as legal services, hospitality services, security, construction, and transportation.

Often, the film producers short-list these professionals and verify their suitability for providing the requested services. For example, Interviewee No.5, a local contractor, disclosed that because his company had a good relationship with the native location manager of the Pirates of the Caribbean, it was recommended as the local contracting film for most of the civil works on the film’s production; yet, the production supervisor required proof of its competence:

We first met a guy called Tom Hayslip and we provided quotations. We provided our financial statements, whatever else that they wanted. We provided references to him. We provide the quotations that they wanted and from there it just went through, once we started doing the work (Leblanc, lines 17-20).

Interviewee No.5 observed that although these film producers bargained aggressively, they tended to give local professionals greater latitude to decide on compensation rates and fees than other independent contractors or local workers providing less specialized services. Recounting the experience of his company, he explained:

Basically, we decided on the rate based on the scope of works, based on the works that actually had to be done, like we cost all our other works. There were sometimes
additional risk factors. There were sometimes accelerated costs that we had to do. There were sometimes we had to be called back to work on certain things that they didn't see before that they need to get in. The work was basically on. I don't think we went out trying to bleed them (Leblanc, lines 51-55).

A post-mortem survey by the local film commissioner on the economic impact of the production of Pirates of the Caribbean on the island found that of the twelve local companies doing business with the film, only three had any written contracts: the communication provider, the security company, and the engineering firm (Bully, 2005). The report notes, “Most of the local companies operated on trust” (Bully, 2005, p. 23). The local companies that had no contracts would typically respond to a telephone order by providing an estimate to the film production for a particular good or service, which the authorizing film agent would pay within thirteen days. Sometimes, these service providers submitted a purchase order prior to delivery, but it was not unusual for them to do so afterwards (Bully 2005).

The Employment of Local Labor

Despite contacting multiple public and private entities that generate and store local labor statistics, I found no official figures for the number of persons employed on either the Seventh Sign or the Orchid House; however, unofficial accounts and an estimate by Interviewee No.22, who worked on the film, put the figures at over 100 for the former and just under 50 for the latter. Interviewee No.15 said that during the production of Seventh Sign, local workers got jobs as logistical assistants, crew assistants, and extras. Interviewee No.10 added that compensation packages were sporadic and fluctuated based on the film department that was spearheading it. Also, wages varied based on how workers got recruited and their capacity to negotiate. The
president of the Dominican Taxi association recounted:

PARTICIPANT D: I got a hundred dollars to work on Seventh decades ago. They paid ECS100 for the driver, yeah, Seventh Sign, they paid a hundred dollars for the driver, decades ago.

BERNARD: So wait a while! In 1987, you got paid a hundred dollars for your day as a driver.

PARTICIPANT D: Yes!

BERNARD: And how much for your vehicle?

PARTICIPANT D: I think it was 180 or 200 dollars (Taxi Associations Focus Group, lines 216-222).

Interviewee No.10 added that some locals who were already involved in various aspects of video production and photography secured jobs with the film’s technical crew:

SHILLINGFORD: I first got employed on a foreign film by Tri-Star Pictures which did that film, Seventh Sign: the location was in the St. Joseph. I was part of the camera crew.

BERNARD: So you were like the camera assistant?

SHILLINGFORD: Camera assistant, changing lens and making sure the camera is ready for the camera men and the crew.

BERNARD: How you got hooked up with that?

SHILLINGFORD: When I heard, I approached the site manager so I approach them and then I spoke to the Director, and when I approached him he told me who to check with and I was hired one time (Shillingford, lines 6-8).

According to Interviewees Nos. 10 and 39, although the locals who worked behind-the-scenes on the Seventh Sign reported a standard wage-rate for local crew assistants, wages for the
extras were not standardized and ranged from EC$20.00 to EC$200. The recruitment of extras for the Seventh Sign generated a surplus of persons than required, which resulted in mass gatherings of eager and disenchanted pools of persons loitering around the production sets seeking work on the film. The producers of Seventh Sign had contacted the Ministry of Culture and their local liaisons to arrange the recruitment of a large numbers of locals to serve as extras for the film, leaving no limit on the number of persons needed; therefore, recruitment became fragmented and disorganized. The producers responded to this dilemma by giving token sums of money to persons who were recruited and had shown up, but not used. Interviewee No.39, the main resident responsible for recruiting extras noted, “Extras that were not used for that day but were present were given as I recall EC$20.00 for their day” (Francis, lines 175-178). He added that everyone was paid cash at the end of each shooting day.

Local agents of the film producers did most of the recruitment of the ancillary workers to the film crews. Interviewee No.22 remarked that other locals who had made acquaintances with some of the foreign cast and crew were also able to negotiate jobs on the film (Moses, lines 28-31). Mostly, recruitment for off-camera jobs was as disorganized as it was for local extras. According to Interviewee No.10, none of the local off-camera workers recruited to work on the film received contracts or worker benefits, and no local worker union or representative body was part of their recruitment or management, despite many working long arduous hours:

BERNARD: Explain to, what a day would have been like for on the Seventh Sign?

SHILLINGFORD: Well, we got up at five o’clock in the morning, and we would have, a bus would pick us up and bring us to Layou River Hotel, that’s where the production of this was, and from there we would move off from six o’clock to the site, and we would have our camera crew and the truck would carry everything for production but we would
work long hours, long hours.

BERNARD: So around what time would you be off duty?

SHILLINGFORD: Sometime eight o’clock in the night, nine o’clock in the night

BERNARD: And whether ended at 4, 5, 8, 9, you got the same rate?

SHILLINGFORD: Same Rate (Shillingford, lines 31-39).

Interviewee No.39 maintained that notwithstanding the ad-hoc and laissez faire system of recruiting and managing workers, the film producers required that local workers sign a release form, which exempted the film producers from any liability associated with their involvement in the production:

BERNARD: So everyone received those releases?

FRANCIS: Nah, not that I recall. It was given to me and basically the extras being used for the day would sign below!

BERNARD: Multiple signatures on one release form?

FRANCIS: Yeah (Francis, lines 35-39).

The production of the Orchid House was not as large as that of the Seventh Sign, but it lasted longer and used more local sites. Recruitment for the film was more organized, perhaps partly because the director had a better understanding of Caribbean societies, being a Caribbean national. Also, the Cultural Division of the government was more actively involved in the production of The Orchid House, and the producers selected a well-connected and influential Dominican family, with deep knowledge of the local cultural landscape to help with the local logistics of shooting the film on the island: the country’s foremost historian worked as the film’s historical advisor and his mother as the production secretary.

Four resident Dominican actors got credited acting roles on the film. They each had
speaking roles, although none had major roles. Interviewee No.32 pointed out that a number of local extras got jobs on the film, including police recruits who marched in different scenes. In an interview with The Chronicle newspaper during the film’s production, the producer, Malcolm Craddock, noted “A large number of local actors, film extras, and also a lot of very skilled craftsmen, carpenters, painters, gardeners, electricians, caterers and drivers will get jobs” (Augustine, 1991, p. 7); however, Interviewee No.10 regretted that none of the locals recruited to work on the film had any form of organized worker representation:

When I approached the director, Horace, I told him about my experience, he told me no problem, that time I was still working with Cable and Wireless at the time, I took time off, vacation leave, and I worked with them, but my role in Orchid House, was Video Assistant Operator, where I had to record every take. I was filming long hours, I had to record everything and make sure that when the producer or the film director asked to look at that tape, I have it and I had to archive it too (Shillingford, lines 54-59).

Interviewee No.10 explained further that the producers of the Orchid House adopted the similar procedures, fees, and wage-rates used four years earlier during the production of the Seventh Sign. According to him, despite regular work shifts beyond 12-hour days, the film producers paid the local technical crew and most of the extras the same rate of EC$50 per day that the producers of the Seventh Signs had paid. He said that eventually the local workers protested and demanded better compensation, threatening to sabotage the production:

BERNARD: You talk about putting down your foot, what happened then?

SHILLINGFORD: A gang of us set up like an organization to look into what was going on, the price they were paying, the long hours we were working and not getting paid for the long hours, and after we complained then they decided to pay us overtime.
BERNARD: So how did you all set up that meeting?

SHILLINGFORD: Well just among guys on the set and we just decide…

BERNARD: Including talent and crew?

SHILLINGFORD: Talent and crew, the guys with the trucks, and we met with the producers and they decided to pay us overtime. But when they pay us overtime it was looking good because it was more money.

BERNARD: Did they increase the hourly rate as well or they just gave you overtime?

SHILLINGFORD: Yes, they increased it, because they paid me as a professional.

BERNARD: So what was the rate you eventually settled on?

SHILLINGFORD: I got like I think it was a hundred and twenty dollars for my day

BERNARD: A hundred and twenty EC?

SHILLINGFORD: A hundred and twenty EC for my day and then overtime, me in a week, based on the overtime, I would come up with over a thousand dollars.

BERNARD: Time and a half?

SHILLINGFORD: Yes time and a half on Sundays got the same as the country, day double time, yeah (Shillingford, lines 77-96).

According to a report published by the local film commissioner, the production of Pirates of the Caribbean on the island employed 500 residents directly and another 200 indirectly (Bully, 2005, p. 6). A news report published by the local newspaper during the filming put employment figures at 400 locals, 150 of which were drivers (“Over 400 employed in filming Pirates of the Caribbean,” 2005). The film commissioner’s report identified phases in the levels of employment. In the first phase, 40 non-residents and 75 residents were employed on the film. In phase 2, these figures grew to 100 each. Her report also stated that by phase three, 480 foreigners
and 500 residents were working on the film on the island. This included 120 extras, 93 of whom were Kalinagos. Of the 175 local drivers working on the film, 100 drove their own vehicles (Bully, 2005, p.6).

During the wrap up of the film, employment figures dwindled to 40 non-residents and 200 residents. Although the study received no official endorsement from the Inland Revenue Department or any department of government that procures labor statistics, the film commissioner estimated that the production of Pirates of the Caribbean on the island between January and June of 2005 produced a local wage bill of EC $2,600,000.00, that contributed EC$186,000.00 to the local Social Security scheme and amounted to EC$400,000.00 in income taxes (Bully, 2005, p.6).

Interviewee No.6 disclosed that to generate electrical power for their shoots, these foreign productions utilized multiple high-capacity diesel generators:

MARTIN: For the rural areas what they did was basically to contract generators in those areas and these generators were portable generators so they could just wheel them to the next site of production. I know they leased two or three significant size generators that they use to provide electricity at those sites.

BERNARD: You have any idea of the capacity of these generators?

MARTIN: I think it was pretty close to 100kv (Martin 1, lines 105-110).

Sometimes they placed these generators near rivers, waterfalls, and coastlines, since they usually crave the islands lush, pristine, and picturesque seascapes and landscapes as backdrops for their films. Oftentimes, it is the first time that such equipment is used in these locations.

The report of the film commission states that the Government of Dominica provided most of the buildings used for office and storage space by the Pirates of the Caribbean production
team (Bully, 2005, p. 6). The largest and most modern public administrative building on the island, the Financial Centre, housed the film’s production headquarters, part of a EC$200,000 dollars rental deal, which also included a large building (in the past used for manufacturing) at the Canefield Industrial Site (Bully, 2005, p. 6). Interviewee No.6 commented that to network its entire operations on the island, the Pirates of the Caribbean production also relied on an EC$69,000 communications package from Cable & Wireless. The local telecommunications specialist who set up the system noted, “Communication to them was critical and their modes of communication encompassed cellular phones, Internet, and also radio links. We also set up VHF radio links for them at various sites” (Martin 1, lines 31-32). The production used 475 cell phones and just under 200 walkie-talkies on the island (“Back to the Bahamas, hurricanes and all,” 2006).

According to Interviewee No.10, at the heart of the communication network was a PBX system installed at the Financial Centre: the Nortel based BCM 400 is capable of supporting hundreds of extensions and about 50 direct lines, but the local communications provider activated 60 extensions and 30 direct lines for the production. He added that since a significant amount of shooting had to take place in backwater locations amidst high mountains, the communications needs of the production also stressed the existing infrastructure of the local telecommunications company. Interviewee No.10 said that to provide the production with uninterrupted mobile and internet coverage, Cable & Wireless had to install portable mobile units at 12 different locations on the island. He explained, “These areas we had to install special internet telephone lines which could facilitate upload of their shooting, so most likely it was to send information to their base” (Martin 1, lines 13-15).
He added that although the capacity of the network was modest compared to standards in developed countries, it was above normal for the Caribbean:

At most of the sites we installed at least two ADSL links and all of them were maxed at E1, so you are looking at least 2 megabits downstream and they were all were equipped with 512K uplink speed. We gave them a minimum of 2 megabits downlink speed and 1000 Kilobits uplink speed at each of the locations (Martin 1, lines 23-29).

The island’s framework for accommodating the production of the Pirate Master TV series, which followed two years later, was similar to the one adopted for the Pirates of the Caribbean. Interviewees Nos. 3 and 41, local elites with experiences of both productions, reported that Pirate Master benefited from the islands hosting of the Pirates of the Caribbean (Bully, lines 602-605; Toulon, lines 501-505). By the time that the producers of the Pirate Master TV series had indicated their interest in using the island as the location for the production, tensions arose between the private scout recruited to work on the series and the local film commissioner about the role of the Dominica Film Commission in facilitating these types of productions.

Interviewee No.3 concluded that since the island was relatively fresh from hosting the production of Pirates of the Caribbean II & III, local authorities were more aggressive in dealing with the producers of Pirate Master and more keenly aware of the kinds of challenges that could potentially unfold. Although they did not make significant headway in their negotiations with the producers, Mark Burnett Productions, on some key issues, they secured some small victories. Whereas there were no locals shadowing the technical crew of Pirates of the Caribbean, local negotiators were able to convince the executives of Mark Burnett Productions to employ locals to serve as camera assistants and apprentices to the production’s technical crew. From January
to April in 2007, the Pirate Master TV Series spent EC$6.5 million dollars during on the island (OECS, 2008). Interviewee No.15, the location manager for Pirate Master, traced the timeline:

We did a big production here called Pirates Master, and Pirates Master, that was Mark Burnett production, for CBS. The total production time was about 6 months from start to end, 6 months. There was 14 weeks of shooting, yeah, I want to get that right, yeah, 14 weeks of actual shooting, but the preproduction was like 4 months or so (Johnson, lines 58-61).

Pirate Master spent EC$1.1 million on local wages, having reportedly employed 257 Dominican residents (OECS, 2008), which included 15 as camera assistants. Interviewee No.15 argued that local authorities were generally able to secure better wages for locals working on the TV production than they did on Pirates of the Caribbean. The former film commissioner reported that Pirate Master also benefited from upgrades to the local hospitality sector initially undertaken to accommodate the filming of Pirates of the Caribbean. The DFC also reported that the local hospitality sector was the biggest beneficiary of local spending by Pirate Master. The sector earned an estimated EC$2.2 million from accommodation expenses by the TV series (OECS, 2008).

Interviewee No.6 stated that the producers of Pirate Master also took advantage of the telecommunications infrastructure used for Pirates of the Caribbean. He added that to accommodate the shooting of Pirate Master, the local telecommunications company made only slight adjustments to the communications platform that they had used for Pirates of the Caribbean:

There wasn't any major difference, not a major difference, and it was beneficial for the latter, because what we did for Pirates of the Caribbean, the next company was able to
benefit tremendously from it. So we already had infrastructure. We already had the equipment. We already had already established a routine and a program that we could have just superimposed for them: The equipment was still there. We were able to utilize it also, so I think it was cost-effective, a lot of savings, because we were able to reuse some of the materials that were used initially for Pirates of the Caribbean (Martin 1, lines 85-90).

RQ2. What are the Political, Economic, and Cultural Implications of Small Island Developing States Hosting the Production of Big-Budget Hollywood Films within their Borders?

Benefits of Hosting Big Budget Film Productions

Arguably, one of the most obvious consequences of SIDS countries hosting big-budget film productions is the increased activity experienced in their economies for the duration of these projects. These productions bring in highly valued foreign currency into these local economies and increase the amount of disposable income available to the local population for domestic spending. Eighty-five percent of interview respondents reported that local retail businesses were performing much better during the shooting of Pirates of the Caribbean than at other times, although they admitted that the phenomenon was fleeting. This was also the consensus during focus group discussions with development workers:

PARTICIPANT C: Well, the people that I spoke to during the time they said that they really benefited a lot. They made money. They really benefited a lot from Pirates of the Caribbean.

PARTICIPANT D: Yeah, Mr. Frampton, I think In terms of the hotels in particular, I
remember giving a young lady a ride and she was relating that, I think it was during the series, I don't think that it was Pirates of the Caribbean, the series, she worked at Anchorage [a hotel on the island] or one of them and she was happy for that period of time because they were full capacity and the kitchen was busy and everybody was making money (Community Development Workers Focus Group, lines 47-53).

Study participants also consistently spoke about the sense of heightened national pride and cultural awakening across the country from the local population’s interactions with the cast and crew that produced the high-profile films on the island:

> It is just the whole feeling, the stars that you are seeing on T.V. You could see them live. You are seeing them passing in your eyes. It was sort of a nice experience. It was an exhilarating experience. I mean, you see those stars, right, you know, so just the fact that they are there and you could see the movie and you say, yeah, I can see Vieille Case, you know, it has a nice feeling to it. The people speak about it a lot (Community Workers Focus Group, lines 311-315).

Often, these expressions of pride by residents from having their places integrated into the spaces created by these Hollywood filmmakers are not only linked to nationalism, but also to a more localized community identity. Interviewee No.50 confirmed that local villagers still fondly comment on the experience of hosting a big-budget film production. The following comment by Participant E summarized the sentiments of the focus group discussion that I held in the village of Soufriere:

> Yeah, to say that's my village, you know. That is what I tell my friends in America: let me tell you all something, DA [Dominica] is the healing destination if Pirates can come
here. They didn't go to just any country, you know. They came to Dominica, Scotts Heads, that's where I am from (Soufriere Focus Group, Participant E, lines 270-273).

Many of the more backwater villages, whose spaces the production of foreign films invaded, received a sudden burst of energy and excitement that most villagers welcomed. This contribution by Participant D represented the general position of the focus group discussion with councilors of the village of Vieille Case:

PARTICIPANT D: One of the things that maybe I can recall is that during the filming there was a sense of excitement around the village. If you remember, there was all that activity that you had not seen before, vehicles going up and down, people around, new faces and all of that.

BERNARD: And how did the villagers respond to that?

PARTICIPANT D: Yeah, man! People were very comfortable with that, excited about that, really excited about that (Vieille Case Focus Group, lines 492-497).

One of the island’s most respected cultural icons still alive and a former cultural advisor in the region to UNESCO for more than two decades, Alwin Bully (Interviewee No.1), argued that the local fascination over foreign, feature film production lingers from the island’s colonial history, when the only encounter with films was as audience never as auteur or behind-the-scenes spectator:

The excitement of going to see a movie, and the thrill of a big screen, a big picture, a big screen, all these kind of things that excited people, but for them to understand being part of that industry, I don't think people thought in those terms at all, to say that we can make our movies. I don't think that people were thinking that we could make our movies at all. It was something way beyond us, as something that came down to us, which we accepted,
and we accepted our place in it as viewers, but it has to do also with a sort of attitude of recognizing or thinking that you are in a subservient position and must feed the machinery that is sent down to you (Bully 1, lines 27-33).

When SIDS nations host these foreign film productions they also derive non-monetary benefits from them, and one of the most glaring examples of this is local human resource development. Interviewee No.47, a Hollywood film producer, stated that although foreign film producers are reluctant and sometimes unwilling to entertain requests by local authorities that they train local filmmakers during production, they provide invaluable practical training to locals simply by employing them:

I hire people and I hire a lot of people and I provide training. I train the next, so I leave behind training. It means that I have left behind a skilled professional, who has a gift now that can even be used to attract more production or be taken into a larger arena and used to expand the wealth here, and so I believe production has and is a powerful tool in development (Langlais, lines 19-22).

My study also indicated that when foreign filmmakers who use developing countries as satellite locations for their productions train local personnel, they contribute towards developing an indigenous film industry. In rare cases, they may also extend the careers of local filmmakers beyond the national boundaries, offering them further opportunities to work on regional and international film projects. The island’s premier location scout, Clem Johnson, has worked on over two-dozen regional projects and a handful of the local crew assistants on the production of Pirate Master joined Mark Burnett productions on several international shoots. Out of the 15 locals who worked as camera assistants on the production of Pirate Master, four travelled abroad with the production company on contracts to work on the Survivor television series in China,
Palau, Micronesia, Brazil, and Gabon. They have mostly returned to the island and are spearheading new standards and approaches to local film production. Interviewees Nos. 38 and 48 reported that three of these local filmmakers have also collaborated to reinvest huge sums of their financial earnings from these projects into purchasing high quality equipment, before absent on the island. Interviewee No.48 added that one of them purchased sound equipment and the two others different pieces of camera equipment:

So one of the strategies that we have employed is always buy gear that complement each other instead of each of us repeating and buying the same gear over and over. I mean our basic package, everybody has to have their own, but in terms of mics and stuff for an interview setting, I have invested in a nice wireless mic set up. He has invested in a crane. I have invested in a cinematic dolly. He has invested in a smaller slider. I have invested in a nice flat kit. He has bought the C-stands for the flat kit. So basically either of us lands a project, the other one can come on board as a worker for the other company and we can always pull all the gear together to get the project accomplished and people would just be paid based on their capacity on the project and the gear that they bring into the project to get the project done. My other friend on Survivor, Kurt, because his area is sound, he has invested heavily in sound, so he has bought the boom mic. He has his recorders, field recorders, his mixers, his stuff like that, so he invest in the sound part of things, so he can just jump in either one of our crews, and always we know we have a well rounded production team that can go out and handle small projects (Casimir, lines 540-552).

Local filmmakers who work with these foreign film producers tend to have more significant collaborations than those who do not. Interviewee No.49 said that it is a popular
belief around the island that professional interest in local film and video production rose since the island’s engagement with Pirates of the Caribbean and Pirate Master. Moreover, Interviewees Nos. 19, 24, and 44 commented that over the past eight years, local educators and cultural workers have noticed a marked increase in students who show interest in film and video production as a career. They even directly attributed the burgeoning local film industry of music videos, short-dramas, and documentaries partly to the population’s increasing exposure to foreign film producers who continue to select the island as the place to produce their films. Interviewee No. 19, a Ministry of Education official stated:

I think young people are starting to realize that they can if they wished to build careers in film. That it is not beyond them; that they can become actors, that they can get into production and in fact I don't know if anybody told you but recently in the past two to three years tons of young people are into production. That’s what they do. Some of them are trying to make a living out of it. They go around, they film local productions for Marpin [the local cable company], they film music videos. We have a music video industry now, so I think they are starting to realize that this is something they could actually get involved in (Durand, lines 57-62).

The new film culture pervading the country within the last half-decade has also produced an umbrella association of filmmakers and videographers on the island called the Audiovisual Association of Dominica (AAD). In an April 22, 2013 press release by the president of AAD, the organization outlined its mission “to promote and support the growth of professionals and businesses in Dominica’s audiovisual sector.” The AAD is not simply a loose grouping of local filmmakers, but a legally registered entity and a member of the Dominican Coalition of Service
Industries (DCSI), the local chapter of a regional grouping of service providers in the region funded by CARICOM member countries.

Although some of the island’s veteran filmmakers appeared cynical about the success of the AAD, the more recent entrants to the industry, most with experiences working with foreign filmmakers, were excited about the formation of the organization. The AAD has opened membership to anyone with interest in developing a local film industry, a policy that has helped increase its appeal and inspire many young persons involved in film and video production on the island. The former film commissioner, who currently serves as the association’s Vice-President, noted that the formation of the AAD resulted directly from the work of the Dominica Film Commission and the island’s interactions with foreign film producers and other film commissions in the Caribbean:

We started what was called CAN. Caribbean Audiovisual Network, which started off as, the film commissioners got together with contact people in each country, film people in each country to set up this thing. It was felt at the time that they needed this organization like an umbrella organization where national audiovisual companies would be registered with them, so if anything happened or is happening on the ground, you can inform say ADD, our Audiovisual Association of Dominica, that there is this project going on, then maybe we can do a coproduction treaty with another country and that kind of thing. Out of that, the film commissioners decided they needed to come together as a group as a well and we've had several meetings, but again it was who was appointed to spearhead it, so you find that the thing falls along by the wayside and everybody gets involved in what they are doing and it doesn't get it off the ground, but it is important that the contact with
the Caribbean film commissioners be kept, because it is a very important contact (Bully, lines 562-572).

Public pundits are hopeful that the AAD will address some of the weaknesses associated with the island’s negotiations with and accommodations of foreign film productions. Media workers participating in the focus group expected the organization to lobby for national policies that encourage the development of an indigenous film industry. Already, in its short existence, the AAD has organized formal training for local filmmakers in script development and music video production.

Large-scale foreign film productions on the island have also contributed positively to other aspects of local development. For instance, they have facilitated temporary improvements in local infrastructure, although elite private interests were the ones most benefiting from them. Interviewee No.11 told me that as a condition for accommodating non-residents attached to the hosting of Pirates of the Caribbean, the film producers required local hotels to undertake upgrades. He added that in some cases these were slight, but in others they were quite significant:

BERNARD: So some hotels anticipating that business did some upgrades?
BULLY: Oh yes, all of them upgraded. All of them put in internet, and so that was a major coup. Okay, so we got our rooms upgraded, then we went to guest houses and then we went to apartments, ok, so like apartments at Portsmouth (Bully, lines 375-378).

Local Philanthropy

When these foreign film producers use the island, fragmented philanthropic opportunities sometimes emerge that benefit many worthy local causes. Although beneficial, these
spontaneous donations often are sporadic and impulsive and sometimes do not align with local priorities. These philanthropic actions usually unfold out of individual experiences by non-resident members of the cast or crew. A local newspaper report noted that after camping out at sea to witness turtle hatching, Martin Kleeba, one of the actors of the Pirates of the Caribbean, financially adopted 4 turtles at the ROSTI Sea Turtle Project. Mostly, the foreign talent and crew develop social relationships with a few locals. Based on these relationships they sometimes make unsolicited gifts to these individuals. Also, from their actions ordinary citizens not directly involved in the film sometimes benefit as well. A little-known local artist explained his encounter with the star of the Pirates of the Caribbean film series:

And one day Johnny Depp came there. I didn't know it was him. I was there making a wall, and he come there and he had a wrap around him and we started to talk, and then my music was giving me some little problem, so he buy a set for me (Frederick, lines 37-39).

Some of the donations by the local cast and crew go unreported, but Interviewee No.15 recalled that following the shooting of the Pirate Master, the film producers reportedly made a donation of two pallets of books to the island. According to participants of the Soufriere focus group, the T.V. producers also left a beacon for the local fishermen as a show of their gratitude for their cooperation during production:

PARTICIPANT B: I think that was one of the negotiations where they say they going to need a beacon, because fishermen say when they were out there that is one of their references if they can see, like when they fishing in Scotts Head. So they put a beacon there, but it was way too bright and they had to shield it. It was too much light.

BERNARD: They left the beacon for which fishermen?
PARTICIPANT B: The local fishermen.

BERNARD: Pirates donated it to them?

PARTICIPANT B: Yeah, during their shooting man, yeah, yeah, but they put a beacon there for the fishermen.

BERNARD: It is still there?

PARTICIPANT B: It is still there (Soufriere Focus Group, lines 718-732).

**Impact on Economic Performance**

Generally, poor data collection and the absence of any procedure for assessing these productions leave policymakers drawing general assumptions of the contributions of these productions to the local economy. All policymakers interviewed for this research acknowledged positive economic impacts of Pirates of the Caribbean, although 57% felt that they were too short and that the island did not sufficiently exploit the opportunities that hosting the production of the film presented. The production of Pirates of the Caribbean is a rarity, since some figures, though disputable in some cases, are available to allow for a more concrete analysis of its local impact. According to the film’s executives, the production had 500 casts and crew in 80 different properties around the island. It also employed 150 local drivers and some 200 local extras.

Many respondents, such as Interviewee No.33, highlighted the island’s experience with Pirates of the Caribbean is instructive for reviewing local legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks relating to film production. Additionally, the more exposed that locals were to these foreign productions, the more insistent they were about the need for changes to local laws and regulations that would allow the island to reap greater benefits from them. Local respondents who had worked on three or more foreign films shot on the island were significantly more
knowledgeable about the subject of the research, contributing to 45 different codes. Also, those who had worked only on Pirates of the Caribbean provided responses that matched 19 different codes, pointing to the significance of that particular production. Interviewee No.2 noted that the ignorance of international film production standards led locals to overstate the benefits of these productions to the island:

Well, the truth is my experience in movie business in Dominica and I see it as a glory days was Orchid House and Pirates of the Caribbean was good, because I know a lot of people made some money, good money, some of them are really satisfied with, but I know a lot of Dominicans when they found out the truth they realized they were taken for a ride, and I know it too, but I must say that we have a little saying eat little and live long (O’Brien, lines 397-401).

Although these foreign film productions tend to provide real temporal benefits to host territories, especially in terms of short-term employment and wages they do come with a range of negative implications. The interview subjects who did not receive any direct financial benefit from these productions were more likely to point out these negative impacts than those who received some monetary reward. Of those mentioning at least one major problem with the island’s accommodation of these films, 77% had never had a paid position on these productions.

Interviewee No.23 identified the main gripe with these foreign film productions that shot on the island, stating that they tended to have very little impact on the long-term improvement or development of the local communities that they use. Participants of three of the study’s five focus groups unanimously complained that many leaders in the communities that hosted the actual shooting of these productions felt somewhat betrayed, since most of the benefits accrued at the national level, with elites outside the communities benefiting the most and villagers the
least. Community development workers employed by the government also expressed concern over the minor benefits derived by the rural communities that actually hosted these productions:

BERNARD: Who do you think made the most money?

PARTICIPANT F: The hotels, the taxi drivers.

PARTICIPANT A: The people who had the rentals for the properties.

BERNARD: Who made the least money?

PARTICIPANT B: The community!

BERNARD: When you say the communities, who?

PARTICIPANT E: The Councils, because I don't think they negotiated. You know something, I suspect they didn't say, ok, how much it would cost for them to use that or whatever, you know. They just said ok, I am giving you this and you get a thousand dollars and you say oh, you get a thousand dollars, even if it was not negotiated.

BERNARD: Who was taking the most risks?

MULTIPLE PARTICIPANTS: The community (Community Development Workers Focus Group, lines 253-264)!

Interviewees Nos. 23, 39, 43, and 50 separately expressed similar sentiments.

**Transparency and Public Information**

The Government of Dominica normally keeps its agreements and some of its key transactions with foreign, big-budget film producers highly confidential. Both foreign film producers and local, high-level government officials honor this code of secrecy years after, especially on matters relating to incentives and concessions. Public officials interviewed for this study consistently appeared uncomfortable about sharing that type of information and were
mostly reticent on crucial details of the state’s agreements with these film productions.

None of the government agencies that are normally authorized to disclose governmental information to the public were willing or able to provide any documented evidence of any transactions between the state and these foreign film producers. Moreover, despite thoroughly searching both the premier online local newspaper and the most widely read local newspaper in print, I found no references to any incentives or concessions that the government gave to any foreign film production. Additionally, online articles based on production notes that reflected the experiences of the film executives, cast, and crew of Pirates of the Caribbean who worked on the island were no different. Although they referenced a range of trivial challenges that the production team faced on the island, they were mute on concessions granted by the Dominican Government.

I also found that this enigmatic privacy associated with critical transactions of public goods created problems during consultations with local stakeholders that the government lobbied to support these projects. Most community leaders with whom I spoke expressed concern about the lack of transparency and accountability of foreign film producers during their engagement with rural populations and institutions. They saw this as a threat to local democracy and justice, since the state has consistently indicated that it is either unable or unwilling to mediate on behalf of the weaker parties subjected to these relationships. For instance, many key persons involved in the negotiations with the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean and popular news personalities were either ignorant of the overall budgets of the films or shocked at the figures when told. Media workers complained that they were shut out from access to information about the production of Pirates of the Caribbean on the island:

BERNARD: You all had talk shows and so on about it, right?
PARTICIPANT B: No!

PARTICIPANT C: I don't recall us having anything.

PARTICIPANT B: This is exactly the point I am making.

PARTICIPANT C: It was very minimal. I mean reporting on the film industry was just humor.

PARTICIPANT B: To me it does not happen like it happens in other countries. That it is a huge deal and the media people are part of it, there is so much hype over there and so many news items. Here, it is completely removed.

PARTICIPANT A: But although on the streets people knew what was happening.

PARTICIPANT B: People knew what was going on, because people who were working on these films would talk about their experiences (Media Workers Focus Group, lines 110-119).

Consequently, key public institutions vested with legislative and regulatory powers to protect the public’s interest routinely remain in the dark, even when these film production activities encroach on their jurisdictions, but it is not only the secrecy of the agreements defining them that creates problems for local authorities and the public, but also their modes of enactment. For instance, Interviewee No.12 explained that these foreign film projects usually demand local services in a much more contracted timeframe than usual, which invariably compromises the functionality and integrity of some established local processes and procedures:

BERNARD: So in working with them what was the most challenging thing for you?
SORHAINDO: The time schedules, trying to meet the schedules. There were a lot of odd times, weekends; a lot of it was last minute we did not have that much long planning period
BERNARD: Why was that?
SORHAINDO: They came and they wanted things now, now, because crews were coming up, things had to be in place, so a lot of things were out of my control (Sorhaindo, lines 66-71).

Challenges to Public Accountability and Systems of Local Governance

In their efforts to maximize the benefits of using satellite locations in developing countries, big-budget, foreign film producers normally adopt extraordinary practices that have the potential to compromise or destabilize local institutions and systems with the authority to regulate or supervise them. Their business practices are particularly tasking on public accountability systems in SIDS, since these countries usually have records of weak enforcement, and even when they are vigilant, local public accountability systems usually do not have the adequate resources to meet their mandates.

Dominica’s case epitomizes this phenomenon. Interview respondents provided 26 nodal points that highlighted activities of these film productions, which threatened or undermined systems of local governance. Interestingly, the more experience that interviewees had with these foreign film productions, the more likely they were to point out this problem, although those who only worked on Pirates of the Caribbean were also likely to point it out as well (see Figure 5).

Multiple respondents indicated that on every occasion the island hosted a major foreign film production, public accountability or the public good was either undermined or weakened. The cases for which they provided direct evidence mostly related to the production of Pirates of the Caribbean II and III and the Pirate Master television series: understandably so, since not only are these the two most recent of the larger productions undertaken on the island, but they are also...
the best documented. From the data, I found at least six cases in which either the requirements or the activities of these foreign film productions placed considerable pressure on the functionality of local governance or the capacity of public institutions to serve the public’s interest.

**Figure 5: Interviewees’ Exposure to Foreign Films and Challenge to Governance**

These were the cases that I found best exemplified the practice: the dysfunction of the Kalinago Council over divisions on the Kalinagos’ cooperation with Pirates of the Caribbean, the fracture of the Dominica Taxi Association, the cooption of the film commissioner and state institutions, the incitation of narratives about missed opportunities from the production of Pirates of the Caribbean I, the pressure exerted on the Indian River Tour Guides Association, and the recruitment of a power of attorney with direct access to the Prime Minister’s office.

The Kalinago Council is one of the most independent branches of local government in Dominica. It represents the interests of an estimated 3000 Kalinagos residing mostly in
reservation prescribed by national legislation. Originally known as Caribs, the Kalinagos recently agreed on a name change, noting that the term Carib is a Eurocentric construction with no authentic significance to their history or identity. During the shooting of Pirates of the Caribbean II and III, the Kalinago Council was at the center of a national controversy that pitted its chief, Charles Williams, against central government, Disney, and almost every resident promoting foreign film production on the island.

Chief Williams reported that recognizing the sensitivity of a particular scene in the move, the film producers had requested a special audience with him. After the filmmakers apprised him of the nature of the scene in question, the Kalinago Chief complained that it perpetuated the myth that the indigenous Indians of the region were cannibals, despite no historical evidence to substantiate such claims. He believed that it was ignominious for any of his people to participate in any type of fictional representation of this myth, arguing that even today this stigma is regularly used to deride his people. He complained, “People call us savage cannibals and say you used to eat people; and it is a stigma that we have been living [with] from all those years, that is still active and alive and strong” (as cited in “Film row over Pirates 'cannibals,'” 2005).

When the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest refused Chief Williams’ demands that they remove or redact that section of the script, he took his objections to the media, apparently without the full support of his Council. Not only did the issue create a national firestorm, but it also attracted the attention of the international press. The Guardian ran a story that reported Chief Williams’ conclusion of his meeting with the Disney producers as “there is a strong element of cannibalism in the script which cannot be removed” (as cited in “Cannibals' round on Disney film,” 2005). The Los Angeles Times also ran a feature story that explained the chief’s position, which argued that despite the film being fictional, “it draws on
history” (Williams, 2005).

The BBC also took up the story, reporting that the Kalinago Chief had called on his people to boycott the production of Pirates of the Caribbean II and III on the island. The BBC Caribbean news desk reported Chief Williams complaining that “Disney has portrayed the Caribs as savage cannibals, a myth the community has long sought to dispel (“Dominican Caribs in 'Pirates' row,” 2005).

Interviewee Nos. 23 and 43 noted that most of the other Kalinago councilors did not agree with the chief’s position and the Kalinago people seemed almost evenly split on the issue, between those who were uncompromising in the fight against the cannibalism myth that had plagued their representation for so long, and those who believed that it was irresponsible to reject the direct economic opportunities that the film production promised to the poorest community on the island. According to the media workers who participated in the focus group discussion, the majority of the local population considered Chief Williams’ argument an impetuous quibble. Interviewee No.36, a budding journalist at the time, recalled the many callers to radio talk shows expressing annoyance at the Chief’s position:

BERNARD: What was the public’s reaction to that conflict?

FRANCIS: Get over it. It's not a big deal. It's just a movie. If the people wanted to appear in the movie then let them make their money. People were more irritated at the Carib chief than at the people from Pirates. People were of the view that we were getting money from it, so just take it (Francis, lines 63-66).

Interviewee No.43 believed the lines were not so clearly drawn within the Kalinago Territory. He said that those who were eager for the temporary financial benefits were as vocal as those who were strident on the need to protect the cultural integrity of the Kalinago people.
Interviewee No.23, one of the councilors who attended meetings with the film producers and who was also the Kalinago Chief at the time of my data collection, had no major issue with the scene:

BERNARD: How did the Kalinagos handle the cannibalism issue?

JOSEPH: Well, some residents saw this as any opportunity to make money, so they paid no attention to the whole thing.

BERNARD: Because of the high levels of poverty in the community?

JOSEPH: Yeah, and so the whole thing about whether it perpetuated the notion of cannibalism it was neither here nor there for them, because in their own thinking the body paint and everything else wasn't particularly what could be consider Kalinago body paint. It was just paint and you know it is more less as a disguise, so nobody would be recognizing anything else, and if that is what the people who were making the film wanted then so be it. I mean I saw Pirates of the Caribbean II and III and couldn't identify our people. I mean you have to look at them very closely, because I know them I maybe can identify one or two, but overall you could hardly identify the person anyway (Joseph, lines 105-115).

In an April 2005 article, the Los Angeles Times may have captured the sentiments of the local Kalinagos who participated in the film and most of the wider public when it wrote, “For the locals being paid almost $100 a day to give the film a more authentic backdrop, there is tolerance for literary license” (Williams, 2005). Actually, according to the DFC report, the Kalinagos received about US$73 per day, which was considerably better than wages paid to most local skilled workers and laborers. Most respondents were uncertain as to whether or not the international publicity of the impasse contributed to this inconsistency in wages, but I found it
notable, especially as 71% of the 130 local extras were Kalinagos.

The research data produced an alternative perspective from a Kalinago cultural activist who sat on the Council then and sits on it now. One of the nationally respected curators of Kalinago cultural art forms, Prosper Paris, had a diametrically opposing view on the cannibalism conflict:

PARIS: I pulled myself from that. I never took part in Disney. I never took part in the film and that was the reason why, because I saw that it would be a political conflict.

BERNARD: So even you as one of the most iconic Kalinago personalities decided that you were not going to be part of it?

PARIS: And even the key members of the cultural groups here who would understand the cultural identity of the Kalinago people did not participate.

BERNARD: And that was an ideological, political position that you were taking?

PARIS: Yeah, political position! It is our right as a people that we would not promote cannibalism. It is what you call the modern times pay back, and we know better than that this time, and that was the position of the Chief at the time, and not only that but also asking financial compensation, you know [sucks teeth in disgust].

BERNARD: So you felt that it was even wrong to take compensation for doing that?

PARIS: Yeah, it was almost like a prostitute kind of thing, because you cannot say it is wrong but if you give me money it is right. So to that end you better stay off from it Now that the money finished the decision still haunts people. Some people don't care. They just take the money; they don't care (Paris, lines 40-55).

It was not the first time that the chief and his fellow councilors were at loggerheads, nor was his position on Pirates of the Caribbean the only issue of contention among them, but their
differing positions on the film project sent the Kalinago councilors in a whirlwind of public salvos against each other that mostly placed the chief on the defensive threatening legal action against his main accusers (Bique, 2005). According to a local newspaper report, at the height of the public row, four out of the six members of the Council filed a no confidence motion against the chief (Bique, 2005, July 15). The news story stated that one of the main accusations leveled against Chief Williams was that he had written a letter to the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean advising them that the Council would be withdrawing the participation of the Kalinago people from the production of the film (Bique, 2005, February 26).

Shermain Bique, the journalist covering the story for The Chronicle, wrote of the mounting national pressure for the Kalinagos to abandon their protest. Local news stories featured the chief on the back foot from multiple charges of impropriety and the Council on the brink of implosion. Bique reported that eventually Chief Williams denied accusations that he wrote an insolent letter to Disney executives. The Kalinago Chief countered with an official letter to the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean committing the participation of the indigenous Kalinagos. Indeed, the local media had begun predicting the dissolution of the Council and the imminent election of a new Kalinago Chief (Bique, 2005, July 15).

Interviewee No.43 noted that although Chief Williams withdrew his protest and the impasse abated publicly, privately the Council remained dysfunctional for years after. Deep-seated resentment and anger over the conflict simmered and councilors were mostly unable to engage in any substantial representation that advanced the interest of the Kalinago people:

PARIS: Pirates of the Caribbean from the time it started has created a division in the territory which still hasn't been sorted out yet. It caused the Kalinago Council to be divided for five years of its operation.
BERNARD: You are serious?

PARIS: Yeah, so that there were different opinions and different lines taken by certain people within the Kalinago Council and they never agreed and some were pro Pirates of the Caribbean and some were for it financially and the others were against it, not getting what they wanted and piggybacking on a very legitimate cause, which was the cannibal issue that Pirates of the Caribbean was going to highlight within the film itself. So the impact was very negative when it comes to politics and the identity and the rights of indigenous people. On the other end it was very financially beneficial to some of the committee members, because almost 200 people were involved as extras, but Disney fell out with the authority here because they couldn't meet the demands which we made (Paris, lines 3-15).

Interviewee No.43 added that broken from the conflict, the Kalinago Council made weak representation to central government on evolving national development programs, including a controversial housing project for the reservation. He noted that the strident chief, respected nationally for his resolute defense of the rights of his people, was suddenly impotent:

It affected not just his tenure, but the whole Council's tenure, because at that time they spent most of the time on radio attacking each other. Other things add up to that, but that was the base of the trouble, and you had a tug of war. They couldn’t agree on anything. A new housing program by the Venezuelan government was just in the pipeline, where people had to stand and take decisions for their land and other rights and you had that overshadowing things, and because the Council was split, it couldn't meet to take very, very important decisions (Paris, lines 114-119).

The production of the Pirates of the Caribbean I and II was also responsible for major
changes to the organization of taxi and bus operators on the island and the way in which the island provided transportation services to cruise ship passengers. According to taxi drivers participating in one of the study’s focus group discussions, when the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean sought to meet its transportation needs on the island, it bypassed all of the taxi associations on the island and contracted the island’s premier auto exporter to meet its needs. With fleets of new vehicles under his ownership, an independent hire-purchase facility, and direct authority over recruitment, the independent contractor recruited unemployed locals as drivers. Taxi operators reported that the vehicle importer also provided individual contracts to existing taxi and bus drivers, who ignored their normal obligations to their associations.

Interviewee No.21 stated that the production was a significant contributor to the fracturing of the Dominica Taxi Association (DTA), the largest formal grouping of taxi operators on the island. He said that faced with sporadic income due to declining cruise ship arrivals and lured by the prospects of higher-than-usual earnings from the production of Pirates of the Caribbean, many members the DTA abandoned it, leaving the organization struggling to meet its contractual obligations to the cruise industry. The DTA treasurer added that in response to the exodus of its members, the organization transformed its structure from a cooperative type of operation to that of a company and launched independent contracts for its members:

We had to rethink the whole question of membership: somebody can be a member and not necessarily do tours, the guy is a member but he is not just in cruise industry. He is a member of the association, but he is not interested in the cruise industry. He will pay his dues. He will do that, but you are not interested in giving him work, so that has changed. As I said the contracts, we had to do the contracts, because practically we have to be able to provide the transportation, so we moved to contracts, and what has happened is that a
lot of the guys are on their own now, looking for their own business as I said, providing services to individual cruise passengers and other tourist on the island. One of the consequences of that is the association has changed, in that you have person who are doing the organized tours and other persons who are not, where before almost everybody would have to come in and would have to play their part in the organize tour to benefit from the private tours (Esprit, lines 82-91).

The island’s engagement with the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean also affected some of public institutions. From its formation, the office of the local film commissioner seemed mired in confusion over its role in facilitating private interests and its responsibility to protect the public’s interest when accommodating foreign film productions. Interviewee No.3 noted that anticipating personal financial benefits that his local businesses could earn if the island hosted the production of Pirates of the Caribbean II, a private hotelier who was also a high-ranking government official, provided the initial funds for the NDC to secure the services of the person who would eventually serve as the local film commissioner:

BERNARD: So what was in it for you then, it was just pro bono?
BULLY: Well, it was a lot of pro bono, but when I started to [work] if I did work I got paid for the work I did, so they paid me.
BERNARD: Did you have a contract with them or was it just an understanding?
BULLY: It was an understanding, but we had done a proposal. Remember based on the funding, we had done a proposal to get some money, so I got like little tranches. That's what they did.
BERNARD: That came under the NDC’s budget?
BULLY: Yes, it came under it. NDC sourced the funds from the private sector that the
friend told me about and then they would disburse it accordingly.

BERNARD: So some private sector interest decided to sponsor that work?

BULLY: Yes, yes.

By the time the production of Pirate Master came to the island two years later, the local film commissioner was on special contract with the government and represented the island at major international film trade shows, including those by the Association of Film Commissioners International. According to Bully (Interviewee No.3), she also implemented a number of domestic policies concerning filmmaking on the island and also served as one of the government’s key negotiators with Mark Burnett productions for shooting the Pirate Master TV series on the island. Interviewee No.48 lamented the fact that notwithstanding her public duties and obligations, Bully accepted a job as a location supervisor on the production while still holding the position of Film Commissioner:

BERNARD: Who was the local representative for Red Sky Night?

CASIMIR: I think, that is another thing, Anita Bully, became locations manager on Pirate Master, which is...

BERNARD: While she was the film commissioner?

CASIMIR: Yeah, at the same time being film commissioner, which I think honestly is like, it's a bit, how should I say it, like kind of conflict of interest, you know. I mean at the same time you are negotiating as film commissioner for films coming in but then you are still trying to get the biggest job available as a local, you know.

BERNARD: Did anybody bring that up as an issue?

CASIMIR: I mean, it has been mentioned. I know it has been mentioned.

BERNARD: At the time did that surfaced as an issue?
CASIMIR: No, no, I don't even think it surfaced as issue.

Interviewee No.15 added that even when he openly raised the issue, no public authority followed up his complaint about the possible conflict of interest issues associated with that practice:

BERNARD: Did anybody question that? Any public outcry?

JOHNSON: Nah! I did [raising eyebrows]! I was very outspoken about it (Johnson, lines 430-432).

When I asked her about it, the local film commissioner denied any conflict of issues related to her direct employment on the production. She argued that it was necessary for her to have these two paid roles for ensuring the successful completion of the project, because the compensation for her contract with the NDC was insufficient for supporting the work required from her position during the production:

BULLY: I was getting an honorarium, ok, so and their thing to me was if I get a job then I can work on the project.

BERNARD: That's NDC?

BULLY: NDC, yeah, ok, so I can make money that way. So I would, ok, so I had to go to them and say look we want a location manager, can I be a location manager?

BERNARD: NDC?

BULLY: NDC and they gave permission. So it is also to their interest, because then I can look after not only the producer’s behalf but the country's behalf, because I would not allow them to do anything they are not supposed to do.

BERNARD: So before you continue, was that arrangement solely because of a lack of resources?
BULLY: They had no resources to pay me a proper salary. They had no resources ok, and they were just giving me a little, you know. If I was working two days consultancy that was what they were paying me a month, you know, it was, you know, it was worth their while for me to still do their work and be getting a little benefit from it.

BERNARD: How did Pirate Master see that arrangement?

BULLY: Oh, they wanted it, because they wanted somebody who could negotiate with government on their behalf. You see it is very important to them (Bully, lines 681-697).

Foreign film producers who use the island as a location strategically secure the services of local elites with the potential to place the objectives of their productions at the fore and justify the complicity of public institutions vested with the authority to protect the public good. Fifty-six percent of those who identified legal and regulatory issues associated with these projects were public officers with a supervisory function, who spoke about the extraordinary means that public entities had to take to legally accommodate the requests of these productions.

When the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean set up Second Mate Productions Inc. to engage the island as a site for producing films II and III of the franchise, they contracted the services of a local legal firm with unusually strong ties to the office of the Prime Minister. The proprietor of the legal firm, Alick Lawrence, was also a legal consultant to the Office of the Prime Minister, directly advising Cabinet on strategies to develop the island’s geothermal energy, among other high-profile matters (Monticelli, 2006). Around the same time, as the power of attorney to Second Mate Productions Inc., Lawrence’s law firm was also representing the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean on critical legal and regulatory matters. Interviewee No.51 stated that some of these matters involved exceptional petitions to the state for facilitating the production on the island.
The impasse involving the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean, government officials and the Indian River Tour Guide Association over the use of the Indian River for the production of the film indicates that the government has the tendency to leverage the state’s regulatory powers and institutional resources in favor of foreign film producers during critical moments of negotiations with local interests. The Indian River, which flows into the Caribbean Sea, is one of the most visited tourist destinations on the island. Dozens of residents in the town of Portsmouth and surroundings rely on tourist traffic on the river for their source of livelihood. Members of the Indian River Tour Guides Association provide tours to tourists regularly at a price of EC$20-EC$25. Members of the association elect an executive that manages tour operations on the river.

For the production of Dead Man’s Chest on the island, the filmmakers needed exclusive access to the river for an extended period, and local authorities needed to secure the support of the tour guides whose boats regularly ply the river. The president of the association, Andrew O’Brien noted that both the government and the filmmakers did not intend to adequately compensate the tour guides for using the river. Empowered by extensive experience working with large film productions: he worked on two previous feature films shot on the island, the Orchid House and the Seventh Sign, and also had regional experience working with Eclipse Fiction based in Martinique, O’Brien tabled a number of conditions to adequately compensate the members of his association, the most critical component of which was the insistence on the payment of loss wages:

O’BRIEN. So they play hardball. They play hardball until when I think the government had a big influence in it.

BERNARD: How you knew that?

O"BRIEN: I knew because the response that was coming back, because it got as far as to
even they mentioned that the coast guard was willing to come and do it for them on the Indian River, and that we are talking about 3, 4 days before countdown eh, before the main day. I stood up and I told them if the coast guard is going to come to work with you all on the Indian River we, the Indian River tour guides will make sure that we bring down the media and we will let the world know what is going on, on the Indian River. Now they didn't want that to happen.

BERNARD: Pirates people?

O’BRIEN: No, they didn't want that to reach that far, you dig, because couple times a few of them were coming to check the site or so, we speaking to them, so it look like they brought back the information and the day before the people shoot, you know, the day before they film I think or the morning before, that's when they agreed to pay us our price you know, for we not operating on the River that day, you understand (O’Brien, lines 228-241).

O’Brien noted that several of the local agents working with the film production company made several attempts to divide the association’s members and were it not for the bond between the leadership and the membership, the negotiating power of the association would have cracked:

BERNARD: What do you think would have happened if you didn't have an Indian River Tour Guides Association?

O'BRIEN: I think they would have come and buy individuals, but it would still be chaos, well it would not really be chaos, and you know when you don't know better, before a man give you a ten cents when you supposed to get 25 cents, because you are used to getting 5 cents you are happy, you understand, because a few, a couple of other guys and myself we knew better, we rally our guys, you understand.
BERNARD: Everybody was unanimous. Everybody was in support.

O’BRIEN: Yeah, they support us, because some fellas checking: what? Boy, I well want my little change, I myself I in that you know. We tell them no, there is more. There is a bigger picture Just stick as a force and fellas did that and we decided we are not backing down (O’Brien, lines 365-374).

Referencing experiences with the negotiations for the use of the Indian River and the Ti Tou Gorge during the production of Pirates of the Caribbean, the film commissioner noted in her report that the government should make it a policy to financially compensate tour guides whenever these types of incidents arise in the future.

Less directly, but no less significant, was the pressure placed on policymakers from popular local sentiment that the country had done something wrong to have missed out on the hosting of Pirates of the Caribbean I, which was shot in the sister Caribbean island of St. Vincent. As media workers noted in the focus group discussions, during the marketing of the film’s premier, debates circulated in the local public sphere, especially on radio talk-shows about the economic losses that the country had suffered from missing out on the hosting of the film. When news surfaced about the possibility of the making of another film in the franchise, local policymakers became obsessive about securing its production within Dominican borders. Participant C of the Taxi Association Focus Group added that the situation became even more desperate when it emerged in the public sphere that a representative of the film had visited the island and had indicated interest in using the island to produce the first film, but the relevant authorities had not followed up sufficiently:

The original Pirates I didn't come to Dominica quote unquote because of the laziness or not wanting to do it by the PS who was in charge at the time, right. Everybody bitched
about it. Everybody quarreled, oh Pirates came and because we didn't go to the thing we
lost Pirates. Pirates came back to do part two, there is no way that anybody in
government was going to let it escape. There is no way (Taxi Associations Focus Group,
lines 553-557).

Public commentators and political pundits juxtaposed debates over the loss of Pirates of
the Caribbean I with other narratives of previous cases in which foreign investment escaped the
island to develop convincing arguments for the island’s declining economic performance.
Participant B of the focus group with media workers noted that these political debates fueled
widespread disenchantment that influenced the government to pull all stops to get the second
film into the island: public administrators knew it whether or not they had received an advisory
on the matter:

I think what caused a lot of the talk is that Dominica had been struggling to get that
movie for a while so I think the conversation was a lot about that. So finally, we got it
there was a lot of talk of we messed up several times before so you know there was
pressure on the government, on the policy makers to get this done because it had slipped
through Dominica’s hands before (Media Workers Focus Group, lines 120-124).

Interviewee No. 51 explained that the government was therefore willing to bend over
backwards to accommodate the producers, often subverting the long-term interest of the country
in favor of political expediency and conspicuously short-term tangible results:

Yes, I think the expectation, the concessions were I preface, I started out by saying there
was a lot of pressure, national pride at stake that I think overriding that would have been
in my opinion, my recollection, my sense, my guts, nobody said that in a letter to me or in
a memo, but my feeling, the vibes around us was it is national pride, national spirit to have this in Dominica (Philbert, lines 257-260).

Incentives and Concessions

Although hosting foreign, big-budget Hollywood-style film productions brings some unquestionable benefits to SIDS countries, it also presents a wide range of serious challenges and losses. Interviewee No.15 observed, “So although the man on the ground might be making a little bit of money here and there, the country itself does not benefit (Johnson, lines 36-37).

Interviewee No.47 explained that when foreign film producers pitch their projects to the authorities in these SIDS locations, they forcefully drive home the need for fiscal concessions not merely as a valued local contribution for gaining a competitive advantage, but as a de facto expectation of the global film industry (Langlais, lines 120-122); therefore, as the island increasingly engaged with foreign, big-budget film producers on the possibilities of using the island as a location, the Hollywood mantra of the necessity of providing these projects with unusual fiscal concessions became increasingly inculcated into the economic logic of local policymakers, forcing public administrators to manipulate local regulatory frameworks. Interviewee No.3 outlined the exceptional levels to which public officers went to provide a rebate to the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean:

BERNARD: What did Dominica give, as Langlais says, you have to give?

BULLY: You have to give, ok, what we did, we found a way to waive the GCT, so we give them back the 15%. It was, I mean we really had to find a way. We had to go within the law and that was where Michael Fadel. Michael Fadel was excellent himself, and the woman from the tax office, the GCT office, they looked at the law, because remember
they had just passed the financial act and because of IMF they couldn't waive, they couldn't waive any fees. You had to pay fees, so they had to then get the companies registered as a exporting company so you get the refund from your GCT because the goods are being exported, so of course the film is being exported so therefore it was treated, so they found that loophole within the system so that they could then get a refund. What they call a rebate of 15%, but they did it only, not for all the sectors (Bully, lines 796-805).

Interviewee No.51, one of the government’s lead negotiators with Pirates of the Caribbean, noted that the film made unusual and significant demands of the government:

Well, the negotiations from our standpoint was public sector, nothing could happen unless there was agreement with the government for a lot of things to be waived and concessions and facilitation, special arrangements put in place. So there is no question they had to be government driven, public sector driven (Philbert, lines 68-70).

Ultimately, the government was so generous to the Pirates of the Caribbean that it even agreed to waive stamp duties for the production. All respondents highlighted the unprecedented aggressiveness of the films’ producers, and Interviewee No.15 questioned the accuracy of framing the exchanges between the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean and the Dominican authorities as negotiations:

Well, basically they just wanted to come in and exploit the island, man. They dictated to hotels. I remember being in a meeting with all the hoteliers in Dominica and the production supervisor looking at them and saying this is what we're going to pay you for your rooms, if you don't like it we will go somewhere else, you know. And that was the attitude. And everybody sat there, you know ...wow. And it is a take it or leave it
situation, and they did the same thing with the government, you know. This is what we want, we want you to wave this tax and we want you to wave that, so there's some bullying when it comes to Hollywood, I got to say (Johnson, lines 43-49).

Both the Head of the NDC and the former film commissioner painted a different picture, noting that the film producers were not so hard-lined. This is how the former film commissioner framed the relationship:

BERNARD: So whatever concession was made by government was voluntary?

BULLY: No, we had to find a way to give them something in return.

BERNARD: So I am asking, did they not ask for something?

BULLY: Well, they asked for a rebate and we found that was the only way we could do was the 15%.

BERNARD: Did they give a number for the rebate or they just left it open to us?

BULLY: They left it open. We told them what we could do and they would come back and we discuss it and come back and we discuss it until it was finally approved (Bully, lines 823-829).

An official communiqué dated February 3, 2005 from the National Development Corporation to Second Mate Productions – Pirates of the Caribbean 2 and 3 disclosed a number of fiscal concessions from the Dominican Government to the film project. Although the author denied my request to unambiguously verify the unsigned document, guarding against accusations of protocol impropriety and breach of confidentiality, he did not discount its contents and even went as far as admitting that they generally represented the support that the government gave to the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean. A number of respondents also provided fragmented information that corroborated much of the document.
According to the official document, Decision #56 by the Cabinet of the Government of Dominica, reached on January 25, 2005, was a detailed response to an application for concessions by Second Mate Productions Inc. The decision granted the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean at least 12 significant fiscal incentives and further concessions for fast tracking government processes and accessing public property and spaces. Any non-resident affiliate, representative or agent of Second Mate Productions Inc. involved in the project qualified for these concessions.

According to official documents, the national government also waived the requirements for work permits for all non-residents working directly or indirectly with Pirates of the Caribbean. None of the non-resident employees working on Pirates of the Caribbean were required to make payments of personal income tax (PAYE); however, Interviewee No.26 confirmed that local employees had to report their income to the Inland Revenue Division and pay the relevant taxes. Such an arrangement is not unusual for foreign direct investment projects in the country; however, in an apparently unprecedented policy move, Cabinet also exempted non-resident workers of Pirates of the Caribbean from making contributions to the Social Security Scheme. Interviewee No.26, a tax expert employed with the government for over two decades, could not identify one previous case in which any company operating on the island was exempted from paying Social Security:

ANTHONY: As far as I know they would be required to pay Social Security, again, unless there is some kind of exemption, but I can tell though I have never seen any concession package that spoke to exemptions from paying Social Security, so as far as I know while there may be an exemption for tax, I have never seen one for social security and if there is none, then it is paying Social Security as normal as I would pay as a
Dominican resident (Anthony, lines 73-77).

BERNARD: So it is not normal for the government to exempt a company from paying Social Security?

ANTHONY: No, no! What you will typically see is the withholding tax might be waived, the corporate tax on the profits, or if it is an individual, the income tax on the profits, you might see stuff like the waiving of VAT on certain imports and that kind of thing, but I have never ever seen one where social security was ever waived, no (Anthony, lines 84-88).

My interview with the Head of the NDC at the time highlighted the tensions surrounding the facilitation of Social Security exemption for non-resident workers on the film. He noted:

PHILBERT: So from my standpoint, Disney was eye-opener in many respects to show us how much we had to examine our processes if we were going to be competitive in this line of work, not just for Dominica but for international. I will give an example: social security payments, we have this law on the books, Disney people were coming in for 5 days or 1 to go back out and so on, the employees working in Dominica on a production yeah, but passing through in a transition operation, under the normal course of the law as I understand it, they would have been required to pay Social Security contributions.

BERNARD: Disney workers?

PHILBERT: I believe so, that is like if you have construction workers passing through and consultants: that was an area that generate some discussion. Does that make sense? These people were going back to America, to Philippines to Bermuda to wherever they exist in the enterprise. What's the likelihood that they would have any needs for benefits under our scheme? And although I understand the rational for it, they were of the view
that said why should we be putting in dollars into something that we know that we are not
going to bear the fruit from, Social Security for instance, for example?

BERNARD: How did you all deal with that Social Security issue?

PHILBERT: I believe under the law exemptions are possible, I believe, and you can confirm that and so we were not averse to accommodate that request (Philbert, lines 100-116).

Additionally, the Government of Dominica also offered Second Mate Productions Inc. and its affiliates a waiver of the corporate tax and the withholding tax, with a cutoff date of December 31, 2005. According to Interviewee No.26, this provision, or different variants of it, is a normal strategy that the Government uses to attract direct foreign investment to the island:

BERNARD: Ok, when we say we are going to exempt a company from corporate tax and withholding tax, what does that mean?

ANTHONY: In the normal setting, the company operates, it has income it has expenses, it may make a profit and that profit is subject to a 30% corporation tax under the Income Tax Act; however, the exemption means that the company may make a profit but they don't pay that tax, and that is something that you find typically given in concessions given to companies as a means of getting them to invest in the country, to the point that you may see no income tax on profit for 5 years or 10 years, but again all of that is subject to the decision of Cabinet. The Withholding Tax is tax that is paid actually by non-residents, so the residents of Dominica pay Income Tax, but the non-residents pay the Withholding Tax (Anthony, lines 57-66).

Another unusual gesture that the Dominican Cabinet made to the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean was an offer to exclude motor vehicles imported just for the production from
registration and license fees. When I asked Interviewee No.26 if it is normal for such companies to be exempted from paying vehicle registration and license fees, he confirmed that such an arrangement would be quite rare, noting:

Not very often, not very often, what I know at the Customs end is that they come in as a temporary importation thing, but they are still required to have the vehicle registered in Dominica, and when they leave through Customs again, the vehicle is taken out of the country that takes care of itself, but as far as I am aware the fees for licensing vehicles are not necessarily waived, no (Anthony, lines 148-153).

Transactional documents show that the Dominican Government also exempted the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean from import duties, consumption taxes, environmental surcharges, and customs service charges relating to the production. The decision also granted the film production free movement of its sea vessels along the Dominican coastline, permitting its mooring from port to port without any port dues or charges. In addition, the film producers received an offer of a 50% discount on all cargo duties and jetty rates on goods that the production imported into the country. The agreement also suspended the quarantine requirements regarding the import permits and charges for importing plants and animals into the country, although it made alternative arrangements to ensure public safety. The Government of Dominica also waived the professional fees for qualified medical personnel working with Pirates of the Caribbean on the island.

Additionally, non-resident employees of Pirates of the Caribbean received exemptions from tax clearance/exit certificates. This was more relief from procedural requirements than it was a fiscal incentive. Normally, the Inland Revenue Division, which collects state taxes, requires persons leaving the island to acquire clearance from it, to ascertain that they do not owe
taxes.

Mostly because the island was not prepared to accommodate the production and partly because of the producers’ insistence on importing all they needed, the local retail sector did not benefit as much as it could have from the shooting of the production on the island. The film’s construction coordinator, Greg Callas, exaggerating the island’s limitations, noted, “Because supplies are so limited on islands like Dominica, we had to bring in everything, like an entire hardware store: every nail, piece of wood, sack of cement and plaster, gallon of paint” (“Shooting in isle of beauty,” 2007). Even when requests for concessions by the foreign film producers clearly undermined the income potential of the country, while only marginally discomfor ting the production, local policymakers acquiesced. Although Dominica is mainly an import tariff economy, the Pirates of the Caribbean’s request for import duty exemption on all their imported foods met no local resistance. Interviewee No.46, a prominent local businessman, expressed regret over this:

Some companies sold more in terms of food products; however, I know they brought in a lot of their own food products, you know, like their sweets and their chocolates, so even when they are living they just give out a whole batch of that, but really and truly should someone be allowed to bring in that type of stuff, I would really say no, but again, as you say, the stronger you are the harder that you are going to push for terms and conditions, and likewise, as much as we want to encourage people to come in we must also have strong people who can deal with these kinds of people. I always say that when it comes to negotiations we always send the wrong people, so we get the wrong end of the deal (Tongue, lines 111-117).

I was able to get an idea of the extent of the island’s losses from that decision by
examining the contents of a single meal by the production team. An online article quoting film executives reported that at a typical breakfast, the cast and crew of Pirates of the Caribbean would devour between “1100 to 1500 eggs, 100 to 160 pounds of bacon, 80 loaves of bread, 50 pounds of sausages, 400 pastries and 10-12 cases of fruit,” (“Shooting in isle of beauty,” 2007) all but a few fruits and vegetables brought in to the island from the United States duty free.

The Restoration of Public Spaces

Local agreements with foreign film producers who use public lands or other such infrastructure usually place conditions on their use. Usually, they require that these producers rehabilitate or enhance them, but always they demand that they at least restore them to their original condition; however, these foreign film producers routinely either ignore these requests entirely or respond to them niggardly, hardly ever satisfying local expectations. Unfortunately, these agreements make no arrangements for independent oversight or arbitration and since the relevant local public institutions have weak systems of monitoring, these breaches in obligation by the foreign film producers went largely unchallenged. I found this particularly troubling, since the Hollywood film producer with whom I spoke highlighted the honoring of contractual agreements a revered rule of international film production. He explained:

If I go somewhere and I've had a bad experience, I never want to go back to that place, but I think that the characteristics of success are that each side fulfills the promise that it makes to the other (Langlais, lines 92-94).

Often it is the most deprived and disenfranchised communities that suffer the most when this happens, since they either provide a gateway to or are the home of the types of paradisiacal and visually breathtaking vistas that the Hollywoodian films often worship and crave.
Interviewee No.50 said this practice exposes these companies’ disregard for the places and the people that they use in their films:

It raises the issue with respect to the social responsibility of filmmakers and their honesty in negotiating with poor communities in using their resources to pursue their objectives. UNESCO may be well placed to take the lead on that conversation and creating an even playing field in this respect (Serrant, lines 68-71).

Interviewee No.39 recalled that in the late eighties, when Tri-Star shot the opening scenes of the feature film, the Seventh Sign in Dominica, it promised the residents of a poverty-stricken village, St. Joseph, that it would fix roads, repair a bridge, renovate a banana sorting depot, and even restore the Catholic cemetery, but the film company did none of these things to the levels initially agreed upon:

Seventh Sign was one of the first major films done and we did not gain as much as we should. In hindsight there should have been a meeting with all key players prior to shooting and proper documentation and due process should have been done (Francis, lines 266-268).

Interviewee No.50 also remembered that even when villagers expressed concern over thousands of pounds of dead fish that the film’s producers had strewn on a main tourist attraction, a beach layered with sparkling volcanic black sand, they assured them of no potential harm, despite conducting no environmental impact assessment study:

BERNARD: That scene with all the dead fish strewn about the beach, what were the local controls to ensure environmental health and ecological preservation?

SERRANT: Not sure what was done if any but giving the longstanding reputation of the environmental lobby in Dominica, I would have been surprised if nothing was done to
ensure all was safe. I recall concerns were raised about the impact and we were assured that they would have had no effect on other aquatic species (Serrant, lines 47-52).

Interviewee No.39 noted that since the days of the Seventh Sign, unknowing local authorities and community leaders give these foreign filmmakers permissive rights over public spaces without adequately securing proper assurances or compensations:

Yeah, I recall villagers asking them about the promise to have Back Street fixed, but it was never done. From what I recall the company was supposed to have repaired the street after filming but that did not happen. It was simply patched and areas where scenes were shot were repaired fully. They also complained about the fact that other bus drivers (out of St. Joe) were also used. And then I remember one of the villagers telling me that "those people" did not come to bars/shops in St. Joe that they only stayed at the hotel (Francis, lines 243-248).

Eight years later, the same thing happened. During production, Pirates of the Caribbean used a number of highly frequented public places. The agreement between the Government of Dominica and Second Mate Productions Inc. expressly permitted the company to use six playing fields around the island as base camps for the production of films II and III in the Pirates of the Caribbean franchise. An internal report of the local transportation coordinator on the production confirmed that the team used playing fields in the communities of Soufriere, Laudat, Portsmouth, Anse Du Me, Vieille Case, and Londonderry.

Interviewee No.51 recalled that when the local agents of the film producers met with the communities to discuss their use of the playing fields the residents expressed deep concern over associative risks and inconveniences, since in most cases the field was their only publicly-shared sporting facility:
Most of the communities were quite content to have assurances that the playing fields would have been restored, in some cases improved at the end of the production and that was music to many of the Councils’ ears because noticing what was going to be associated with it, any damage they were going to improve it and in some instances make it better (Philbert, lines 398-400)

According to the DFC’s report, the national government had agreed to accept EC$60,000 from the film producers for repairing any damage done to these recreational areas as a result of use by the film production. When the shooting of Pirates of the Caribbean climaxed and the production team left the island on June 26, 2005, the producers contracted a local firm to do the repairs (Bully, 2005, p. 6), but the contractor was unsuccessful at returning all the playing fields to their original state. For instance, Participant A of the focus group held in the Prime Minister’s constituency, Vieille Case, noted that the playing field in the village received an enhancement since the Prime Minister incorporated the contribution of the film producers into a financial allocation from central government for rehabilitating the field:

PARTICIPANT A: Well, that's where they had all their equipment. They had trucks. They had their security officers there guarding their equipment. So they had given us a donation towards the playing field for renovation of it.

BERNARD: But there was no formal sort of arrangement with the Council and Pirates on the playing field should be used and how it should be maintained?

PARTICIPANT A: That money was for the use of the playing field, because there was some damage to the playing field from the heavy trucks driving in and out.

BERNARD: Did the Council negotiate that or they just offer it?

PARTICIPANT A: No, no, no! They offered! They offered it to the community.
BERNARD: Has the playing field been renovated back to its original state?

PARTICIPANT A: Yes, it has.

BERNARD: And that the amount of money that you all received was sufficient?

PARTICIPANT A: It was not sufficient, but we accepted it, because some truckers got work and our own people got work, so it was a very good initiative to give back to the community. I think so, the damage done I think we dealt with it (Veille Case Focus Group, lines 66-81).

Another community, one of the poorest on the island, was not as fortunate. The government agreed for Pirates of the Caribbean to provide ECS$20,000 to the Village Council for repair of the community’s playing field, but from the onset the money was insufficient. Participants of the focus group held with villagers of Soufriere noted that the contractor needed additional funds from central government, since the monies provided by the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean were insufficient. Without additional financial support from central government, the Council was unable to repair the damage done to the field by the filmmakers. According to participants at the focus group, compounding the problem of an inadequate budget, the Council also redirected some of the funds to another development project, the completion of the community centre, leaving the playing field currently unusable for major community events:

PARTICIPANT A: All now so we have no playing field. It is a disaster, and I hear that they got a good sum of money, so I don't know where the money went to. So you could ask the Village Council that question: where the money went to, because they got a good sum of money!

BERNARD: What's your take on it?

PARTICIPANT B [Villager Councilor]: My take? Well, at the time the money that was
made available was insufficient to repair the damage that was done to it.

BERNARD: What did they do on the playing field?

PARTICIPANT B: Well, they had tents. They had vehicles and so. The grass was mashed up. They had big tents, a set of big tents. They had all their vehicles, trucks and stuff.

BERNARD: That's the playing field up there [pointing in the direction of the playing field]?

PARTICIPANT A: Yes, that’s the one!

PARTICIPANT B: Because that got mashed up! That's why they used a private company to come back and do a planting session, but the grass that they brought was an old kind of grass and from that the playing field was just messed up, all right (Soufriere Focus Group, lines 28-41).

In preparatory meetings with the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean, the Soufriere Villager Council had cautioned the filmmakers about the dilapidated condition of a main bridge that the producers had intended to use during their production. The Council requested that the film producers repair the bridge if they intended to use. Villagers at the focus group discussion noted that backed by central government and local elites, the film producers ignored their request and instead introduced the bridge to a regular convoy of container trucks and heavy vehicles, the extent of which it had not faced before:

PARTICIPANT B: We even mentioned that for them to undertake that project to redo the bridge: all that too and that was never done, because the bridge even right now is in a deplorable state. And we mentioned to them that if we can get this bridge done that would help us out.
BERNARD: And did they use the bridge while they were here filming?

PARTICIPANT B: Yeah!

PARTICIPANT D: Of course!

PARTICIPANT A: Of course! They used to pass through it.

PARTICIPANT B: They had big trucks. They had a big convoy going through, because they were filming at the bayside (Soufriere Focus Group, lines 428-436).

The Suppression of Local Wages and Labor Laws

Although producers of these foreign films travel to offshore locations with highly skilled contractors and engineers, they typically recruit local contracting firms to help design and construct local film sets, since these professionals are experts in the local terrain, climate, geography, and labor culture. Through a process of closed bidding, the local location managers and liaisons are critical in short-listing potential candidates. These well-paid local advisors normally recommend their close associates or colleagues, while government operatives lobby on behalf of firms and service providers run by or aligned with economic and political sidekicks. Interviewee No.5, one of the main local contractors on Pirates of the Caribbean, said his company was highly recommended by a local associate:

We were involved with A&D Solutions, who were the guys on the ground, their scouts. We would help them find the sites and we would go visit the sites with them and understand what they wanted and give them the quotations to do it. There was very little drawings involved, very little anything else (Leblanc, lines 24-27).

As the comments of Interviewee No.51 indicate, with no type of local labor representation featuring in the recruitment and employment of local workers for any of these
productions, foreign film producers shooting feature films on the island frequently engage in activities that undermine fair labor practices:

I remember labor laws were being an issue in terms of hours of work, working on weekends, Sunday, overtime and labor contracts and child labor. I remember labor laws being an issue, or a discussion and we worked around these things (Philbert, lines 428-430).

Dominica has very strict child labor laws. The Employment of Children (Prohibition) Act, Chap 90:05 defines a child as someone below the age of 12 years. The law prohibits such persons from engaging in employment that is light domestic or agricultural work unless under the supervision of their parents or guardians. The Employment of Women, Young, and Children Act, Chap 90:06, identifies a child as someone below 18 years of age. The law restricts such persons from engaging in any public or private industrial work where family members are not employed. On multiple occasions, these laws presented serious challenges to foreign filmmakers shooting on the island, but as Interviewee No. 51 noted they were quite acute during the filming of the Pirates of the Caribbean:

So the child labor, they needed extras in some of the shoots and some of the scenes, some were in the Kalinago territory I think and some other areas they had to have extras and the extras I believe were kids or who to act like kids, were young underage and we had to navigate that I believe in the context of the laws. I don't remember how we resolved it. I remember that it was an issue (Philbert, lines 126-131).

Foreign filmmakers also tend to pay low wages perfunctorily even by local standards. Historically, they also tend to reimburse local extras better than they do local skilled assistants and laborers. Even then, monetary compensation normally either tow local minimum wage levels
or are not far removed from them. Notably, local elites who work with these companies tend to secure respectable wages for themselves, while assisting their foreign colleagues suppress the wages of subordinate workers.

**Figure 6: Interviewees by Labor Hierarchy on Suppression of Wages**

They all admitted to knowing of complaints or rumors of very conservative thresholds established by local authorities for local wages related to these foreign film productions. None of the public officials interviewed admitted to the practice, but of those who commented on it 36% were high level executives and 21% non-supervisory workers (see Figure 6).

Pirates of the Caribbean local wage rates offer perhaps the most conspicuous example of this practice. Locals holding positions as Assistant Location Managers and Location Scouts, who advised the film producers on appropriate local wages, negotiated aggressively and secured
wages of EC$672 (see Table 1). The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank reports that the average exchange rate between January 2005 and June 2005 was 2.71 Eastern Caribbean Dollars to 1 U.S dollar, which would put these wages at US$241 per day. Despite intensive pressure from the film’s production manager to settle on considerably low rates, Interviewee No.41, one of the location managers, insisted that the producers paid him and his colleague rates that would be considered respectable internationally:

If this gentleman had his way, they would have maybe gotten the movie for free, and unfortunately some people's posture is they so want the movie they were willing to bend and I was not willing to bend. My partner and I we put it straight: if you want our services, and you know we know Dominica, this is what you have to pay us, 300 U.S. a day. That's the going rate. He said oh no, no, and we said boss, that's it. Clem on the other hand took a different position, but that was my position. That was my partner's position, so he called us in the evening trying to play one against the other: oh, he doesn't think he needs Paul, oh he didn't think he needs Allan, the rates are, so I said, boss, is take it or leave it, you know (Toulon, lines111-118).
Table 1: Wages Paid to Dominican workers by Second Mate Productions Inc.
Source: (Bully, 2005, p. 51).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crew List</th>
<th>Daily Rate (EC$)</th>
<th>Hourly Rate (EC$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asst Location Manager</td>
<td>672.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Secretary</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst to Production Secretary</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location Scout</td>
<td>672.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location Labour</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipping Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Officers</td>
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<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadets</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Captain</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Housing Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Associate</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background Casting Assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Captain</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makeup Assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairstylist</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greens Labour</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extras</td>
<td>200.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Workers received a 12 hr day with time and a half after a 40hr week and double time on Sundays and Holidays. (Source: Bully, 2005: Impact assessment: The filming of Pirates of the Caribbean 2/3).

In 2005, Pirates of the Caribbean paid a local Background Casting Assistant who had the responsibility of recruiting and supervising over 200 local extras only US$5.53 per hour. For the same period, the going wages for that job in the United States was around US$18.27 per hour (Careerbliss, 2013). Following historical practice, local authorities either did not have the political will or the leverage to demand that the film producers match local rates with international rates for any jobs on the production, other than location manager, whether they were skilled or unskilled. Interviewee No.41 explained the nature of labor negotiations for the
Pirates of the Caribbean:

BERNARD: So there was not a classification?

TOULON: Well they tried to do that after but when we got in, Anita and myself said this is the rate for these guys, because they came and said, What do we pay? I say carpenter is this, plumber is this. I have that documented somewhere you know, basically that's how we did it, because the girls we got in here to start, they were 12 U.S. an hour, you know, the first 3 girls that were head of, the office managers.

BERNARD: So what happened?

TOULON: No! I mean the first crew. And then when everything started coming they said we have to get a better rate, so I said [to the local workers] you are not really skilled guys so all you can go down a little, you know (Toulon, lines 294-300).

Astonishingly, the salary of these local managers and scouts working on Pirates of the Caribbean were 16 times that of the lowest paid worker on the production (see Table 1). In fact, the data consistently revealed that on every foreign feature film production shot on the island, locals recruited for these projects had strong suspicion and knew of widespread rumors concerning high-level government representatives conspiring to suppress local wages (see Figure 6). As early as twenty-seven years ago, when the island first accommodated the production of a foreign film as an independent nation, public discussions were prevalent about government officials and community leaders actively working to keep down wages that the foreign film production paid to local workers. Interviewee No.39, who was responsible for paying local actors on the production of the Seventh Sign, confirmed the rumor:

BERNARD: People keep talking about the government trying to restrict the amount of money that the film producers pay locals, what do you remember about that?
FRANCIS: I remember there was some concern that it was above the minimum wage and that it was being paid directly to people and not through the official system.

BERNARD: Who were the ones articulating those concerns?

FRANCIS: Some senior government workers and local business people, also. I think Village Council officials were concerned it was creating a "bad vibes" and would affect them for future projects in which they did not have that "kind of money"

BERNARD: So government officials and the Village Council wanted to control the rates and wages paid?

FRANCIS: Yeah! It was cash that they felt could help develop the area (Francis, lines 77-86).

Without any prompting, interviewees who worked behind and in front the camera on the production of The Orchid House in 1991 reported direct government direction to the foreign producers to lower their proposed rates for compensating local labor. Interviewee No.10, a video assistant operator on the production remembered the heated discussion and told me that he learned of that policy from the film producers themselves:

SHILLINGFORD: They mentioned 50 U.S. but when the government got involved, I think the Freedom Party at the time, it decided that paying locals 50 U.S. that’s going to spoil them, because nobody here was getting 50 U.S. for their day, so they decided to give us 50 EC.

BERNARD: So you initially were offered 50 U.S. and then they had to give you 50 EC? Did that turn out to be a sort of public discussion or something?

SHILLINGFORD: Well the public discussion among the film crew and locals working on the film (Shillingford, lines 14-21).
Interviewee No.18, the local actress who played the speaking role of Fifine in the Orchid
House confirmed this narrative, adding that the film’s production secretary mentioned that the
government had rejected the higher wages initially proposed by the film producers:

Actors and extras were supposed to be paid in U.S. dollars. Mamo [Prime Minister
Eugenia Charles] said to pay us in EC dollars. I got paid about $300.00 a day. That's the
reality. They think that big money will go to our heads. The people budgeted for it, you
know (Cuffy-Weekes, lines 6-10).

Senior public servants, like Interviewee No.51, who assisted in negotiating the island’s
hosting of Pirates of the Caribbean, denied any established policy on keeping local wages low,
but taxi operators participating in the study’s focus group discussion expressed strong suspicion
of a deliberate strategy by local policymakers to keep down their wages:

PARTICIPANT C: There is a mentality going around that certain people shouldn't make
a certain amount of money. That is just to tell you where the problem is. You know what
I am saying? Not all things I will share with you, right, but when I worked with them the
first time I was paid more than what I was paid after, more than that.

BERNARD: When you were with them on the scout?

PARTICIPANT C: Yeah, to do the tour. Naturally, we could have gotten more money
but we were not allowed, basically, it was a mental block, right. I say mental block that
certain people shouldn't be making that kind of money and that's the way it was handled.
I will go one step further. Those people who worked knew what they were working for
before they set their foot on the project. Don't do like you all were getting paid U.S. 8
dollars and then it was coming down to EC 8 dollars.

PARTICIPANT D: The government played a big role in that, a big role.
BERNARD: How did that happen?

PARTICIPANT B: The government wasn't proactive, because our minimum rate in Dominica is low; when they came to pay they would have paid us more.

PARTICIPANT E: Much more!

PARTICIPANT B: More than the ordinary rate that the Dominicans were getting, and then I think the government at one time said, it was rumored, that you cannot afford to pay the bus drivers that. So that is when the price came down to the eight dollars (Taxi Associations Focus Group, lines 510-518).

Interviewee No.28 and multiple participants at the focus group with taxi drivers noted that while local taxi operators received EC$7.25 for driving, their counterparts in St. Vincent received US$7.50, raising questions concerning the effectives or priorities of local negotiators. Interestingly, the written agreement between the Government of Dominica and Second Mate Productions Inc. does not address local wages. Interviewee No.12 said that Pirates of the Caribbean negotiators expected local service providers to lowball them and therefore drove a hard bargain preemptively, but Interviewee No.15 observed that the rates paid by Second Mate Productions Inc. to local workers on the production were generally low throughout:

BERNARD: Disney paid people very low wages?

JOHNSON: Oh, yes man! Oh, yeah! Oh, yeah: 5 dollars an hour, 5 dollars an hour. These were the government rates that were there on the labor books long time, eh. You get me?

BERNARD: So they paid them based on the outdated minimum wage?

JOHNSON: Where's a laborer on any production that I am in charge of, whether it is a television production or a commercial getting that? The minimum a laborer would get is 50 US, you know. That's 130 EC.
BERNARD: How do you go about assessing the rates? What do you thing is a fair rate that a laborer should be paid?

JOHNSON: In the American context. You're not asking for American wages, but it needs to be reasonably set. I mean you’re coming here. One of the reasons you're coming here is you're going to save money on areas like that. Ok, but make it reasonable. Don't try to rape as I said (Johnson, lines 260-270).

Wages paid to locals by these feature film productions do not come anywhere close to matching the rates offered to below-the-line film workers in developed countries. In fact, the comparison of the wages from a handful of jobs revealed remarkable disparities. They paid these local rates notwithstanding their access to a highly literate labor force that is proficient in their language of operation with unique but productive work habits. Although a bi-lingual country, the official language in Dominica is English and the island has a literacy rate of 94% (U.S. Department of State, 2012). Filmmakers working on the island normally commend the work attitude of locals and Pirates of the Caribbean’s Producer Jerry Bruckheimer was no different. He noted, “We employed a lot of people on the island, and they were brilliant and wonderful to work with” (as cited in “Adventures in Dominica,” 2007).

Unfortunately, these producers who shoot large-budget films on the island do not necessarily transfer their appreciation of local work ethic to their compensation packages. According to the blog, 12ptcourier.com that serves aspiring filmmakers, production assistants in the United States normally get paid a daily wage between US$100-250 for a 12-hour -16 hour day (“Production assistant,” 2011). The pay is standard even if the employer requires the production assistant to work fewer hours for a particular day (“Production assistant,” 2011).

A local production assistant on Pirates of the Caribbean made just under US$14.76 for
an 8-hour day. While local construction workers, many of whom were highly skilled, were earning, US$6.52 an hour on the production of Pirates of the Caribbean I and II in Dominica, unskilled construction works in the U.S. were earning an average of US$12.50. Interviewee No.5 noted that most of these workers were quite skilled:

BERNARD: What was the quality of personnel that you had, the different types of kills?
LEBLANC: Well, I mean we would of course have equipment operators. We would have artisans, masons, carpenters, general laborers. Basically these are the general laborers that we would have used: Steel benders, fabricators, our usual mechanics, so it would just be people that we would have had on our payroll. That generally the rates would be, starting from the laborers about, around EC$6.00 [US$42.21] an hour, up to for the foremen, EC$20 [US$7.38] or EC$25 [US$9.22] an hour, generally that range.
BERNARD: So these would be the rates that you would normally pay anyway?
LEBLANC: Normally, we would pay that rate (Leblanc, lines 126-133).

Interviewee No.28 argued that one of the biggest areas of savings for the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean was transportation services, not only with the related labor fees but also from contracting local trucks and heavy duty vehicles, one-ton and over:

Yeah, all drivers got the same deal, most busses. With the trucks I think it was like 350-400, [US$129] flat beds were like 500 [US$184.50] per day, the trailer trucks, guys who pull the containers were a different price, but for the busses it was 225 [US$83.02]. So you would get that per day for your bus and then they would pay you EC7:50 [US$2.76] per hour to drive the bus and then they would full your tank [with gas] at the end of the day (Robinson 91-94).

According to taxi operators participating in the focus group, local taxi and bus drivers
working on Pirates of the Caribbean initially expressed little to no dissatisfaction with their compensation; however, when the demands of the production began kicking in and they began working unusually long hours, making multiple trips to some of the farthest corners of the island, and when rumors began circulating that they had secured a less attractive compensation package than drivers in St. Vincent who had worked on the same production, some protested, resulting in swift retaliation from the film’s management:

BERNARD: So nobody heard of any issue where anybody had to get fired?

PARTICIPANT B: Fellas got fired for foolishness.

PARTICIPANT E: They got fired for the foolish talk that they had down there.

PARTICIPANT B: For asking for a higher price.

PARTICIPANT D: All right, ok. For price, for price!

BERNARD: So they went and they protested? They made noise?

PARTICIPANT E: How it started was they were saying that what they explained to them and the hours they are working, the price should be better and they started protesting.

PARTICIPANT G: When they started protesting is when they heard about they got U.S. $8 in St. Vincent.

BERNARD: When you say making noise, what did they do?

PARTICIPANT G: I mean they were not fighting. I mean they were just talking about the price.

BERNARD: They grumbled? They went to complain officially? How did they do it?

PARTICIPANT B: There was a heated argument at one point.

BERNARD: Among themselves or with the Pirates people? How it went down?
PARTICIPANT A: Me, myself cannot help you. I really don't know about that.

PARTICIPANT E: They were just talking among themselves, talking, talking, talking and somebody overheard it.

BERNARD: And went back and reported them?

PARTICIPANT E: Yeah, yeah!

PARTICIPANT B: And the boss man called them and fired them (Taxi Association Focus Group, 474-496).

The data from this research suggest that looking only at the labor wages for an accurate assessment of how these foreign film companies exploit labor, misses a more fundamental issue that of the stark disproportionality between the wages and the duties and responsibilities assigned to such workers. One case where this incongruity was profound was with the employment of the local transportation coordinator for the production of the Pirates of the Caribbean. The local transportation coordinator, Interviewee No.28, said that he received an hourly wage of US$5.50, despite having supervisory responsibility and accountability for the daily operations of a fleet of vehicles in the hundreds:

BERNARD: Did you have any staff that you were responsible for.

ROBINSON: Yes, I had two other staff at the office and then I had the guys in the field, some of the drivers who were like supervisors in the field cause I had a local transportation captain in the field and so on, but there was one other guy over me, that’s the guy from LA. He was my boss.

BERNARD: But you were in charge of the local staff

ROBINSON: Yes, yes, yes.

BERNARD: About how many vehicles you were responsible for under your control.
ROBINSON: I would say about 250.

BERNARD: You were responsible for 250 vehicles: you had to account for them?

ROBINSON: Yes, 250 vehicles, yes (Robinson, lines 122-133).

Another such case that I found quite jarring was the compensation given to Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) who worked on Pirates of the Caribbean. Interestingly, the table prepared by the local film commissioner detailing the wages paid to locals by Second Mate Productions Inc., does not list the services of an EMT, although Interviewee No.30 reported that three of the island’s most trained EMTs worked on the production:

FURGUSON: Well, the experience I have is I worked with Pirates of the Caribbean when they were here as a medic.

BERNARD: A medic?

FERGUSON: Yeah a Medic. My role was to provide pre-hospital care for anybody that would get injured on the set or on the scene while they are working on the set and also to drive the ambulance.

BERNARD: How many of you all were assigned to Pirates?

FERGUSON: Actually, there were three of us assigned to Pirates of the Caribbean and we were all, well one of the requisites for being part of that was that we were supposed to be emergency medical technicians, certified emergency medical technicians (Ferguson, lines 2-10).

Interviewee No.30 stated that the producers of the film initially had no intention of paying the EMT, citing a murky government arrangement that agreed to provide their services for free:

BERNARD: Ok, when the Fire Chief gave you the order to go on the field to work for
Pirates, what exactly did he tell you? Did you see that as a normal everyday assignment or that was a special assignment?

FERGUSON: It was a special assignment. It was a special assignment with the concept that we would be getting some form of payment.

BERNARD: The chief told you that?

FERGUSON: Yes, yes. He told me that.

BERNARD: So you were at work for how many days when you realized that you were not getting paid?

FERGUSON: Well, we had already worked for three weeks when we realized that we were not getting paid and that is the time we had a meeting with the boss at the financial centre and that is the time that he declared to us that the agreement between the Fire Chief and Pirates of the Caribbean was that, you know, we are delighted to be part of this whole session for the purpose for getting the experience (Ferguson, lines 30-41).

Interviewee No.30 added that The EMTs, who are also fire officers, routinely receive personal compensation when serving on special duty, separate and apart from their government wages. Interview No.29, the fire chief, confirmed this, stating that fire officers usually accompany police officers as part of the security protocol of these foreign film productions working in the island. Like with police officers, the Fire Ambulance and Services Act, 10(b), Chapter 42:60 of the Laws of Dominica makes provisions for non-humanitarian services by fire and emergency personnel; however, unlike the Police Act, that law does not explicitly outline individual remuneration for fire officers. Notwithstanding, the Fire Chief emphasized that such assignments normally compensate fire officers individually and separate from their salaries:

As we established earlier, the fire officer would be compensated and that money received
would go to his pocket. The fire service would also receive compensation, but I say the fire service meaning the Government. Essentially, the fire service doesn't really receive or should not by law receive moneys that it keeps for itself, so all moneys that are paid to the fire service actually goes to the consolidated fund (Dupuis, lines 70-74).

According to Interviewee No.30, after the EMTs protested, the film producers agreed to pay them as drivers at a rate of US$2.76 per hour, six times less than what their U.S. counterparts were earning at the time. In 2005, EMTs in the United States earned an average of US$16 an hour for their services (U.S. Department of Labor, 2006). Interviewee No.30 added that the three EMTS were on rotation, working alone at a time as both the ambulance driver and the emergency respondent. He claimed that they had in their care powerful drugs that local regulations would normally restrict them access to; however, the government had granted temporary licenses to medical professionals working with the production that circumvented normal restrictions:

FERGUSON: No, most of the drugs, all the drugs were provided by Pirates of the Caribbean.

BERNARD: And were these drugs, drugs that you used normally, that you were familiar with?

FERGUSON: Yeah, some of them I was familiar with and some of them I read about them, but I never had the opportunity to use some of them. Like for example morphine, I heard about morphine but never had the experience of administering it to somebody, you know.

BERNARD: Normally, would you be allowed to give somebody morphine?

FERGUSON: No, I would not be allowed to do that normally, but then with Pirates of the
Caribbean, based on the advice of the doctor, if he tell me all right give five CCs of whatever drug, then I would of course take the drug, describe what is it I have in my hand and he would direct me what to do before I transport you know.

BERNARD: That's a heck of a lot of responsibility.

FERGUSON: That's a lot of responsibility; yes (Ferguson, lines 323-333).

Typically, the state subsidizes a significant part of the security and emergency needs of these foreign film productions on the island. The Police Act, 30(1), Chap 14:01 of the Laws of Dominica makes provisions for special duty by police officers, which allows the government to collect fees from private firms and businesses to compensate police officers for their services at non-governmental public events and activities. The law allows on-duty officers to receive 75% of their earnings and off-duty officers 90%, with the remaining 25% and 10% respectively going towards a fund administered by the Police Welfare Association.

Apart from unusual access to police officers in the normal course of their duties who are not directly connected to the production, the foreign film producers normally take advantage of the special duty provision to augment their private security provisions for these productions. Interviewee No.37 said that throughout the production of Pirates of the Caribbean and Pirate Master, local security firms also received private contracts to provide security services. Interviewee No.9 endorsed this statement, adding that at some of the hotels of the cast and crew, private security provided 24 hour security. When Second Mates Production Inc. shot Pirates of the Caribbean in Dominica, it contracted a local security firm to provide security services. That firm paid its workers as low as US$1.84 per hour, while several local security firms were paying their workers higher rates for domestic assignments. In 2005, the mean hourly wage for a security guard in the United States was US$10.91 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005), so these
local security officers were earning about six times less than their counterparts in the United States.

Apart from providing police and fire officers for routine duty, the government also assigned some of the most trained police officers on the island, from the special services unit to protect the film’s high-profile talent and executives. Interviewee No.37 admitted that even the base wages that Second Mate Productions Inc. paid these special police officers were less than the fees that residents would have paid:

The EC$15.00 [US$5.53] was $5.00 less than the stipulated rate in the law. They didn't pay $20.00 [US$7.38].

BERNARD: A local person would have to pay a police officer $20.00 per hour?

GEORGE: Yes, but there were other things that came. So they gave us the vehicle free. We had accommodation, they paid for that free and we ate on site (George, lines 311-322).

Interviewee No.37 added that when a few of the high-profile film personnel learned of the wages that their personal security attendants were receiving they made their own contributions that increased the compensation of these officers:

BERNARD: The police officers who were responsible for securing the high-profile talent were they under the same arrangement?

GEORGE: Yes!

BERNARD: $15.00 an hour?

GEORGE: No! I don't think so. I think they may have worked that out, but I believe that after a while they had a relationship with the actor himself. Yes, that would probably be, but I think later on they had a relationship.
BERNARD: So it may have started off like that but then it changed?

GEORGE: I think they got $25.00 or they got $100.00, those that were there fellas were pleased with that, so I am just paying you and that’s it you don't have to tell anybody anything, I do not know that happened but I believe that is what.

BERNARD: But the negotiated rate initially was $15.00?

GEORGE: Yes, I think that is what it was and we were paid that for eight hours and anything in excess of eight hours you were paid time and a half. You were paid double time on Sunday, which if I was working at the Windsor Park and I worked 12 hours I would get 12 hours by $20.00. In that case I am getting now time and a half for the remaining six hours, an extra six hours. So I was getting get $22.50, but that’s not all. I would also get free meals. My accommodations the company paid for that, my transport, so I did supervision with my transport. We used the others to drop people back and forth on the job. They provided fuel for the vehicle, so I had to account for it and telephone as well (George, lines 325-343).

Notably, the police superintendant’s account of wages paid to police officers is inconsistent with the official report submitted by the local film commissioner, which lists the hourly wage paid to police officers as EC$20 (see Bully, 2006, p. 52). I also found it quite important that both the local film commissioner and the police superintendant disparaged complaints or petitions for better wages by locals working on the production of the Pirates of the Caribbean.

In a June 23, 2005, in a memorandum to the General Manager of the NDC, Superintendent George wrote, “I also encountered what I termed “An attitude of entitlement” [bold, italics and quotations as in original] among police officers, cadets and civilians that
suggested some were expecting to be paid large sums of money, preferably in United States dollars, not necessarily for quality work output” (N. George, personal communication, June 23, 2005).

The local film commissioner even went as far as to propose a national campaign to curb the tendency of Dominican workers on these projects to requests better wages. She recommended that the country, “Develop public awareness programs to address and stem urgently the *Attitude of Entitlement* [bold and italics as published] that appears to be all pervasive and has infected the Dominica Labour Force” (Bully, 2005, p. 9). It is striking that in both documents the authors made a deliberate attempt to highlight the neoliberal anti-worker slogan: attitude of entitlement.

Parallel to these charges by the two influential local elites who held advisory roles on the production, the production supervisor of Pirates of the Caribbean, Tom Hayslip, in a local newspaper report, admitted some logistical challenges in producing the film on the island, but did not highlight the work ethic of the local employees as a problem: on the contrary, he complimented Dominicans on their work habits (as cited in “Pirates of the Caribbean filming ends,” 2005). Interviewee No.5 endorsed Hayslip’s comments:

We generally had, I would say, no difficulty with our workmen. That they were not critical of any one of them, that they were pretty satisfied with the work that was taking place. So in terms of how the skilled workers are integrated I would say they were well integrated in the process (Leblanc, lines 3-8).

Foreign film productions on the island did not utilize the special duty provisions of the police and fire departments only for direct security assignments, but they more regularly used them for traffic management. They relied on a very close relationship with influential and
powerful police officers to direct their movement around the island. While the producers of the Seventh Sign had involved almost the entire unit of the St. Joseph Police Station in the production, the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean privately recruited one of the top-ranking police officers in the country to spearhead their traffic management plan. Interviewee No.37 explained the basic conditions of his employment with the film company:

At the time I was a serving police officer, Superintendent of Police and I was interviewed by the management team at the Fort Young Hotel and they were interested in getting somebody to handle communications for them. That communications really entailed the movement of the gear from seaport to the film sites and back and back to the seaport for the duration, but as time went by it developed into more than that. So once they explained that, I now had to apply for leave, so I put in my leave application and it was approved and I had to go on attachment with Pirates of the Caribbean that is allowable under the Laws of Dominica, so that is called special duty, and so I can do that (George, lines 5-11).

Interviewee No.36 said that he recruited 12 police officers and twelve cadets, which the authorities placed under his direct control to form a state-sanctioned traffic management team for the shooting of Pirates of the Caribbean. In his traffic plan, he identified seven communities posing particularly significant challenges for the movement of the film production’s convoy. These communities were Massacre, Mahaut, Portsmouth, Fortune, Loubierre, Pointe Michel and Soufriere (N. George, personal communication, June 23, 2005).

Environmental and Public Health Threats

Despite the island’s normally vigilant environmental health programs, some of which
neighboring islands have emulated, no public or private entity on the island has ever done or commissioned an environmental impact assessment study for any foreign film production in Dominica. Interviewee No.34, a senior policymaker on the island, emphasized that this fact leaves serious questions concerning the impact of these projects on the local environment:

The fact is that the islands are generally ecologically fragile and often for the purposes of film, people might need to clear forest or secondary growth, and if the legal conditions, contract conditions for the film making does not take into account these factors and require the filmmakers to restore the place to how it how it used to be as much as possible then that could be a problem, you know (Marie, lines 17-21).

Interviewee No.12, one of the local contractors for the civil works projects undertaken as part of Pirates of the Caribbean confirmed that no environmental impact assessment studies were done for any of the civil works that his company did:

BERNARD: Did you recall an environmental impact done for the works?
SORHAINDO: No!

BERNARD: Do you know of one being done?
SORHAINDO: No! I mean there were basically, except for one, which was cutting a new road, most of them like going into the areas in Hampstead, were existing roads that would have to redo, put in culverts where necessary, concrete where necessary, going into the existing things, dig hole, nothing really permanent, so it did not really need any major environment impact [study].

BERNARD: Typically would an environment impact still be required by the government for works like that?
SORHAINDO: I would think so in most countries, but it was a very, very sudden thing. I
don't know if it was planned, but I only got in when they were ready to build, so I don't know if it was actually considered (Sorhaindo, lines 242-252).

At least on one occasion there were immediate consequences for not doing such a study. The production of Pirates of the Caribbean required the construction of a bypass bridge over the Hampstead River, but works proceeded without an environmental impact assessment and Interviewee No.41 reported that before the bridge was completed river levels rose drastically, washing away the construction:

In Hampstead, where they found the ideal location for the wheel to roll, from a cinematography standpoint, their stuff would have held up traffic so they had to build a little bypass on the side to go over the bridge. First time they did that, it got washed away. The river came down. We were there and we just see brown water coming, no rain there you know, but the signs were in the mountains (Toulon, lines 322-325).

The island’s chief environmental health officer, Interviewee No.7, said that the Environmental Health Unit, which normally oversees such assessments, does not have the skills or the experience to properly assess and monitor the impact of foreign film productions on the local environment, but as environmental health officers who participated in the study’s focus group noted, proper regulations and procedures for handling these productions do not only have implications for the physical environment, but also for public health. These focus group participants also warned that an often ignored risk of these mass gatherings is the potential that they pose for the spread of communicable diseases. They cautioned that in the most severe cases, a possible outbreak could outweigh all the financial benefits that these projects promise:

There might be introduction of new diseases that we haven't got here, and as you say dealing with their waste, and as you say some of the things that we cannot really take care
of in our small state situation. So that is one of the things that we might have. We should also be concerned about pollutants and even where they are having the film [made], how much damage they do to the environment; for example, our water and those things. There are a lot of concerns that we should have, but I suppose that never even crossed our minds before you came here to talk about that (Environmental Health Workers Focus Group, lines 48.54).

Taking into consideration the potential environmental threat from only a fraction of the waste from a typically large-scale film production like Pirates of the Caribbean makes the hands-off approach by environmental protection seem somewhat negligent. To build many of the film’s sets, the construction team on Pirates of the Caribbean used large amounts of inorganic material such as latex and foam (“Beware of falling coconuts,” 2007). The technical crew also used 178 barrels of special effects and more than 6,000 batteries (“Back to the Bahamas, hurricanes and all,” 2007). Environmental health officers noted that for a small island with limited resources, unsophisticated waste management systems, and a reputation as the Nature Island of the Caribbean, Dominica’s absorption of that extent of potentially hazardous waste is not insignificant:

BERNARD: And on any of the films that were shot in Dominica, do you know of any sort of monitoring that was done? [Silence] Is that a no, yes?

ALL: No! No!

PARTICIPANT A: Nothing at all!

PARTICIPANT B: No!

PARTICIPANT A: As far as we know, not as a department! As Clement said the Portsmouth Health District, they were asked and he being part of the Portsmouth Health
District had done some inspection, but not Environmental Health as a department.

(Environmental Health Workers Focus Group, lines 81-87).

The pressure placed on some locals to conform to the production logic of the foreign film producers can be so overbearing that they may also become complicit in disregarding established laws and regulations. For instance, the focus group discussion with environmental health officers revealed that an off-duty junior environmental health officer supervised the burning and burial of artificial waste used on the production of Pirates of the Caribbean, even when he was fully aware of his department’s policy discouraging and even in some cases prohibiting these methods of waste disposal:

PARTICIPANT A: What he was saying, they had something to burn and he said it was a kind of foamy material.

PARTICIPANT C: They would have to get permission to burn. They cannot just burn [sternly]. They would have to get permission.

BERNARD: From whom?

PARTICIPANT C: Environmental Health, the Minister has the authority. We represent the Minister. You have to get permission to dispose and burning is a form of disposal.

BERNARD: And what would be the procedure to get permission?

PARTICIPANT C: To burn? You would have to go and look at the type of material to be burnt. We do not recommend burning [silence]! It is not something that is recommended, unless it is done in a confined area, like incineration, those kinds of things and down wind, not up wind. So we would have to look at all those things. We would have to look at incineration, the area, the type of material that is being burnt. So we do not recommend open burning. It is not something that we recommend. As a matter of fact we try to stop
open burning. Even coal pits we are trying to stop people from having, but we don't recommend burning. Somebody can burn, you know, and we do not know.

BERNARD: So then, you do not have a problem then with their burning of the foamy material?

PARTICIPANT C: No! We have a problem with that!

BERNARD: But it was done

PARTICIPANT C: It was done, but doesn't necessarily mean because we have a problem with it that it can't be done (Environmental Health Workers, lines 394-414).

On rare occasions, special interests groups were able to step in and insist on some type of environmental protection measures, as was the case when the Pirates of the Caribbean used the Indian River for filming. Interviewee No.2 said that as part of its arrangement with the film company, the Indian River Tour Guides Association insisted that the filmmakers adhered to some of the association’s own ecologically friendly methods for traveling along the river. The local guides disallowed the film production from using any motorboats on the river (“Beware of falling coconuts,” 2007).

With so many environmental risks associated with feature film production, I found the weak enforcement of local environmental laws and regulations during these productions so baffling that I put the issue before local Environmental Health Workers. They reasoned that the lack of a clear policy and the deviation from normal procedures to accommodate these productions often allow these foreign filmmakers and their local associates to side-step and overstep the required documentation and processes, potentially exposing the public and the country to a range of potentially serious risks:

So if those things had to come in, we would definitely have had to have an input, but it is
like something just [happened]. Somebody came to do that and you heard that they were doing a something, but it wasn't something [we were informed of]. I mean if there is policy in place then there would definitely be activities that we would have to carry out (Environmental Health Workers Focus Group, lines 128-132).

One of the major roles for the Environmental Health Unit under the Employment Safety Act is the monitoring of worker safety procedures. The unit has a reputation for reprimanding local businesses that do not adhere to local laws and procedures; however, they have never examined worker safety on any of the foreign films shot on the island. Partly due to climatic and temporal pressures, worker safety is not always prioritized on these productions; however, Interviewee No.30, one of the EMTs attached to the production of Pirates of the Caribbean, outlined a number of safety violations by locals on that film project:

"It was followed to a certain extent, but it has a lot to do with culture in a sense, that the locals would think that, look, I am going to work as a laborer, probably I do not need to wear steel toe. Probably I can wear sandals, or I don't need to, you know, to wear a hard hat. I can just use any hat or [remain] bareheaded, you know. So I think that was part of it, because even when some of these things were provided [by the film company], they were left aside (Ferguson, lines 277-281)."

Disposal of Imported Goods

Interviewee Nos. 3, 10 and 41 note that when these big-budget, foreign film productions wrap up shooting on the island, they usually find it more expedient and cost-effective to give their local associates and acquaintances donations of material, supplies, and other goods that were imported to the country rather than export them out of the country. Although local laws,
and even documented agreements with the government, when they exist, disallow this practice, it happens frequently. On multiple occasions, respondents reported receiving significant material donations from foreign film staff or crew on at least one major foreign film production shot on the island. Interviewee No.41 explained that either out of share luck or based on special relationships developed with the production executives or the film’s technical crews, locals who are closest to the action usually get privileged access to valuable assets from these film companies:

TOULON: Well, instead of taking the last week's pay or the last month's pay, we took a lot of stuff.

BERNARD: You told them to give it to you instead?

TOULON: Yeah, yeah, yeah, and some stuff they just gave us for a dollar, you know, but they were not taking anything back, and we, Allan and myself, we had the first grabs on everything they had. They had tons of tents. We got tons of tents (Toulon, lines 516-520).

Oftentimes, it is simply convenient for the film producers to simply hand-over valuable items to their local staff, whether or not these staff members are in a position to make good use of them. These filmmakers pay scant regard to identifying local entities that would ensure that the country or the wider public benefits from these donations. Interviewee No.10 traced the practice as far back as 1987:

The two companies I worked with, and then even with Orchid House I got a whole set of pneumatic tapes, I got over five thousands worth of pneumatic tapes, after that I end up selling it to a local company, the tapes I got because I did not have use for it. And with Seven Signs I got like for my still camera, aerobic meter to do meter reading, exposure meters, I got all that (Shillingford, lines 282-286).
Local laws require that film companies who receive duty concessions on imported goods seek permission from the Comptroller of Customs before disposing of them; however, in many cases, the department is unaware or uninvolved in the disposal of these materials unwanted by the production team. Local authorities are so insistent on Customs having an involvement that the Cabinet of Ministers made sure to outline it in its agreement with Second Mate Productions Inc. Notwithstanding, this research indicates that the implementation of this provision is ad-hoc: in some cases they are too rigidly enforced and in others largely ignored. As Interviewee No.15 observed, on completion of these productions, strict application of the laws and irresponsible bureaucracies sometimes lead to a travesty of justice and inexcusable waste:

Do you know that at the end of the shoot, this happened with Pirates Master as well, with food, they allowed them to import food as well. And I remember at the end of shoot, they had refrigerator containers full of food and the food had to be destroyed rather than give it to people. I suggested to give it to Grotto [a local charity], and the caterer was prepared to do that, but because it came in duty free, the technicality of giving it to kitchen staff or giving it to Grotto or the hospital or so on, the implications were that they would have had to pay duty on it, so they destroyed it. You believe that, man (Johnson, lines 181-186)?

**Place and Space**

Unlike most of film production projects in developed countries that usually have sufficient latitude to isolate their immediate operations from mainstream activities, foreign film productions in SIDS routinely operate closely interconnected with other major economic activities taking place simultaneously in the country. In SIDS, scarce resources and more
contracted spatial boundaries require disparate economic projects sharing common but limited resources to cooperate, and in some cases even consolidate, their activities for mutual benefit. What makes this most critical in SIDS is that these competing interests often have little or no other reasonable options.

In these situations, the state and community leaders are crucial in efforts to mediate these different and sometimes starkly contrasting objectives and interests. Three critical cases with the Pirates of the Caribbean’s experience in Dominica highlight this unique challenge, one mainly economical, the other mostly cultural, and the third more overtly political, not that I am suggesting that they are mutually exclusive in themselves, but differentiating them in this case serves the purpose of highlighting the variation in the ways this dilemma surfaces in SIDS.

Interviewee No.37 explained that even before Pirates of the Caribbean began production, local facilitators had to conceive of plans to integrate the film’s local activities into the routines of the island’s cruise industry, its traditions of banana export procedures, and its national electoral campaigns, since highlights of these three different major activities would clash with film production schedules and objectives.

The local team managing traffic for the production had to meet with various stakeholders of the local cruise industry to ratify a coordinated plan that did not adversely disrupt the interests of any of the parties. A windfall of thousands of cruise passengers on the island at the height of the season puts considerable stress on both public and private infrastructure and services; therefore, adding a massive big-budget film production could be chaotic and disastrous. Interviewee No.37 said that mindful of this, his team shared the cruise ship schedules with the producers of the film to fine-tune any needed adjustments to schedules on either side.

Local organizers of the production of Pirates of the Caribbean on the island also had to
face possible adjustments to the island’s local banana operations, a sensitive undertaking since issues related to the banana industry historically have had profound political and cultural consequences. Many rural farmers struggling to eke out a living serve the island’s struggling banana industry and regulatory issues associated with the local industry often unfold into potent political conflict. A request for slight adjustments in cultural practices by these farmers often makes local politicians quite nervous, since this is a very influential and vibrant section of the electorate. Interviewee No.37 said that his traffic management team had forecasted that banana reception schedules, which are predetermined days for farmers to sell their produce at either of the island’s two ports for export, would affect the film’s production. Banana reception normally produces long processions of pick-up vans and container trucks along major roads on the island. Ritually, the procession occurs on the same days and has become as much of a cultural practice as an industry directive for local farmers.

According to Interviewee No.37, his team had to convince The Windward Island Banana Development and Exporting Company (WIBDECO), which is the purchasing company owned by the governments of the Windward Island, to extend its deadlines for receiving fruit for export to accommodate possible traffic delays that could hamper transportation of bananas to the ports. The team also had to persuade local banana farmers to make adjustments to their harvesting practices that would facilitate their earlier arrivals at the ports.

But Interviewee No.37 believed that perhaps the most challenging tasks for the team was to manage the inter-island travel of the production team and negotiate a volatile political climate at the height of national election campaigning. Traditionally, these national elections exhaust the services of a range of public institutions, not the least the security forces. Furthermore, big-budget filmmakers are inherently uncomfortable with unstable political environments on satellite
locations; therefore, local authorities had to give convincing assurances to the foreign producers that the local political climate would not disrupt filming. As Rudy Langlais, the producer of five Hollywood films, including the blockbuster The Hurricane, told me, uncertain political environments make film producers uneasy for a range of reasons, from insurance liability risks to practical threats to the successful completion of their projects:

I look for a stable political environment, you know. If I see that there's a volatile election coming I stay away. If I see that there is civil war that is potentially going to rage, I stay away. I didn't mention it, but if I see that there's a big crime problem I am concerned. Jamaica has a big crime problem and so I stayed away, because to shoot in a place, any place you have to have insurance and to shoot in a dangerous place, you may not get insurance (Langlais, lines 125-129).

The culture of political campaigning in the Caribbean is different from that of many developed countries, which can make an unwitting tourist quite uneasy. That was exactly what happened to Pirates of the Caribbean’s actor Kevin McNally. He complained:

But on the first night I was in Dominica, I went to bed at about ten at night, and all of a suddenly hell broke loose in the street. They started campaigning at midnight, and continued until 7:00 in the morning with whistles, rattles, music, cars revving up and down the street. Back home in England, there'd be, perhaps, a man in a suit coming around once during the campaign at 4:00 in the afternoon so he doesn't disturb your tea (as cited in “Shooting in isle of beauty,” 2007).

According to Interviewee No.37, to avert the possibility of any crisis, the police officers working in a private capacity extended the authority of their public office to advance the objectives of the film producers:
So you know what political elections is like in Dominica, rally upon rally and motorcades. So now not only did I have to go to the Councils, I had to go to the headquarters of the political parties. I told the fella [man] we need to do that so that we share information with them and they share with us so we can find ourselves moving without losing one hour of downtime because of political activity (George, lines 82-86).

Interviewee No.37 added that police officers working with Pirates of the Caribbean also piggybacked on their access to the state’s security infrastructure and services to engage in both overt and covert policing operations to protect the production team and their activities:

GEORGE: We spent a lot of time controlling traffic, and it got to a point where I was doing an intelligence brief to the management.

BERNARD: What's that?

GEORGE: I would seek information from the parties and I would take the pulse for the political campaign and then prepare a brief of the last 24 hrs. What went on, the present 24hrs what is going on and the next 24 hrs and what is going to happen.

BERNARD: The general political climate.

GEORGE: Yes, the general political climate and I went in and briefed them (George, lines 118-125).

Since Dominica has narrow roads, Interviewee No.37 said that the police also implemented temporary parking restrictions for residents along the traffic route to facilitate the movement of the film production’s convoys. As the focus group discussion with villagers of Soufriere revealed, for a country like Dominica, with no designated public parking facilities, this meant considerable discomfort to residents in some of the communities with the potential to cause bottlenecks even during normal traffic.
Arrangements to accommodate the needs of these big-budget film productions sometimes involved the transfer of residents from their normal parking locations to less desirable ones. During the shooting of Pirates of the Caribbean, some affected residents on occasion had to walk much longer distances to access their vehicles from home. Since most islanders do not have garages at their residences, parking as close to their homes is not only a personal convenience but also a security measure. Interviewee No.37 said that local government authorities were also instrumental in facilitating the cooperation of local residents, since many did not take kindly to the discomfort.

The shooting of the film also affected local commuters, since mini-bus drivers left many local students and workers stranded. These commuters had established arrangements with these drivers to provide them regular transportation to work and school; however, with most of the bus drivers abandoning their bus routes for the more lucrative stint with Pirates of the Caribbean, many of their regular passengers had to seek alternative transportation. One local journalist who used public transportation to commute to work recalled a sharp increase in the tardiness of many workers during that period:

It was literally impossible to get a bus from Roseau to Goodwill as all these buses were engaged. When a bus became available you would get an earful from the drivers as to their experiences working with these people and how great it was (Francis, lines 46-48).

While this radical shift in the island’s public transportation system affected commuters temporarily, it had a more protracted effect on bus drivers. The local transportation arrangements that the country made to accommodate the shooting of the Pirates of the Caribbean, though temporarily effective, had long-term negative implications for the sustainability of public transportation in the country. On conclusion of the film’s production on the island, a large
number of new mini-bus owners rushed into the island’s public transportation system to provide their services since there were no major barriers to entry. Interviewee No.21 noted that eventually the glut of service providers significantly reduced the earning capacity of mini-bus drivers, which further weakened the already frail industry:

BERNARD: Did you see an increase in the amount of vehicles in service after Pirates?
The people who got the vehicles from the auto importer were they operating?
ESPRIT 1: Yes! They had to come into the system, which means that everybody is making less money. That's it, because everybody ends up making less. Guys have to be leaving vehicles to go overseas and see if they get work in the United States. Go somewhere, because it is no longer economical or profitable to run their vehicles.
BERNARD: And you are talking about commuter busses?
ESPRIT 1: Yes, yes, because there were more people in the system, because more people came in the system, which is not sustainable (Esprit, lines 372-378).

Hollywood celebrities visiting the island often attempt to escape the everyday and search for the most exotic experiences on the island that often take them to areas of the island unfrequented by residents. Apart from their creation of these private spaces from already established public places, non-residents also are crucial in shaping production spaces. Barricaded from public access or intrusion, the film sets were almost like gated communities, which a few of the islanders with native intelligence of the local terrain easily but discretely breached.

When these film productions arrive on the island, there is usually a persistent buzz and gossip about their activities (Francis, lines 48-51); however, to most of the public, the highly marketed celebrities associated with these films stay mainly invisible, since the ordinary citizen hardly hear or see them. Participants of the focus group that I held in the village of Soufriere,
where significant portions of the shooting of Pirates of the Caribbean took place, said that Depp remained particularly elusive to local residents:

BERNARD: Did he come into the community?

PARTICIPANT C: You are crazy? Mister [the man] never really went around people much.

PARTICIPANT B: But the guys working on the film at the time would see him pass and stuff.

PARTICIPANT C: Yeah (Soufriere Focus Group, lines 610-618)!

Not only do the activities of these foreign film productions stay mostly isolated from the daily routines of the majority of residents, but they also avoid media attention. Dominicans traditionally rely heavily on local radio and television programs for information; therefore, many were expecting local broadcasters to keep them updated on the activities of the executives and high-profile cast of Pirates of the Caribbean on the island, but media workers charged that the production authorities starved them of any valuable information:

PARTICIPANT D: Access to the stars was very, very limited.

PARTICIPANT A: Yeah!

PARTICIPANT B: It was none existent. What limited? Did anybody get any sort of access?

BERNARD: Not necessarily stars, but access to other people?

PARTICIPANT B: Well that's what I'm saying not even a grip. That's what I'm saying to you. Not even a grip from the production much less pou [for] Johnny Depp (Media Workers Focus Group, lines 566-572).
The lack of media coverage on the activities of the cast and crew belied their adventures throughout the island. Locals who worked closely with them frequently gossiped about some of their weirdest escapades, narratives that continue to surface in social conversations years after. In fact, foreign film productions sometimes implant new spatial identities on the island. I found some of the clearest examples of this phenomenon from examining the influence of the non-resident workers on the local accommodation sector. For instance, Interviewee No. 9 reported that for both nostalgic and marketing reasons, the proprietors of the Picard Beach Cottages renamed some of the rooms at their property after the Pirates of the Caribbean guests who occupied them during the production of the film. The hotel owners even inscribed the names of these guests on the doors of these rooms:

BERNARD: Ok! How many rooms are named after the Pirates crew, talent, and staff?
RIVIERE: I believe 16 -17 cottages at the Picard beach cottages. One was used as a cutting room for the production.

BERNARD: Cool! What has been the benefit of renaming them, any real results?
RIVIERE: Not sure! We may or may not have received referrals from guests who have stayed there and felt excited by staying in a cottage where, say jerry Bruckheimer stayed (Riviere 1, lines 59-64).

When non-resident cast and crew of these productions create their own private places out of the island’s exotic spaces, they frequently indulge in the most carefree of behaviors that contrast their public persona. Commenting on the social activities of the non-resident workers of th ePrivate of the Caribbean, Interviewee No.9, a hotel administrator, said, “They found a little restaurant in the bushes too, where they could go smoke weed all night and eat food off a coalpot” (Riviere 1, lines 33-34)
Although the most high-profiled talent of the film, Jonny Depp, mainly stayed on his yacht when not on set, he and a few of his colleagues frequented Indigo Cottages perched amidst dense tropical fauna in a rural village (Patullo, 2006). The proprietor, Interviewee No.14 said that the property was not part of any of the privately organized tourist tours; however, the Pirates of the Caribbean celebrities made it notorious among many locals who were curious about its appeal.

BERNARD: So how Depp told you he found out about the place?

FREDERICK: Well, what happen, one day two women came on their own and they said that they are surprised that none of the people who are driving the buses, bringing them to Trafalgar [an internationally renowned waterfall], all over the island have never brought them here. It is so close to Portsmouth, the nicest place that they have seen on the island, more local [it is more exotic]. So after that they started to bring the people from the film, Orlando Bloom, all of them fellas came here.

BERNARD: So the two of them who initially came were people on the film already, themselves?

FREDERICK: Yeah, those two people were working on the film.

BERNARD: Ok.

FREDERICK: It had all kinds of [people]. All of them were coming here.

BERNARD: So Orlando Bloom Johnny Depp and so came?

FREDERICK: That one there, Penny Rose, she was making all the soup. Every day they were coming. Every two days [they came to] drink tea (Frederick, lines 18-29).

At many places on the island that the cast and crew of Disney’s Pirates frequented they stamped a Hollywoodian mark. On a few occasions they even reconfigured these spaces to suit
their fancies. The majority of interview respondents reasoned that most local proprietors of entertainment businesses were tolerant or indifferent to the fancies of their Hollywood guests, because they drank and tipped well, but participants of the Soufriere focus group discussion agreed that some of these film workers were not generous nor were they all interested in immersing in the local culture.

Similarly, a few locals resisted the cavalier attitude of some of these Hollywood figures. For example, Interviewee No. 9 recalled that when the executives of Pirates of the Caribbean offered to redo one of their favorite hang-out spots on the island, the bar at the Picard Beach Cottages, the stolid proprietor refused, despite the promise from the grownups that they would meet all the cost and have the reconstruction completed under a week. Interviewee No.9 claimed that the Hollywood executives wanted to transform the place from an open terrace bar in the form of wooden beachside patio to a themed movie set.

**Cultural Tensions**

By extending their imprints across many localized places and spaces, non-resident cast and crew involved in the production of big-budget foreign films in Dominica inadvertently created cultural clashes. The island’s physical closeness to the United States, its traditional absorption of American television, and its colonial ties to both the French and the British make it no stranger to diverse Western cultures; however, its celebration of independence and sovereignty has produced and preserved distinct articulations of unique cultural practices, norms and mora. Whenever the island accommodated foreign film productions on a large scale, differences in these cultures surfaced, sometimes creating bonds and other times creating conflicts. Recognition of some of these cultural differences is so important to the island’s ability
to compete for this business that in her report on the impact of the production of Pirates of the Caribbean on the island, the local film commissioner observed the dire need for training locals who interfaced with these foreign film productions on cultural diversity. She wrote:

The American culture is a totally different kind of culture. As a result one has to be extremely careful what one says to them and how one conducts oneself, ensuring that all business is conducted in a professional manner and that common courtesy is not misconstrued for currying favour so that the name of the country and the people are not sullied (Bully, 2005, p. 21)

In her interview, Bully observed that these cultural conflicts most obviously became a concern during the interactions between the hired local drivers and the non-residents cast and crew working on the production. The local tourism industry provides training to local drivers who normally interact with tourists, but because of the size of Pirates of the Caribbean, the transportation manager had to recruit many untrained local drivers. According to Interviewee No.28, one scenario that reflected this type of conflict was the approach of some of the local drivers to public conversation on contentious issues. He explained that during their downtime, it was a routine and a normally accepted practice domestically, for local taxi and bus drivers to enter into heated but benign debates about political issues and current affairs. Such debates are a normal part of the Dominican society’s public sphere; however, Interviewee No.28 said that when they unfolded within the spaces of foreign film production they tended to make the non-resident cast and crew uncomfortable, and many of them thought that this ritual created a hostile working environment:

At the early stages we had a problem with that where the guys would be arguing either politics or religion or girls whatever and sometimes something exciting come up. We had
to constantly tell them to lower their voice, but I think after maybe a couple times they got it (Robinson, lines 209-212).

Interviewee No.28 also said that another common cultural tension between the locals and non-residents was the differing notions of proper etiquette required for using the vehicles owned and operated by the local taxi and bus drivers. Traditionally, mini-bus drivers and taxi operators in the Caribbean usually pamper their vehicles and are usually very alert to clients who callously handle them. Interviewee No.28 remarked that the habits of the non-resident passengers frequently broke some of the tacit rules for interacting with hired mini-buses on the island, which the typical resident passenger would know are sacrosanct in local culture:

ROBINSON: Yes, the folks, they tend to slam the doors a lot and the guys would get really angry with them, but there is a nice way of doing it. You could either come out and go to them and tell them well, ok, the door is very easy to close so this is how you close it.

BERNARD: You mean the U.S. crew they slammed the doors a lot?

ROBINSON: Yes, yes, they [foreign cast and crew] slammed the doors a lot because the cars in the U.S. they have heavier doors and they always believe that you have to slam that door to close it. When I will take my door and just simply just close it, he will want to slam it. So it’s just a matter of just coming to them and saying I know you are accustomed to the heavier doors but look it’s very easy to close. That’s how you do it, you understand?

BERNARD: But the Japanese busses are more fragile.

ROBINSON: Right, right, right. So that is a problem we had all the time (Robinson, lines 186-192).
Interviewee No.28 pointed out further that the non-resident passengers also habitually placed their feet on the seats and upholstery of the hired vehicles, causing mild but frequent arguments. A milder cultural tension surfaced over the transportation of pets. The majority of the owners of hired vehicles in the Caribbean would not allow pets as riders. Like with most other Caribbean islands, Dominica does not have as sophisticated a pet culture as exists in most developed countries. Taxi and bus operators at the focus group discussion recalled that when a local bus driver had a dog as his regular passenger, his colleagues found that amusing:

PARTICIPANT G: When they called my name and tell me Mathew you are going to drive two dogs, everybody started laughing at me, eh.

PARTICIPANT E: Yeah, yeah.

PARTICIPANT G: They were laughing! [They said] dogs are going to pee in his bus, but that wasn't so.

PARTICIPANT E: The dogs were well trained, oui [yes] boy. Well trained you know.

PARTICIPANT D: I would put tarpaulin on the floor of the bus (Taxi Associations Focus Group, lines 305-310).

Dominica does not have a legal speed limit for most of the main roads connecting communities, although the traffic police do cite drivers for dangerous driving. Local mini-bus drivers take pride in their knowledge of the roads and usually express it by driving at risky speeds, which would make anyone unaccustomed to that culture fearful. Participant C at the Soufriere focus group discussion said that the foreign film producers had to reassign a local bus driver who found it impossible to drive at lower speeds. He said that instead of having that driver transport passengers they assigned him to distribute snacks and lunches. Interviewee No.28 said
that there were also other differences in driving habits that surprised both the local drivers and their foreign passengers:

ROBINSON: Normally, Dominican drivers use their horn a lot and Americans don't do that. Most of our crew came from America.

BERNARD: Yes, that’s true, to call people and so on.

ROBINSON: Yes, so you would be going down the road and you would meet twenty-five partners [male friends], and you would blow your horn all the time constantly and then the people would wonder why you are doing that, because in the states [U.S.], they basically just do the finger. They drive and they just give you the finger, but in Dominica you know we use the lights and the horn, and all of that (Robinson, lines 197-204).

A highpoint for many members of the cast and crew of these foreign film productions was time away from work when they could participate in the local drinking culture. The island has some of the most lax laws and regulations on the public consumption of alcohol anywhere in the world and none of the related statutes are ever aggressively enforced. The country does not even have a minimum age limit for the consumption of liquor. Interviewee No.28 told me that although the management of Pirates of the Caribbean had strict rules prohibiting anyone drinking while driving or working, the non-residents inculcated local drinking habits that gave them temporary liberties they could only dream of in their homeland:

They realized the culture that we have and they just let down their guard and they just joined in; so it was a normal thing to see the guys drinking at the end of the day. The drivers would take them to places like the fish fries at Pointe Michel, a very popular thing with them and barbecues on a Friday night after work, driving down [to their hotels after work] they would stop in certain villages, like in Calibishie where they have little action
[street parties] and so on. They enjoyed it because they were allowed to sit in the van with a beer drinking going down the road. It was really fun it was nice for them (Robinson, lines 241-247).

But the cultural differences were not always resolvable. Interviewee No.28 reported that one driver was fired for sexual harassment because of starkly different tolerance levels of gender socialization at work. The majority of the drivers had received no training in workplace conduct that addressed such issues. Interviewee No.3 identified the way in which the local drivers handled the buffet style layout for snacks and foods as another sour point. Dominica does not have a food buffet culture and many of these drivers were not socialized or trained on the accepted etiquette for receiving snacks and lunches that way; therefore, many abused the opportunity, which made some members of the film’s management team angry and confused. In her report, the local film commissioner at the time touched on the need for local training to avoid a repetition of this conflict:

I mean Dominicans did some weird things to eh. I mean some of the drivers were going overboard. Yeah, I mean they had never seen so much food in their life. I mean, you know, that kind of thing. It is something that you have they have to get used to (Bully, lines 744-746).

Review and Assessment

As a standard procedure, the Government of Dominica does not conduct Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) on large or small film productions on the island, nor does it demand it from foreign film producers shooting on the island. The staff of the Environmental Health Department participating in the study’s focus group discussion admitted never reviewing any
EAI for such a project:

If permission is granted in such a way as mandated by legislation then we would have a part to play in granting permission. We review environmental impact assessments. All environmental impact assessments, we do a critical appraisal of environmental health. If there is a need to request a healthy impact assessment, we can request it prior to the implementation of the proposal, or the plan or program. If permission is granted by Cabinet, we have to, because remember the Ministers are the ones responsible for the laws (Environmental Health Officers Focus Group, Participant A, lines 199-204).

Interviewee No.7 supported the environmental health workers, adding that despite the fact that the agreement between the Dominican Government and Pirates of the Caribbean placed full responsibility on the film producers for mitigating environmental damage from the production, no EIA was done before or after by either party. Notably, the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean contracted the services of the island’s most renowned historian and archeologist to do an archeological impact assessment as a prerequisite for meeting a U.S. regulation. That local archeologist, Interviewee No.32, admitting that his analysis was not a complete EAI, said that he identified no significant risks in his report; furthermore, the appropriate local authorities never reviewed his analysis.

To compound the problem, nor the government or the private sector systematically evaluates the impact of the production of these foreign films on the island and no independent studies exist on foreign film production on the island. A survey entitled, “Impact Assessment: The Filming of Pirates of the Caribbean 2/3” researched and prepared by the local film commissioner is the only officially commissioned industry study of the impact of any foreign film shot on the island. The report relied mainly on estimated expenditures on the island to
conclude that the production of Pirates of the Caribbean in Dominica was a major success. It did no cost-benefit analyses that took into consideration the cost to the island from hosting the production. The document was also very liberal with its assumptions and projections. For instance, it suggested that the island adopt a ratio of 5:1, to appreciate the multiplier effect of accommodating the production of the film on the island (Bully, 2005, p. 6), a formula that stands at odds with other respected industry studies.

Also worthy of note is the underlying censorship of information related to these productions. National public officials usually suppress the less flattering incidents that occur during these productions, but they are equally important in reaching a balanced assessment. For instance, while the highest ranking police officer working on Pirates of the Caribbean and the local film commissioner openly reported minor cases of misconduct by some of the locals, they were more reluctant to disclose the misbehavior of some of the non-residents working on Pirates of the Caribbean.

*RQ3. How do the Realities of On-Location Shooting by Foreign Productions in Small Island Developing States Fit Extant Theories of Cross-Border Film Production?*

From examination of the data, I identified some clear examples of ways in which foreign film production in Dominica amplify some of the most respected theories of international film productions. Conversely, I also outlined some profound differences that are unique to the island, and others more generally associated with Small Island Developing States. Before tackling these important distinctions and deviations, I will outline some of the general ways in which Dominica’s encounters with international film production match some of the more prevalent and
relied upon theories in the field.

How Dominica’s Experiences Fit Current Theories

By focusing my research on a SIDS country, I have confirmed Wasko & Erickson’s (2008) observation that a research project that looks at international film production from the perspective of the host location has the potential to produce useful and refreshing results. The nature of my research also endorses their proposition that a study of cross-border film production that highlights cultural and historical contexts has greater possibility of offering needed clarity to some of the more popular research projects on the topic that emphasize economic indicators.

One of the existing theories of international film production for which my research provided greater insight was the ways these projects avoid transparency and processes of accountability. In this research, I outlined various clandestine activities that surround the negotiations and agreements of these foreign film productions in offshore locations. Based on this finding, I endorse Epstein’s (2012) observation that these film productions have two types of budgets: an official one that they allow to reach the public through special channels and a concealed one that is more accurate and revealing. None of my sources were able to tell me about, or direct me other sources that had information of, the actual budget of any of these productions: the one that includes savings from government subsidies and other exceptional concessions. In some cases, local authorities, including senior government officials responsible for negotiating with and supervising foreign film companies, did not even have information on the official budgets of these films. No one seemed to know exactly how much it really cost these production companies to make these films on the island or how much it cost the island for that matter.
The findings of my research also support the two main reasons given by Scott (2005) for filmmakers to choose film locations around the world: realistic locations and costs reduction. While the producers of the major feature films publicly disclosed that they chose Dominica for its unique physical attributes, they never mentioned the ways they exploited the island’s capacity to reduce their production expenditure, especially the means by which they extended the capacity of the state to produce concessions to unprecedented levels. On each of these films, the producers spent significantly less than they would have in most of the countries with more experience hosting such projects.

Dominica’s experiences also confirmed that multiple companies, foreign and domestic, interconnect in complex contractual agreements to form the production chain of these foreign film productions, affirming Miller et al.’s (2005) and Scott’s (2005) explanations of the modern structure of international film production, which posit that the industry has transformed from a studio or single production company setup to a system of outsourcing at different levels, involving a string of separate and interconnected production companies and independently contracted professionals (Miller et al, 2005).

The findings of this research also attest to Buchmann et al.’s (2010) observations of the strong linkages between cross-border film production and tourism strategies in host locations, although they draw some striking variances in how they interconnect in SIDS than how they intersect in more developed film locations. This study also corroborates the general consensus in the scholarship of the multiplier effect of these productions on local economies. Newman (2008) is right that while foreign film productions definitely produce a multiplier effect throughout the wider economies of their production locations, policymakers in these locations have the tendency to exaggerate that effect even when the extent of its depth and reach is uncertain. As the report
of Dominica’s Film Commissioner showed, policymakers often use spurious projections and “guestimates” to justify more extensive support from the state and wider public for these projects (Newman, 2008, p. 221).

Based on this research, I am able contribute to the already convincing evidence, which indicates that transnational media companies leverage their compelling political and economic power to configure the production environments in locations around the world that make these places flexible and adaptable to increasing profits and reducing costs for these productions (Christopherson, 2008). I am also able to substantiate the theories of international film production, which argue that foreign film producers benefit in multiple ways from regulations and public policies governing satellite production locations (Goldsmith & O’Regan, 2008; Miler et al., 2008). As the data of my research show, not only do they receive extensive fiscal concessions, but they also benefit from extraordinary arrangements that give them easy access to public facilities at highly discounted rates or sometimes for free. I also agree with Christopherson’s (2008) argument that these wealthy film producers do not only take advantage of state resources by accessing special provisions for exploiting public infrastructure and services, but they also exploit key sections of the location’s skilled labor force, developed and sustained mainly by the state for national development.

Significant portions of the data from my study also match most of the characteristics of Miller et al.’s (2005) New International Division of Cultural Labour, especially when they underscored some of the ways these foreign film productions were able to make Dominican workers blind, indifferent, or defenseless to the many ways in which they were being exploited or undercompensated. Likewise, the dichotomous tension between the deep appreciation and concrete criticisms of foreign film productions emerging from the responses of many
Dominicans who worked on such projects, partly supports Mosco’s (2008) point that workers in these host locations tend to support these projects until they begin to suffer directly from the lack of regulatory protections and inadequate occupational safety conditions surrounding their temporary employment.

As I have illustrated, Dominica’s experiences with filmmaking fit many normative theories of international film production; however, the data revealed some significant peculiarities that warrant deeper exploration. From the data, I outlined seven main themes that explain these distinctions. They are the centrality of the state, the influence of local elites, the mobilization of local labor, the development of a local film industry, the differences in business practices, the unique approach to film tourism, the flexibility in surmounting logistical challenges, and the indifference to Hollywood’s celebrity culture.

The Centrality of the State

Whenever foreign producers use the island to shoot feature films, they find a loyal and pliant partner in the national government. While this is typical of experiences in many developing countries, Dominica presents a unique twist. Although the first point of contact for these foreign film producers was almost always local elites with strong connections to private business, the bulk of the facilitation came mainly from public structures and systems.

Unfortunately, because of a dire lack of capacity and institutional resources, the state allowed these foreign producers to take the lead on key policy and regulatory issues. Additionally, the state used its influence and legal resources to interpret local laws quite liberally. Even when non-state legal experts got involved in mediating troubling legal or regulatory questions, these persons manipulated their connections to the corridors of power to
serve the interests of the foreign film producers.

Another hallmark of SIDS’ engagement with foreign film productions was the levels to which the highest public authorities got personally involved in organizing these projects. Because of the extent to which these productions stretched state resources, negotiating and managing them became priority activities for some of the most powerful public offices, including that of the Prime Minister. Politicians also exploited the local population’s adulation of these projects from ignorance of the inherent costs to taxpayers. Most Dominicans still believe that Pirates of the Caribbean was a tremendous financial success for the island. Leaning on this perception, Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit, whose administration oversaw the hosting of Pirates of the Caribbean and Pirate Master, publicly announced that he had personally attempted to recruit Hollywood producers to the country. The Government Information Service outlined his announcement in a press release:

We believe we have the experience already and therefore I had the opportunity to speak to one of the biggest producers who is based in New York to explore the possibility of having Dominica as one of his locations for future films. He has agreed to send one of his representatives to Dominica to visit the place to do some exploratory site visits and to determine whether Dominica would suit the kind of locations which he normally uses (as cited in “Efforts continue to promote Dominica as a movie location,” 2011).

Overtime and with experience, Dominica’s processes and procedures for dealing with foreign film producers within its shores underwent an evolution from being loose and indifferent to being regulated and purposeful; however, it is still obsequious to the desires of foreign producers. The framework lacks transparency and does not adequately allow for processes that facilitate public accountability. Decades after negotiations with foreign filmmakers, the state
continues to withhold crucial information from public access that would more meaningfully explain the nature of these arrangements and relationships. Both state actors and foreign producers have unnecessarily high thresholds of confidentiality on such transactions. Additionally, the foreign producers who shot their films on the island always withheld basic information from local authorities on their project’s finances and sometimes even their plans for using the island.

All the key operatives of the state whom I interviewed, who had interfaced with the executives of Pirates of the Caribbean, especially Interviewees Nos. 11, 20, and 51, reported overwhelming pressure during negotiations for the state to confirm to transnational corporate practices and objectives. These testimonies highlight the anxiety of policymakers in SIDS countries, regarding the deepening vulnerability of the state in globalized markets. Also, as Interviewee No.51 implied, they also confirm that for developing countries this tension is particularly acute when negotiating projects related to their cultural industries:

BERNARD: How do you remember Disney now even years after?

PHILBERT: I remember some things. For example, I remember we had some things, little things that probably meant a lot to us, meant a lot to us, and we thought we had some [leverage]. You know, sovereign states take themselves seriously across the region. Small island states take themselves very seriously, their sovereignty. We have police, we have army, we have laws, we have presidents, and governor generals, and we have military ceremonies, salutes and national anthems, and that's good because obviously for national pride and so on, but when we interface with the international community more and more at the corporate level, not even government to government level, more so at the corporate level, because at the government to government level protocols are observed
irrespective of size, but when you begin to swim amongst the bigger fish you begin to realize that with all of these things you really do not have much leverage and you are very insignificant (Philbert, lines 172-183).

Interviewee No.20 concluded that on almost every contentious issue in the negotiations with the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean, the state had to sacrifice some fundamental aspects of its sovereignty for promises of tenuous economic benefits:

There are certain aspects of the negotiation that are deciding factors for the decision to come to your destination, you cannot turn on them even after you realize boy it’s costing me more than what you agreed on. I think to a certain extent we had an issue like that if I recall (Thomas, lines 238-241).

One of the most telling articulations of the Dominican Government’s alliance with these foreign film producers in assisting them meet their business objectives is the covert roles of its influential operatives in suppressing the wages of locals on these productions. Interviewee No.43, a local actor who has worked on over a half dozen of such films, stated that the problem is recurrent:

BERNARD: You are convinced that they behave like that?

PARIS: Oh yeah, yeah, convinced that they behave like that (Paris, lines 168-177).

When the state is not providing direct fiscal incentives, it features prominently in a range of ancillary support services that are crucial for the success of these productions. One of the most glaring examples of this is its deployment of its security apparatuses to ensure the cooperation of the public. It often provides these foreign productions with police and fire officers gratis or at minimal rates to mitigate or disrupt any serious local challenges or threats. Inspired by the rationale that such control measures are crucial for protecting the national interest, these security
personnel subtly, and on rare occasions vigorously, keep the public committed to the success of these productions. Interviewee No.37 pointed out that community policing was a key strategy for maintaining local compliance with the objectives of the producers of Pirates of the Caribbean:

BERNARD: So there is a level of community policing going on?
GEORGE: There is a level of community policing going on and that is what, I do not know how it will work for any other country, for us this is what I used. The tool I have: we have no firearms on duty; night or day we carry no firearms. We arrested nobody.
BERNARD: None of your staff were armed?
GEORGE: No, excepting those who are specially detailed to carry the high profile staff and that is understood. If they were in the United States they would get that, anywhere in the world they would get that. They asked for it and it was provided (George, lines 268-275).

The Influence of Local Elites

Almost all the academic theories that examine cross-border film production downplay the significance of local elites in facilitating these productions. In Dominica, not only are they instrumental in convincing the state to accommodate these productions, but they also use their private resources and individual influence to gain tremendous personal benefit from them, while alienating civic society organizations from representing the interests of locals. In some instances, they even help to snuff out opportunities for wider national benefits, when doing so would appease their foreign employers or clients.

One of the most vivid examples of this is the current absence on the island of any artifact or tourism product associated with any of these foreign film productions. Often, the local sites
used by these foreign film producers are privately held lands. These property owners normally receive considerable compensation for use of their lands; however, on multiple occasions, they have thwarted efforts by the state and other private tourism interests to develop these spaces into national tourism sites, subordinating the national interest to their own personal whims and indiscretions. To challenge the resistance of these elites, public authorities and local governments would need to engage in protracted legal battles on issues of eminent domain that are costly, time-consuming, and hotly debated by the public: ultimately, neither party is eager to petition the courts for redress on such matters.

Following the completion of the filming of Pirates of the Caribbean, public authorities assiduously petitioned land owners on whose properties film sets were built to collaborate with the government to keep some of these structures as tourism artifacts. Tourism officials argued convincingly that these structures would help boost the national tourism industry, but their persuasive efforts failed at every attempt. Interviewee No.51 observed that the government did not pursue any legal action even if the local courts had previously held that the state could seize private lands by providing adequate compensation, not only to confer a social benefit but also to facilitate private development in the national interest. Furthermore, he added that when the state exerted intense pressure on these property owners, the foreign film producers discouraged them for fear of bad publicity and unpredictable legal complications:

It is clear we didn't go that route back then, and if I recall we hinted it in some of the conversations with the land owners and that got back to Disney, because we hinted to the land owners in question that, hey, if necessary we are going to acquire it. I remember hinting it myself and Disney came back to us and said hey, hey, if you guys have to go down the road to actually take legal action, acquire property, and do all of these things
and so on we are not in that (Philbert, lines 362-366).

Moreover, local contractors pointed out that the film producers also had other more personally compelling reasons to discourage the state and local business interests from keeping these sets. Interviewee No.5 said that the film producers were reluctant to leave behind any relics or artifacts of the production because of the fear that liability would be traced back to them. His partner, Interviewee No.12 agreed, adding that leaving them behind was too risky for everyone:

Even the bridges, the suspension bridges and so could not have stayed. Well, for one, the nature of the materials used, the main structure was as strong in terms of the steel cable and so on. They were well cladded with cable, but all wood and stuff like that. The other components of the bridge were wood and it is not any special wood either. They were just sand blasted and cut up to look old, but they would not have lasted a year in our environment so they would become a liability. That’s why the film industry insisted that they don't leave anything that would become a liability to them. So basically, that church would still have to be broken down and rebuilt, but that would take millions of dollars to do that church as a permanent structure. Could we really generate that amount? I tend to suggest that we won't unless a Russian millionaire would come down (Sorhaindo, lines 210-218).

The Mobilization of Local Labor

In Dominica, foreign film productions not only find low wages, but a highly literate labor force easily trainable for short-term assignments. Recruiting workers for these fleeting investment projects is easy, since they are readily available and there is usually only an offer and an acceptance, with hardly any negotiating room for fine-tuning worker compensation.
Interviewee No. 11 argued that high levels of unemployment coupled with exceptionally high numbers of high school graduates and a steady pool of workers emerging from numerous public and private skills training programs throughout the country, provide these productions with a below-the-line labor force that is better skilled than those in many other countries:

We love to parade out there the fact that on a per capita basis we are smart and we produce a lot of people of high intellect and high performance, which is true, but the crucial thing though is how do we use that intellect? How do we use those high performance individuals that small states and places produce (Martin, lines 11-13)?

There is a downside though. Interviewee No.12 argued that when these skilled workers get exposed to these productions, they are more desperate to migrate after returning to their jobless condition. SIDS nations are at a particular disadvantage in providing local skilled labor, since their economies are unable to sustain them and Dominica has a chronic human migration problem largely due to the unavailability of commensurate jobs. SIDS countries spend scarce public resources on developing the skills of their local population, but lose them to more consistently vibrant economies. Interviewee No.12 captured this dynamic when he stated, “We train a lot of people and then there is nothing happening here so they migrate and then something big comes down then you have to rush and scramble and try to bring back people” (Sorhaindo, lines 12-114).

The Development of a Local Film Industry

Interviewee No.42, a very influential and connected policymaker, emphasized that Dominica has no local film industry:

I don't have to tell you a film industry does not exist in Dominica. It does not exist, the
aspects of or elements that could be brought together in an industry. My sense of an industry is a holistic interaction among components that results in particular products. So there would be the entire works, like a book industry or a banana industry, in which you have various levels of producers, financiers, insurers, shifters, critiques, intellectuals, teachers, audiences, a whole number of components. That doesn't exist in Dominica and so from that perspective what I noticed was the more developed aspect of that industry that exist in Dominica is the technical, especially camera technical side, so there are videographers (Aaron, lines 29-36).

Most territories that attract big-budget, foreign film productions have a functional local film industry to support them; however, only during the process of my data collection for this research were there any coordinated and comprehensive attempts to try to build a local film industry. Dominica’s case is not unique among SIDS nations, since these small territories normally have fragmented attributes of a film industry, but do not have the economies of scale or the resources to sustain all the major components of a film industry.

*The Differences in Business Practices*

The smallness of the land mass and populations of SIDS countries normally breed a strong sense of community and more interconnected networks of personal and social relationships. These relationships often bleed into business interactions, giving these islands unique approaches to business. Routine business practices in these territories are likely to appear unwieldy and risky in other countries. The tensions between local business cultures and that of the foreign filmmakers make these SIDS countries vulnerable to unscrupulous foreign businesses, but they also provide a mostly conciliatory and flexible business environment.
In her report on the production of Pirates of the Caribbean, the local film commissioner flagged this island attribute as a concern (Bully, 2005, p. 23). Key players involved in the hosting of foreign film producers on the island, such as Interviewee No.48, also reasoned that a loose business culture is one of the main reasons that the island consistently loses out on hosting big-budget film productions:

We don’t think things out: we meet people for two days and they are our friends. We just think you are my friend, so just take that. That is the problem, [we tend to say] no problem, no problem. I will go for that, no problem, and at the end of the day they are leaving and they want to save money. There is nothing that you are going to gain back from them. You never knew them. They are just people who work with you for the time, and sometimes because they come and smile with us and everything else, that we take it too friendly and too soft and maybe just take it for granted that they are, you know, genuine people you can trust (Paris, lines 158-166.).

Interviewee No. 46, an owner of a group of local businesses, also pointed to a stark difference in the local business culture and that of foreign film producers who shoot films on the island:

Well what I would say is that the foreign people are a lot more meticulous in terms of what they do, procedures. It’s all about risk management being placed on a different level as compared to how we see things in Dominica. We are more relaxed and take things a lot for granted. I think that was the primary difference, the professionalism of how things were done (Tongue, lines 30-33).

Another unique characteristic of the island’s business environment is the relative dormancy of trade and business associations. Local professional or business groups were rarely
involved in interacting with those foreign films productions that use the island. Actually, this was one of the inspirations behind the setting up of the Audiovisual Association of Dominica. When negotiations or planning consultations took place with these foreign film productions none of the amalgamation of taxi and bus drivers were formally part of the process.

Interviewee No.46 lamented that neither the local business chamber, the Dominica Association of Industry and Commerce (DAIC) nor the Dominica Employers Federation were officially part of the negotiations of any of the big-budget films shot on the island. Also, Interviewee No.5, the president of the Builders and Contractors Association, remarked that his organization ought to be a regular fixture of negotiations with and planning for foreign film productions on the island. These types of professional organizations are critical for organizing and developing wider sections of the economy interfacing with these foreign film productions. Interview No. 46 reported that since it was dissatisfied with the level at which short-tem foreign investments on the island, like big-budget film productions, have integrated local businesses, the DAIC is gearing up to acquire a greater presence in these transactions:

Actually, the DAIC is trying to do something where all companies registering should actually be going through the Chamber of Commerce, so likewise a company like that coming should be a temporary member of the Chamber of Commerce, a company coming in like that should be a temporary member of the Employers Federation, because they would not have to hire local people (Tongue, lines 122-127).

The National Approach to Film Tourism

Despite the significant revenue that Dominica earned from Pirates of the Caribbean, many respondents were cautious about recommending that local policymakers promote, market,
and organize the island as a satellite location for producing big-budget films. Local proponents of concessions to big-budget film productions rationalize that the fiscal incentives given to such projects are a token compared to what the country stands to benefit not only from employment creation and local revenues, but also from the publicity and marketing associated with those films.

On the contrary, the data show that the international publicity that the island received from hosting the production of any of the feature films shot within its borders was marginal and in some cases even non-existent. A few pieces of data even suggested that the island received substantial negative coverage from the international media reports based on production notes of the Dead Man’s Chest and At World’s End. Interestingly, the agreement between the Government of Dominica and the films’ producers did not outline conditions for framing an image of the island in promotional or marketing activities. It simply required that the producers mentioned the island in their marketing campaigns. Interviewee No.34 concluded that a significant part of the international publicity that the island received from hosting the production of Pirates of the Caribbean was negative:

What you can do is require of the people in the publicity to build up to the film that they make mention of where the film was shot and so on. Unfortunately you can sometimes get negative publicity, because I saw on Wikipedia couple days ago somebody's writing about the Pirates of the Caribbean and they said that Gore Verbinski, or the guy who was the director, he was the guy who wanted to come to Dominica. He thought Dominica was the ideal place that would give the sense of remoteness that he required. Then the person writing the thing in Wikipedia says that was precisely the problem with the production there, because it was so remote. We didn't have enough roads. Five-hundred people took
up all the roads in Dominica, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah and so on, so definitely that supposed promotion which we got there was negative. It was not positive. It didn't say Dominica was a great place (Marie, lines 55-63).

Ironically, the island’s lack of infrastructural development was precisely what qualified it as the major production location for Pirates of the Caribbean. Jerry Bruckheimer stated, “We selected Dominica as a major location because it's beautiful and virtually untouched. Because it has such a jagged coastline, they can't get cruise ships in, which prevents the island from becoming overly developed’ (as cited in “Adventures in Dominica,” 2007). Unfortunately, in multiple media interviews, Bruckheimer decried the island’s developmental limitations as a springboard for highlighting the competence and creativity of the production team. In one interview, he likened the island’s hotels to camping accommodations, stating “The hotels weren't exactly fancy, but everybody bonded together. It was like going to camp. A lot of cast and crew lived in cabins, slept in mosquito netting and had dinners on the beach” (as cited in “Adventures in Dominica,” 2007). The Executive Producer of the film, Bruce Hendricks, was even less subtle, saying, “Dominica is what the Caribbean looked like 200 years ago” (as cited in “Adventures in Dominica,” 2007). Even a stunt double, Lee Arenberg, weighed in on the chastisement, saying “Dominica is an incredibly beautiful place, but it's definitely off the beaten path and to find yourself living that way for a few months will change your life and inspire you” (“Beware of falling coconuts,” 2007).

These negative reviews of filming in Dominica were consistent. The production supervisor of the film, Tom Hayslip, told the online media that Dominica did not have a record of hosting large film productions and it struggled to meet the production’s requirement. Production Designer, Rick Heinrich chided, “There's no road in Dominica that's 15 degrees,” (as

And if the island’s infrastructure was a problem of the Hollywood filmmakers so too was the weather. The First Assistant Director of the film, Peter Kohn, complained that it rained everywhere they went (“Adventures in Dominica,” 2007). When it was not too rainy for the Pirates of the Caribbean’s production team, it was too hot (“Beware of falling coconuts,” 2007).

Despite denials by Interviewee No.37, the local transport coordinator employed by the film, of any significant traffic delays with the film’s convoys, star talent Orlando Bloom complained that it was difficult traveling around the island (cited in “Pirates of the Caribbean filming ends,” 2005). Because of the island’s fragile tourism industry, which its economy relies on heavily, even episodic negative publicity by these renowned filmmakers can be extensively devastating.

Furthermore, opportunities to transform the local experience of hosting these films into viable tourism products seem to have escaped both public and private stakeholders in the country. As I stated earlier, no artifacts or relics from the production of any of these feature films remain on the island, but, at least with the Pirates of the Caribbean, Interviewees Nos. 5 and 51 emphasized that it was not from want of trying to secure them. Interviewee No.5 explained that one of the major problems was that these requests by state and private tourism interests for the production artifacts to remain on the island were an afterthought and never surfaced in any written agreements or during preparatory consultations.

Whereas many countries frequently justify overtures and concessions to big-budget, foreign film productions as a strategy for developing their tourism sector, the data in this research showed that this was not the case with Dominica. Of all the major foreign film productions that used the island as a location, the state was only actively involved in luring one.
The only film that the Government of Dominica successfully courted to shoot in Dominica was the Pirates of the Caribbean II. This rare governmental strategy appeared motivated more by political than economic considerations, since the public’s outcry over the island’s missing out on the first Pirates of the Caribbean film was so widespread and venomous that it potentially posed real threats to the incumbent government at the national polls. Interviewee No.17 stated that the overall strategy for attracting these projects remains passive:

Well, right now, it's basically them contacting us. We do not have a strategy or have not heretofore had a strategy that said we wish to contact all the producers of reality TV shows, but we have been doing quite a bit of work with the location film scouting. We have been advertising in the film guide and going to the film trade show, trying to attract the bigger films and my personal feeling is that we need to kind of crawl before we walk. Yeah, we got Pirates of the Caribbean and we need to continue to do that, but in between every 5 to 7 years when you get interest in bigger projects you need to have a series of things happening, so the issues of documentaries and smaller things we need to more proactively go after that and that's why I say it needs to be determined, because film is only taking a niche approach with us (Piper, lines 102-110).

Despite the passive marketing of the island as a film location, some in the local tourism sector, like Interviewee No.9, believed that the island has received a small tourism boosts from these films. For instance, Interviewee No.15 attributed the increased visitor arrivals at the Titou Gorge to the direct publicity that the site received during the director’s cuts of Pirates of the Caribbean II. The Titou Gorge, which is a staple of the island tourism product, was the site of the popular scene in the movie featuring a Johnny Depp daring adventure.

No local policymaker interviewed could reference any tourism campaign connected to
the production of the Seventh Sign. Although the Orchid House was a period piece based on a story set entirely in Dominica, it too had no significant impact on the island’s tourism.

Conclusively, Interviewee No.15 summarized the general sentiments of most respondents in the study, when he stated that the island did not fully exploit the tourism potential of Pirates of the Caribbean:

BERNARD: So the strategy was wrong?

CLEM: Totally wrong. If they had gone to the small trade shows, the television trade shows and they are not small, they are big in their own regard.

BERNARD: So the Association of Film Commissioners International that market is not for Dominica or other small island states?

CLEM: I don't think so. I don't think so. It is good to have a sort of presence right, being associate member or something or something but it doesn't warrant setting up a booth every year, doing every five years or something, spending that kind of money.

BERNARD: So instead of going there you go where?

CLEM: There are other types of trade shows, independent producers, ICP, commercial producers [pause]. I've got a whole list of them man, the Europeans man. There are more European productions shot in the Caribbean every year than American (Johnson, lines 706-717).

According to Interviewee No 17, for now, this is the direction that the local tourism industry seems to be heading. Dominican tourism officials have reorganized their promotional and marketing strategies, reducing attention to big-budget film producers and implementing internal and external strategies that encourage small-budget film producers to use the island for shooting their projects. They generally agree that these types of foreign film productions better
suit the political and economic characteristics of the island (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Interviewees’ Preference for Low-Budget Foreign Film Productions**

Interviewee No.17 explained that in this new model the government is partnering with the private sector:

So film at this particular time because of financial resources is going to take ah, it's not going to be a primary focus of Discover Dominica Authority. It's going to be a secondary, in terms of like a niche. We would look to develop film in association with the private sector, like we do to develop things like the health and wellness sector and some of the other sectors (Piper, lines 77-80).

Interviewee No.15 endorsed this new approach, adding that although constrained by
small budgets, producers of documentaries and television shows who shoot on the island tend to pay better wages than the big-budget productions. He added that on these projects, it is easier for local agents to negotiate better wages for local labor and better rates for services than on the Hollywood-type production. He said that these larger productions use their political and financial leverage to maximize profits rather than to offer fair wages that meet international labor standards or fair contracts in line with fair-trade principles:

If you don't put these [labor regulations] in place then you cannot just expect Disney to come and just pay more because they are a foreign production. You can get away with it with smaller productions, you know. They ask me how much do we pay people and I will put that in their budgets for them, you know. So labor, I would put $50 US. Skilled guy, 75 US, you know, a carpenter or somebody like that, you know that kind of thing. So at least from my point of view, I can influence that on the smaller productions. On the big productions where they sit down and work with the Ministry of Finance, that's where they need to get their shit together, man (Johnson, lines 564-570).

The Flexibility in Surmounting Logistical Challenges

SIDS territories typically have very unsophisticated infrastructure and challenging geophysical characteristics, so to do major film productions there local intelligence on the peculiarities of topographic, climatic, and cultural limitations is as important as academic theories and professional rubrics about managing projects. Interviewee No.15, who has over two decades of experience working on film productions in the Caribbean, noted that unfortunately when big-budget film producers visit these islands they tend to import their production logic, little altered, pushing the limits of these islands beyond acceptable boundaries and against local
wisdom. Emphasizing that this practice is particularly risky in Dominica, the most mountainous of the Caribbean islands, he said that foreign film producers most clearly exhibited this tendency in their transportation planning and strategy:

Therefore it came with the Hollywood, you know, attitude, and they thought that they could do anything here and they got trucks stuck around corners, trying to take 40 foot containers up to Titou Gorge around up you know the road going up to Laudat, and they don't listen to anybody. So they got themselves in trouble that way (Johnson, lines 228-231).

To remain within their comfort zones, these foreign productions tend to stretch the resources of a compliant and desperate state to unusual limits, while disrupting the daily lives of citizens conditioned to yield to the fancies of big-business. As Interviewee No.28 observed, catastrophe is usually averted, but at a substantial cost or inconvenience to the country and its people:

ROBINSON: Luckily for us the police they were onboard with us so whenever we had to move we always had the police to direct the traffic because you know the local drivers will always obey the police in uniform so we had those guys at the head of the convoy. It was well planned, when we were moving we had well organized because we had movement days and we had the assistance of the police. There was nothing really challenging for us.

BERNARD: So you got priority on the streets at all times?

ROBINSON: Definitely, because at the time we needed the money in the country so the local authorities did everything in their power to make sure that they had no hiccups (Robinson, lines 52-60).
Although Interviewee No.37 admitted that the island’s sinuous, narrow, and rough road network frequently pose serious challenges, none of the locals working on any of the major foreign productions identified the lack of an international airport as a serious impediment. Interviewee No.47 warned Dominicans not to expect that level of tolerance to become standard:

BERNARD: Is the lack of an international airport a problem?

LANGLAIS: I think it's going to be. I think it's going to be. Look for the beginning part of things, you know, people will accommodate having to fly to Puerto Rico or go someplace else and then come in, you know, or there being only one flight a day on LIAT coming in at a certain hour, that's going to work a little bit, but it's not going to work when we start having a large number of people coming in. You're going to need more flights during the day. You're going to need more easily connected flights, you know. Most people now are accustomed to one place but not with too long a layover, connecting to Houston, Dallas, Miami, Charlotte, San Juan, but the furthest away for the most part, that Americans want to be, the American film community want to be is the equivalent from a flight to New York, which is 5 hours, so that's what they are accustomed to and when they have to go beyond 5 hours to get their destination, it starts to get really uncomfortable, especially when you are on a big flight and then you are on a tiny airplane, where there's no first class, and there's no food, and you know the rocky ride (Langlais, lines 200-211).

Langlais’ pessimism should not be taken lightly, especially since some of the equipment of the crew of Pirates of the Caribbean shipped from the United States to Dominica mistakenly ended up in the more well-known Dominican Republic, which has an international airport (“Adventures in Dominica,” 2007). In fact, the producer of Pirates of the Caribbean, Jerry
Bruckheimer complained that limited air access to the island was a serious setback for the production. He told the press, “But if a piece of equipment breaks down, it takes at least two days to get it replaced from off-island, so we had daunting production challenges” (“Adventures in Dominica,” 2007).

The Indifference to Hollywood’s Celebrity Culture

Dominica’s experiences with the production of Hollywood films that feature popular celebrities supported a common regional narrative that most Caribbean countries tend to be less obsessed with Hollywood celebrity culture than people who live in developed countries. Every respondent who discussed the issue noted that Dominicans are generally indifferent to international celebrities when they visit the island. Interviewees Nos. 44 and 9 remarked that although the island regularly hosts international music stars and visits from Hollywood celebrities, there are no limo or valet services on the island. Interviewee No.9 said, “Dominicans are weird like that. Movie stars visit Portsmouth [a major town on the island] all the time and people hardly make a fuss” (Riviere, lines 188-120).

All the focus group discussions produced similar assertions. At the session with the villagers of Soufriere, respondents eagerly disassociated themselves from a star-struck, celebrity culture:

BERNARD: Were people dying to see Johnny Depp?

PARTICIPANT A: No!

PARTICIPANT B: Not me!

PARTICIPANT A: Not me, nah!

PARTICIPANT C: Not me!
PARTICIPANT E: Not me!

PARTICIPANT C: Maybe the younger ones.

BERNARD: Were most people trying to see Johnny Depp?

PARTICIPANT B: Nah man! (Soufriere Focus Group, lines 762-770)

Additionally, Interviewee No.37 reported that locals who worked closely with the cast and crew often commented that the foreign celebrities continually expressed pleasant surprise that Dominicans were not star-struck:

BERNARD: How did the public respond to Johnny Depp’s presence?

GEORGE: I understand that he was quite taken aback when he had not been mobbed or sought after for autographs.

BERNARD: He wasn't?

GEORGE: No, he was free to go about. Probably the cadets had a better experience than even me with him, Orlando Bloom, those fellas. They were among the cadets like they were ordinary people. There was no force, no stoppage of work to get autographs. There were no harassments that came to my attention of them and I understand that it was mentioned that he [Johnny Depp] was really impressed with that (George, lines 215-222).

As the comments of Interviewee No.14 indicated, even the locals with whom the cast and crew developed non-work-related, social relationships reported not being heavily invested in the celebrity appeal of the big-name stars that temporarily befriended them:

I don't know about these men, boss. It is after people start to tell me boy heavy fellas [famous people] that are there, but they liked coming by me. These men were coming here regularly. And one day Johnny Depp came here. I didn't know it was him. I was
there making a wall, and he came there and he had a wrap around him and we started to talk (Frederick, lines 31-39).
Discussion

This study clearly demonstrates the complex workings and deep penetration of globalization in one of the smallest and most vulnerable territories in the world. It supports Castells’ (1996) argument that national states are important actors in the process of globalization, although they are heavily committed to the economic and political practices sustaining the flows of global capital through a new spatial logic. This study highlights many of the difficulties that confront developing countries when they engage in foreign investment agreements with transnational business, but it also brings into sharp focus some peculiar challenges with foreign film productions as short-term foreign direct investment projects. It clearly confirms Pelling & Uitto’s (2001) proposition that Caribbean governments are so eager to attract foreign economic projects to their shores that they provide excessive concessions to big-businesses that invariably undermine the economic development of these countries.

Apart from endorsing many extant theories on the tensions between the nation-state and FDI investment, the research also revealed some troubling issues associated with the interaction between small islands states and wealthy film-producers that use these territories to produce their films. While the disparity in power relations appears obvious at first glance, the complicity of state actors and the local elite in undermining openings for national benefits leads to more sophisticated analyzes of the dynamics of these relationships.

The majority of the Dominican policymakers interviewed for the study did not have a major problem with the island granting fiscal concessions to these wealthy, big-budget film production companies, emphasizing the relevance of Nye’s (2004) theorization of soft power and Louw’s (2011) concept of the Pax-Americana, which clearly outline the subservience of elites in
developing countries to Western business interests. Whereas policymakers in the Eastern Caribbean assert that incentives and concessions are crucial for sustaining investment and averting drops in national revenue, Chai & Goyal (2008) argued that these countries could experience significant increases in national revenue if they abandoned many of their concessions. Although admitting possible benefits, such as delayed revenue, Chai & Goyal (2008) doubted that the cost of tax incentives in the Eastern Caribbean justifies them. In making a connection with cross-border film production, I acknowledge Christopherson’s, (2008) observation that most film locations outside of Los Angeles that host Hollywood productions end up facing significant losses to the ignorance of the taxpayers funding them.

The results of my study support the general trend in Eastern Caribbean countries concerning the discretionary and hush-hush ways in which concessions are granted (Chai & Goyal, 2008). Throughout the region, the intense competition to have the most attractive concession package often makes the cost override the benefits (Chai & Goyal, 2008). Calling for a regional approach to harmonizing concessions as a means of mitigating national losses and reducing intra-regional competition, Chai & Goyal (2008) note, “A development strategy based on increasing the amount of concessions to investors is unlikely to result in increased investment and growth” (p. 22).

Apart from opening new avenues for exploring Chai & Goyal’s (2008) recommendations, my study also endorses Goldsmith & O’Regan’s (2005) and Wicker’s (2003) arguments that low-cost labor alone no longer satisfies foreign film producers searching for concession from offshore locations to produce their films. If that were the case, Canada would not be among the most successful of these destinations; however, I depart from Wicker (2003) when she asserts that favorable exchange rates are the most attractive stimulus to luring these productions. In
Dominica’s case, currency valuation did not surface as a major bargaining point, although the Eastern Caribbean Dollar is significantly weaker than both the EURO and the U.S. Dollar. Still, Vogel (1990) warns, and this research shows, it would be a mistake to deemphasize the impact of cheap labor, since it can accrue to substantial savings for these productions.

Furthermore, there are other means of subsidies that frequently escape cost-benefit analyses of these film productions in developing countries. Perhaps none more so than the services that the state provides, which easily cross over into benefits for private businesses: a typical case in point was the non-humanitarian special duty facilities for police and fire officers. Arguably, no other clients, resident or foreign, have exploited these provisions more than the big-budget foreign film productions operating on the island. Fiscal incentives are now a given, but not only that, governments must also be willing to do whatever it takes that does not stir negative publicity to assist these wealthy short-term investors.

Christopherson (2006) notes that film commissions generally emphasis cost reduction strategies as their strong point, but at its most functional stage the Dominica Film Commission (DFC) did not only lobby for extensive fiscal incentives for the major foreign film producers using the island. More specifically, it harnessed and coordinated private sector interests to weigh down on the lobbying efforts to government and assist in advancing the business interests of its foreign clients. The behavior of the DFC suggests that film commissions in SIDS have the tendency to adopt imperialistic attitudes that promote U.S. cultural industries to the detriment of national development. When government officials chastised local workers about their complaints of wages and working conditions, when they mobilized the local population to surrender some of their normal conditions in the service of these foreign film producers, with no compensation, and when they twisted existing laws to unprecedented levels to accommodate these foreign film
produces, they were endorsing Sinclair’s (1995) and Jin’s (2011) observations that contemporary American cultural imperialism convinces these state operatives into believing that such sacrifices are inevitable for national progress and development.

The ways that these foreign film productions colonize and dominate these spaces have striking resemblances to how empires operated under colonialism and how they continue to implement their imperial agenda (Newman, 2008). Through their colonial practices, their priority is on exercising uninterrupted control of these locations, sucking out as much as they can from them with little mind for their sustainability or the wellbeing of the local inhabitants.

In this study, I also point out that although not aggressively promoted, Dominica does provide substantial incentives to foreign film producers. In fact, according to the data, Hollywood producers are even more aggressive in seeking concessions than foreign investors from other industries: requests for exemptions from social security are never successfully made by other petitioners from other industries.

I also found it troubling that information on the details of these incentive packages remains largely unclear, since public pronouncements on them are often inconsistency, even when they come from the persons directly instrumental in facilitating them. In one of her trade show interviews, the former Dominica Film Commissioner, Anita Bully, noted that Dominica provides a 10% tax rebate to foreign film producers on their total expenditure incurred while shooting on the island (“Dominica Film Commission interview,” 2008). In this study, she admitted that the rebate given to Pirates of the Caribbean was 15%. Bully’s pronouncement also conflicts with a recent study conducted by Nurse et al. (2009), which reported that when Disney shot two of its films in Dominica, it received no special incentives from the government.

Obviously, Nurse et al. (2009) were inaccurate on that count. Leaving open the
possibilities of investigative error, and considering the investigators’ lamentations on the
difficulties of accessing information from the island, the findings of this study may also suggest
that national governments in the region tend to withhold crucial information from professional
investigators and assessors even when these research projects are commissioned and funded by
regional organizations that they actively participate in and even help manage.

Generally though, the island has had a weak system of assessing the benefits to the island
from investing in these foreign film productions. It has never conducted an independent study
based on a cost-benefit analysis, not that I am suggesting that this should be the only method of
analysis. Cost-benefit analyses, while useful in the quantification of important economic
indicators are limited in their ability to assess the benefits of foreign investment projects on local
human development, since they tend to prioritize those who already have the most and are
heavily influenced by participants’ self evaluation (De Shutter, 2013).

Perhaps one the strongest cases for independent assessment of these foreign film
productions in satellite locations came most convincingly from a review of Pirates of the
Caribbean’s filming on the island. The local film commissioner and the Superintendent of Police
responsible for traffic management presented conflicting accounts of the wages paid to local
workers. Both of these sources are highly respected locally and were integrally involved in the
production; moreover, despite the local contractors’ admission that most of the infrastructural
work done by the Pirates of the Caribbean were temporary and unreliable for prolonged use, the
island’s former film commissioner referred to them as a major contribution to the island during a
regional conference to develop the film industry in the OECS. I do not take these inconsistencies
lightly, since Dominica’s report of its encounter with the production of the Disney film franchise
has left other islands salivating for a similar experience (Ysaguirre, 2012).
Certainty, official assessments authored by persons directly involved in the management of these projects and who may have directly benefited from them are unreliable. The study done by the local film commissioner regarding the impact on the island of the production of Pirates of the Caribbean, while a useful document, lacks credibility as an independent assessment. Apart from possible conflict of interest issues, the tone of the impact assessment study appeared more celebratory than critical, and whenever it offered critiques they were predominantly in the service of the foreign film producers. Also, considering that in the U.S., with more advanced systems of public accountability than Dominica, a film commissioner was convicted for bribery (Russell, 2007) and an independent audit found an Iowa film commission guilty of impropriety (Longwell, 2011), an independent review seems more than appropriate.

From the levels of secrecy surrounding these projects documented in this study, these skewed assessments are even more problematic. While U.S. domestic states are eager to promote their film incentive programs and often disclose details on the packages that they offer to film producers, public authorities in Dominica discourage the sharing of such information publicly. The government censors documented information on its agreements and transactions with big-budget producers, beyond the implementation period and several years after the timeframes have elapsed.

When public authorities in the U.S. and much of Europe are stingy with such information, access to public information laws frequently make significant portions of these documents available to the public. In SIDS, like Dominica, without such laws and with an arbitrary governmental culture on disclosing information, there are no such assurances. De Shutter (2013 writes, “By disclosing the terms of the agreement and ensuring adequate transparency, the state and the investor can reduce suspicion regarding fairness of the contract
terms and guard against unrealistic demands (p. 173).

There seems little hope for change, although the data from this research make a compelling case for it. The proposed Broadcast Act that the Government of Dominica tabled as a bill in 2008 recommended even greater censorship and concealment of public information. After widespread public outcry against many of its provisions, the government withdrew it and it is yet to resurface ("Draft broadcast act raises valid concerns," 2008). Compounding the problem, the local media tend to be apathetic about covering or investigating issues surrounding the hosting of big-budget foreign film productions, and foreign film producers shooting their films on the island almost always get away with keeping their finances and contractual arrangements confidential.

When there is no transparency in the negotiations and organization of FDIs, like is usually the case with these foreign film productions on the island, it is nearly impossible to expose or investigate those who breach the public’s trust and subvert public accountability systems ("Draft broadcast act raises valid concerns," 2008). One of the most effective investments against the continued trend of such dishonorable public representation would be to continually produce independent cost benefit analyses of such projects (Chai & Goyal, 2008).

The difficulties that I had accessing public documents on these projects underscore the perpetual cry of researchers collecting data on and in the island. My experience validates many of their claims about struggles accessing even the most basic documents. Even an IMF study by Chai & Goyal (2008) had trouble finding key data on tax concessions made by Eastern Caribbean Governments to FDIs.

In this study, I also show that Dominica’s approaches to dealing with foreign film producers ignore Campling’s (2006) valid recommendation that SIDS countries engage their citizens actively in policy formulation and decision making as a template for working towards
sustainable development. This is particularly poignant in Dominica’s case, since I found that community leaders were usually more effective at representing the interests of ordinary citizens, a finding that endorses Castells’ (1996) observation that local governmental authorities are oftentimes more effective than national governments in mediating global capital, since the state can be either too rigid or too small as a single entity to be an effective negotiator with global capital.

The growing angst amongst leaders in some of the local communities that hosted these foreign film productions about the national government’s willingness and capacity to represent community residents validates Fransworth’s (2006) caution that governments in poor countries that offer excessive concessions to foreign investors will eventually lose the trust and confidence of its citizenry. Castells’ (1996) suggestion that an amalgamation of local authorities offers the best option to engage the penetration of global capital is quite compelling. Also, to address the void in public accountability by the national government’s complicity and to counter the subservience of democratic principles associated with these projects, SIDS territories ought to mobilize effective civic society institutions when engaging these powerful transnational companies (Beasley-Murray, 2010). After all, the data from this study proves Wright’s (2013) point that most transnational companies are obsessed with profit maximization and are little committed to meeting their social responsibilities in the territories where they conduct business.

Furthermore, the UN General Assembly has adopted the Right to Development, which places certain normative expectations on foreign investment projects. Pertinent to this provision are the conditions that subjected communities participate in the decision making on these projects and that they benefit directly from revenues derived from them (De Shutter, 2013). Although industry officials recommend that film producers contribute to the communities of the
locations used for production (McCurdy, 2011), the major film productions that shot in Dominica were quite miserly with community donations and sponsorship of social development projects. Even when such contributions were expressed conditions for the communities’ involvement, the film producers did not always honor them.

From this angle, my research contributes to the ongoing debate about the effects of foreign investments in developing countries (Colen et al., 2013). It supports the school of thought, which argues that even when economic growth produces an increase in income for the poor, that increase does not necessarily transfer to larger societal development. Also, research projects heavily reliant on econometrics that focus on growth indicators are often deficient in accurately presenting other crucial economic and social factors, such as the inequality of wages. Ultimately, with many FID’s, such as foreign film productions, even with increased income across the board, the rich may be benefiting disproportionately more than the poor, leading to further developmental complications.

In this research project, I also extend Goldsmith & O’Regan’s (2005) convincing explications of how the state employs extraordinary means to provide favorable conditions for foreign film productions to take advantage of production locations. While they are correct in identifying the more conspicuous modes of facilitation, such as the securing of permits and the deploying of state resources, they tend to by-pass or deemphasize other questionable and covert ways in which the state facilitates these productions. As I illustrated in this study, public authorities may sometimes manipulate or subvert laws and regulations or smother their enforcement as a means of lessening the anxieties of these foreign film producers. Additionally, consistent with McCurdy’s (2011) observations of offshore film productions, I argue that foreign film producers using the island typically recruited some of the most influential local security
personnel to secure compliance to their business objectives.

From my analysis of the data, I find it difficult to support Pav’s argument that filming a big-budget production in SIDS carries major difficulties and setbacks that are quite expensive for film producers (as cited in DeWayne, 2002). On the contrary, the data advise me that by using these islands, wealthy film production companies save huge amounts of money, which may even result in the underutilization of major financial allocations tabled in their budgets.

Interestingly, many of these foreign film producers are keen to cite hidden costs when talking down SIDS countries as production locations, but they rarely ever open up about their hidden savings. For instance, although Second Mates Production Inc. spent six months in Dominica, shooting most of Pirates of the Caribbean II and some of Pirates of the Caribbean III, the company’s expenditures on the island only amounted to 6% of the budget of Pirates of the Caribbean I. Many of these exaggerated difficulties that these foreign filmmakers mention in the media are easily circumvented when they adopt effective production management practices and employ political strategies that embrace key local power brokers as allies.

From my conclusions in this study, I also endorse Miller et al.’s (2005) theory of the New International Division of Cultural Labor, since the data indicated in varied ways the methods that film productions employ to manipulate labor, even to the point of subtly getting those grossly affected by their unjust practices to buy into the production’s labor logic. The notion that you “get what you pay for” which is a mantra throughout the international film industry (as cited in Dewayne, 2002, p. 5) does not hold in the Dominican context. I argue in this research that the foreign filmmakers who used the island secured local labor and services significantly lower than acceptable international rates. In fact, SIDS countries often provide good crews with good work habits for cheap (DeWyane, 2002).
I also augmented Miller et al.’s (2005) analysis by zooming in on the frequently overlooked partnership between the state and local elites that encourages these foreign film producers to exploit local labor, even when it is not in the national interest to do so. In fact, what I find particularly intriguing about big-budget film productions around the world is their constant ability to escape the scrutiny of social advocacy groups or the protests of anti-worker-exploitation campaigns, despite the fact that they routinely adopt similar labor practices and tactics to many of the transnational manufacturing firms that have so rightly been maligned and vilified.

Starkey’s (1994) and Miller & Leger’s (2001) explanations of the ways Hollywood dissects labor into primary and secondary markets to facilitate its business objectives is useful, but as this research shows even within these secondary group there is a further hierarchy constituted not by levels of skills, but mostly by the ability of these types of labor to advance the interests of the production in multivariate ways. Deviating from Scott’s (2005) analysis, I argue that by focusing on the employment of local elites, researchers can get a better picture of how labor at the bottom levels of these productions sometimes receive respectable compensation.

Besides, a more useful way of looking at labor in these projects is to highlight the gross disproportionality between the wages paid to these works and the responsibilities they hold or the types of duties assigned to them. The cases of the production assistants trudging leased equipment worth hundreds of thousands of U.S. dollars through treacherous terrain, and the EMT in whose charge lives and powerful drugs were placed magnify this point. The grossly inadequate financial compensation provided for the services of an EMT on a major film production, with multiple mass gatherings, and where risky activities take place speaks volumes.

Also, production assistants are quite valuable to film projects in multiple ways. They are
key functionaries in the public relations strategy for managing the immediate production environment and are also a critical defensive line in dealing with strangers or observers to the production (McCurdy, 2011). Skonieczney (2010) was making a similar point when he criticized a U.S. security firm for the low wages that it paid its staff who provided security for one of the wealthiest citizens in the United States, Warren Buffet. The deplorable labor rates paid to most of the locals working on these foreign film productions seem to implicate local public authorities in a type of beneficial complicity, where they knowingly aid and abet perpetrators in possible violations of human dignity in the service of wider political and economic goals (Wettstein, 2009).

Importantly, just a month after Pirates of the Caribbean wrapped up its production on the island, a veteran Dominican newspaper columnist and legal mind lamented the demise of worker representation on the island. He charged that local unions were weak and many workers felt helpless against an increasingly anti-worker private sector (Lawrence, 2005). Weak unions are not good for local workers, but there are also suggestions that they may also be bad for foreign film producers shooting in certain satellite locations. In fact, internationally renowned location manager, Paul Pav argues that during film production in offshore locations unions can be beneficial to the production, since they make it easier to reduce risk and the unpredictability associated with local labor (as cited in DeWayne, 2002).

I also found the results of my study to support other research projects that have shown that FDI projects have the tendency to increase wage inequality (Willem te Velde, 2003). Dominica’s wealth distribution is not as troubling as most of the other Caribbean islands (BBC, 2012); however, the practice of hosting foreign film production poses a serious threat to this positive aspect of the country’s profile. As Miller et al. (2005) and others have noted, wage
inequality is an inescapable feature of big-budget film productions. With weakening systems of worker representation, the more of these types of productions that the island hosts the more likely that the wide disparity in wages along the labor hierarchy will become entrenched in the island’s business culture.

Already, I find it astonishing that no policymaker challenged the wide disparity between the highest paid local worker and the lowest paid local worker on Pirates of the Caribbean, but this finding endorses Romero’s (2004) argument that national governments and their affiliates are complicit in this type of exploitation. This type of wage inequality matches the problematic trend in the U.S. that can certainly have more immediate and damaging impacts on SIDS countries as globalized neoliberalism becomes more entrenched in these economies. The CEO of American banks make salaries that are as much as 500 times the salaries of their lowest paid worker (Cannon, 2011); yet, U.S. regulators appear little troubled by such statistics.

Notwithstanding, SIDS ought to guard against adopting such absurd levels of wage inequality, since their economies would be unable to sustain them without serious social and political conflicts; however, there are already signs that they have already allowed them.

From my analysis in this study, I suggest that perhaps the lines between above-the-line and below-the-line workers should not be as clearly drawn nor as impulsively emphasized as previous scholars may have hinted, since these foreign film producers normally contract the services of skilled residents in these satellite locations to supplement a core of skilled personnel. It is not so much that local labor is “unskilled,” but that it is grossly undervalued and that only elites with the political space to negotiate are able to gain commensurate compensation. For example, the majority of residents in these host territories may quickly outline the varied levels of driving skills of many of the very bus drivers that the foreign film producers entrust to
transport their high-valued cast and crew.

Recognizing these important nuances, the local film commissioner described such workers as semi-killed laborers (Bully, 2005, p. 5), but the labeling of these local experts by policymakers as semi-skilled workers serves to co-sign some of the biases of classical economic theories of labor that have traditionally hindered the progress of developing nations. It also invariably panders to the economic logic of international film production that places suffocating thresholds on the market value of the peculiar attributes of these locations that ascribe a benign economic rational to their exploitation.

An alternative perspective to examining how these big-budget film producers approach labor compensation in these SIDS satellite locations might focus less on their valuation of technical skills and more on their prioritization of the power of local agents and sympathizers to control and direct local labor along a predetermined hierarchy and model. Mostly, the focus is less on professional and technical skills in the traditional sense and more on the capacity of a few prized employees and collaborators to regiment the required labor force into a logic that underemphasizes workers’ rights and compensation and highlights the objectives of the film production within the national economic programs, a strategy that ultimately masks the main goal of the producers to make the best film at the cheapest possible cost. Arguably, the approaches of these foreign film producers to labor are more political than technical or applied, which I find a critical distinction, because by foregrounding the skills rhetoric researchers run the risk of whitewashing the critical tri-partite tensions among business objectives, national investment strategies, and human rights empowerment, when in fact for critical scholars they become the bee-hive of any inquiry inspired by labor justice.

In their defense, many of the local elites working with these foreign film producers argue
that the wages that these films pay to locals are comparable to or slightly better than the local
going rates. What they omit is that local labor wages are horrible in most cases and a significant
contributor to migration. Unions in Dominica continually complain that the country’s minimum
wage is too low (“Stipulated minimum wage too low… unions,” 2007), and while the United
States gears up to hike its minimum wage at both the state and federal levels (Lovett, 2013),
American-based film companies continue to exploit minimum wage standards in SIDS, like
Dominica, that are significantly lower than many set in the developing world. No doubt, the
neoliberal developments in the global market feed the trend of plummeting labor wages in
developing countries like Dominica. Entrenched labor policies increasingly sycophantic to
wealthy, avaricious employers have crippled unions and worker security, leaving businesses
mostly antiquated minimum wage standards and a glut in labor supply to direct labor
negotiations.

Historical context is also important in understanding labor dynamics in these SIDS
countries, and I find this particular so for Dominica. The current anemic state of worker
representation belies the island’s historic roles in regional labor struggles. Throughout the
Caribbean, and especially in Dominica, organized labor was a major force behind colonial
resistance and the struggles for national independence (Rhodes & Henry, 1995). Labor
movements in Caribbean islands were intricately tied to struggles for other forms of social
justice. The labor movement in Dominica was so organized and influential that it was a local
labor unionist who spearheaded the first international public protest against apartheid in South
Africa.

The legendary Dominican politician and unionist Phyllis Shand Allfrey, ironically the
subject of a film by one of the foreign film producers who exploited the island’s local labor, led
her fellow West Indian Federation representatives on a walk out of the International Labor Organization’s 1960 Geneva conference demanding international action against the South African apartheid regime (Paravisini-Gebert, 1996). By extension, the current dearth of effective labor representation in Dominica also mirrors a steep decline in the strength of civil society institutions, partly buried by a perverse neoliberal logic.

It is not insignificant that despite the fact that Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit, under whose tenure the largest foreign film production took place in the island, campaigned and won the 2005 national elections partly on promises to increase the minimum wage and attract foreign investment to the country (“Dominica country profile,” 2012), complaints about low local wages continue to increase. The last time that Dominica increased its minimum wage was in 2008 (U.S. Department of State, 2012), but the concessions to those at the bottom of the labor force were so insignificant that it aggravated the ire of the labor movement, which then ignited effective resistance from local businesses that sent public advocates in retreat (“Address by PM Hon. Roosevelt Skerrit,” 2010). The increases were so marginal and yielded so subserviently to pressure from the country’s business elites that they left most of the labor force disgruntled, prompting a further promise by the Prime Minister to revisit them (“PM reiterates commitment to deliver on election promises,” 2010).

Dominica has different minimum wage levels for different jobs. The lowest minimum wage in the country is US$1.50 per hour and the highest is US$2.06 per hour (U.S. Department of State, 2012). Most Dominicans work a 40-hour week and the island’s laws make specific provisions for overtime pay. The president of the largest workers union on the island, Kertist Augustus may have been alluding to the very challenges posed by the island’s hosting of big-budget film productions when he told the local press, “The [labor] movement is faced with a few
challenges that threaten to engulf us: trade liberalization, technology, globalization and fragile economies” (as cited in “Treat us as equals: WAWU President,” 2011, p. 9).

Foreign, big-budget film productions using the island as a production location mostly met little resistance to their practices, since Dominica has never had a documented set of comprehensive procedures or rules for public institutions interacting with foreign film producers. Unlike many of the developed countries, such as Canada and New Zealand, with records of success as established satellite film locations (Miller et al, 2005), Dominica does not have any established policy or framework for accommodating these types of investments. The major policy documents of the government mention film as a potential focus of economic development, but do little more.

From this study I was easily able to recognize the lack of a clear policy or procedural framework for working with these producers. The interview responses clearly revealed this, especially when policymakers consistently talked of the hosting of Pirates of the Caribbean as new to Dominica, although the country had previously hosted at least two big-budget film productions. Documentation and analyzes of the island’s encounters with these big-budget film productions as a platform for establishing policies and processes are very poor. In some cases, key decision makers crucial to developing policies to attract and accommodate foreign film production on the island were not aware that scenes from the film Seventh Sign were shot in Dominica.

Sustaining such mediocre national frameworks comes with a price. The study endorsed the observation of the World Bank (2007), which states that poor, developing countries do not have the proper institutional capacity to negotiate with and accommodate transnational business projects without being vulnerable to exploitation. Foreign film producers routinely exploit the
lack of coherence in public policies and the prevalence of weak institutional frameworks in these countries for interfacing with foreign film production. They are most effective in doing so when they align with powerful locals who can effectively lobby for their specific interests.

From this inquiry, I found that whereas many theories of satellite film production superficially attended to the role of resident location scouts, in the case of SIDS, like Dominica, they are actually one of the most powerful powerbrokers, influential on both sides of the bargaining table. While advising local policymakers on critical points of negotiations, they are also the ones who make recommendations to the Hollywood producers on hires and contracts. Even low-budget films prioritize the services of these highly-valued agents in their compensation packages and big-budget productions “leave the door wide open for the location scout” (McCurdy, 2011, p.60). Location scouts are seemingly indispensable to these production projects (Elmer & Gasher, 2005).

On the other hand, previous scholars have tended to overstate the commitment of location scouts to their resident communities (DeWayne, 2002), but I found that in the case of Dominica only in rare cases did the resident location scouts lobby and secure the best possible deals for local communities. The more normal practice was to demand and receive enviable terms and conditions for themselves, while mostly remaining indifferent to agreements that were unfair to other subordinate locals or the wider community.

Based on the results of my study, I advise that instead of depending heavily on private sector interests to lead these types of arrangements, the state should strengthen its capacity with more transparent processes and competent institutions, since dominance by elite interests tend to lead to greed and the unfair distribution of benefits. Accommodating big-budget films has the potential to be beneficial to SIDS, but the multiplier effect so venerated by policymakers has a
diminishing effect in direct performance with the levels of the host location’s competences and capacities.

SIDS countries that do business with transnational corporations can reduce their vulnerability to manipulation and exploitation by being better prepared and adopting more effective negotiating frameworks. As this research shows, even governments with a reputation for protecting their populations from unwieldy transnational corporations often make questionable decisions when negotiating with foreign investors that promise immediate economic results (De Shutter, 2013). Although foreign film producers typically provide detailed information about their productions to location authorities in many developed countries (McCurdy, 2011), the study showed that relevant decision makers in Dominica were largely ignorant of many fundamental pieces of information crucial for negotiations.

Furthermore, these host countries typically adopt an almost laissez faire approach to many of the transactions. For instance, local contractors had to provide the Hollywood producers with financial statements and a detailed work history, but the government of Dominica appeared to have had no idea about the film’s production budget for the island at the time of negotiating. Also, it is disturbing that local services are routinely provided to foreign film producers, without proper documentation, despite the regular practice of film producers globally to insist on written contracts, a major component of what industry operatives call “deliverables” (McCurdy, 2011, p. 30).

When presented with rare opportunities to use these foreign film productions to mobilize local efforts towards building a local film industry, the state only embraced them haphazardly. Countries that typically perform well as on-location film production sites provide extensive state resources to develop their local film industries parallel to aggressive campaigns focused on
attracting film producers (King, 2010). Dominica provides no public funds directly towards developing a local film industry. Furthermore, the island only has trappings of an industry and developing one is low on the list of national priorities.

My analysis of the research results aligns with Clapham’s (1999) proposition that ruling elites benefit the most when transnational businesses engage locations in SIDS. Despite the fact that local elites and foreign film producers seemed quite inclined to reach fair compensation for property owners, they seemed less inclined to adopt the same posture for compensating below-the-line labor.

I found no evidence of any bribes paid by Hollywood filmmakers to any local public officer, but the data highlighted the deftness of foreign film producers to compromise local systems of governance and public accountability, supporting previous literature (Bunting, 2007; Fritz, 2009; Gardner, 2008) that points to the industry’s inclinations to usurp established public rules and regulations as a strategy for meeting their business objectives. Advancing some of the findings by Story et al. (2012) in their research of the dynamics of the U.S. domestic film incentives program, I also conclude that in SIDS nations, like Dominica, public authorities may not simply rubber stamp requests by foreign film producers, but often go further to even lean heavily on them for advice and direction.

Following the findings in this study, I am sympathetic to Blomkamp’s (2010) framing of film commissions as neoliberal constructions that serve market forces and ignore inescapable motifs of sustainable development; therefore, I find it unsurprising that a report emerging out of the Dominica Film Commission reviewing the production of Pirates of the Caribbean II and III on the island chastised legitimate challenges to the local wages paid by the foreign film producers. The report adopted a signature neoliberal slogan, “attitude of entitlement” to criticize
the local workers requesting better compensation. Data from this study emphasize Shiva’s (2005) point that whenever states follow strict market principles they expose the weak to abuse and exploitation.

When the national government had opportunities to intervene at the intersection of neoliberal practice and sustainable development, it remained indifferent, even when action would not have necessarily created tensions with the foreign film producers. Whenever foreign film producers were likely to emerge as the major beneficiary, public authorities were swift and dexterous in bending laws and regulations, but when local citizens and the wider national interest emerged as the petitioner they mostly stuck rigidly and irrationally to statutory interpretations that disenfranchised the neediest. This chronic and irrational commitment to global neoliberal principles provides further credibility to Held’s (2003) call for alternative economic approaches that provide better systems of public accountability and representative governance.

A typical case in point was the rampant waste and unscrupulous disposal of leftover material and supplies from the production. The government arrangements and concessions with foreign film producers overlooked a key aspect of foreign film production, which had to do with the effective utilization of remaining resources that the filmmakers had abandoned on the island, opening many doors for waste. Often, locals who benefited most from these abandoned items left back by these productions were not necessarily those in most need or those who could make the best use of them, but those who were closest to the action.

Another riveting example was the imported food that legally had to be exported out of the island by the film production. Simply as a form of expediency, the film produces arbitrarily dumped them, leaving serious questions of justice in the relationship between national need and legal imperatives. I may be unclear about a suitable balance, but I am certain that there is
absolutely no justifiable excuse for foreign film producers to throw away tons of food in one of
the poorest Caribbean nations (BBC, 2012).

The island’s missteps in dealing with foreign film productions also slid into lax
environmental protection measures, which supports Wright’s (2013) claim that SIDS countries
are infamous for their arbitrary enforcement of environmental laws and regulations. Despite
records indicating that the film industry has an unenviable reputation as one of the worst
polluters (Aftab, 2007), foreign film producers who used the island were mostly given
unsupervised and unmonitored access to some of the most ecologically fragile areas on the
island. Local authorities required EPA studies for none. This is particularly troubling not only
because the island prides itself as a environmentally friendly country with a track record of
vibrant environmental protection programs, but more importantly because researchers like
Beeton (2000) and Felchner (2012) have argued convincingly that evidence of breaches of
environmental protocol can often become visible years after these productions leave their filming
locations. Contradicting claims by many of the local elites who benefited from these productions,
McCurdy (2011) dismisses the myth that film production is a clean industry, pointing out that
“trash is a big part of a film production” (p. 140). Film production has a significant carbon
footprint and for any SIDS country this ought to raise alarms.

With such passive attitudes by public authorities on the assessment and monitoring of the
environmental impact of foreign film productions shot in the country, the call by the president of
the Waitikubuli Ecological Foundation for the establishment of an Environmental Law
Association on the island “to enforce legislation pertaining to the protection and conservation of
the environment” seems quite fitting (“Wiltshire calls for environmental law association.,” 2007,
p. 28). Supporting this call, I also advise the island’s policymakers that these locations usually
undergo some type of spatial reconfiguration from their encounters with film production, which are not always positive. As McCurdy (2011) points out, film locations always evolve into more than simply a physical place where the film is shot.

Dominica has had no strategy for cost recovery in any of these productions that it hosted. Cost recovery allows the production company to compensate the relevant public authorities for the cost of monitoring the productions (McCurdy, 2011). Obviously, these film productions do their own monitoring, but their focus is on avoiding or reducing liability (McCurdy, 2011), not necessarily on prioritizing restoration or preservation of the occupied locations: the important difference being that they are likely to use the locations in any way that serves their objectives if they are convinced that they would be absolved or protected from liability.

Apart from having weak systems of environmental monitoring, the island also has a poor record of linking its hosting of these foreign film productions with its wider tourism program. As anticipated, I confirmed from this study that O’Regan’s (2005) model of Greenfield Locations that describes emerging offshore film locations does not fit the Dominican context. Dominica’s experiences with foreign film production are also incompatible with Tetley’s (1997) framing of film-induced tourism. Even when Dominican authorities went out of their way to accommodate these foreign film productions, they had no strategic plan for exploiting the associative long-term benefits. As outlined in this study, Dominica has received no substantial tourism benefit from any of the big-budget foreign film productions shot on the island.

Ward & O’Regan’s (2009) framing of film production as a business activity within a niche form of tourism comes closest to explaining the Dominican context, yet it still falls considerably short. While Dominica normally responds to these types of film production projects on a case-by-case basis and does not have a standardized framework for accommodating them,
the island does very little to attract or entice them. Like with Ward & O’Regan’s model, the island is quite welcoming of these productions because of their perceived multiplier effect, but moves away from that model by failing to use them to develop more lucrative and durable tourism products.

Goldsmith & O’Regan (2005) highlight aggressive marketing strategies as a staple of satellite locations in the global film industry; however, Dominica presents an aberration of this theory. The island has never had a sophisticated or sustained campaign to attract foreign film productions and only on one occasion were public resources consolidated to attract such a project: Dead Man’s Chest.

Despite the fact that factors unrelated to film production have telling effects on the competitiveness of locations that market to major film productions (Goldmsith & O’Regan, 2005), Dominica appears little disadvantaged by them. The island’s unique, virgin images, hardly projected on the big screens in the past, coupled by a obsequious government desperate for any uncontroversial opportunity to generate local economic activity was sufficient to make the normally petulant Hollywood film producers tolerant to the infrastructural deficiencies that disadvantaged the island as an on-location film production site.

Although most studies on international film production focus on the luxurious hospitality needs of international film cast and crew, few identify the industry’s tendency to adapt to the limitations of the localities. My study deviates from this. Despite the publicized quips and reproaches by the non-resident members of the production team, local hospitality personnel who facilitated these film production guests noted that there were no serious complaints during their accommodation of any of these productions. In fact, they hailed the island’s hosting of these huge projects a major accomplishment.
Because of the type of big-budget film productions that the island attracts, it finds it difficult to exploit product placement to promote local tourism products; therefore, it has had to rely on gratuitous plugs from the marketing and publicity of these films for any promotion, a strategy which has mostly proven fruitless and unreliable. The island seldom gets mentioned in promotional campaigns for any of the major films that used it as a production location. When it does, the publicity is usually negative. For instance, in post-production media interviewees, the cast and crew of these big-budget films seemed reluctant to highlight the positive attributes of the island, but instead whined about characteristics of the location that did not fit their Hollywood style comforts. Disenchanted from the limited tourism benefits that Dominica derived from these big-budget film productions, local tourism officials have adopted a niche approach to attracting international film productions to the island. Their strategy targets mainly nature and adventure reality shows and documentaries, which are also interested in the countries for these attributes.

Based on my study of big-budget, foreign film production in Dominica, I propose an alternative way of looking at the connection between film and tourism in developing countries. I term this concept episodic film tourism, which I understand as a tourism model that treats foreign film production as a type of FDI and accommodates the staff, crew, and cast of foreign film producers as business tourists. Episodic film tourism relies largely on unsolicited clients who find market value in the host country’s natural attributes and are willing to forego the benefits of sophisticated and highly modernized infrastructures and services typically associated with satellite locations in more developed territories.

Episodic film tourism is intrinsically sympathetic to neoliberal tenets, magnifying the spinoffs of the stay-over tourist in the wider economy and deemphasizing the associative costs to
the state and the local taxpayers. It is committed to economic growth but tentative on sustainable development. Under this model, pliant state institutions and authorities encouraged by opportunistic elites scurry to arbitrarily organize temporal structures, regulations, and rules to accommodate the objectives of these foreign film projects, while subverting democratic principles and established systems of governance. Influential elites and nearsighted decision makers in these host territories develop mostly ad-hoc adaptations geared more towards short-term outcomes than long-term sustainable benefits.

In this paradigm, local employment and the expenditure of the foreign film producer surface as key assessment criteria for judging success, while the overall wellbeing of residents and the future economic, political, and cultural environments of the host country remain marginalized. Episodic film tourism is malleable and no policy or institutional framework too entrenched to deter the incorporation of the needs of potential clients. Its lack of rigidity makes procedures and regulations both easily accessible and easily dispensable. This model of film tourism flourishes in societies with weak civic society institutions and highly centralized systems of government with relatively weak frameworks of accountability.

My findings in this study also give credence to predictions made by Elmer and Glaser (2005) almost a decade ago about the increasing interests by scholars about the social and cultural influences of runaway productions on locations, since such issues became crucial to achieving richer understanding of the political economic dynamics. The complex negotiations of space and place by both sides were also other important ways in which social and cultural factors impacted the investment relationship.

For instance, none of the online articles based on the production notes of the cast and crew of the Production of Pirates of the Caribbean II and III referred to the localized places on
the island where major parts of the films were shot,. This rhetorical practice reflects the typical tendency of Hollywood to rip away the original identities of the places that they colonize (Osterweil, 2011). By ignoring these local places in the media and marketing campaigns of these films and by refusing to allocate them their rightful positions in the historicity of these productions, these film producers and marketing executives co-opt their audiences in the deplacialization of these authentic places.

Data in this study support Hall’s (1996) explanation of more contemporary configurations of post-colonial phenomena, where the ubiquity of corporate expansion has replaced state formations as a colonizing force. As this study shows, and as Said (1993) observes, national independence has done very little to thwart colonizing projects by Western powers, despite obvious expressions of sovereignty by these colonial subjects. From Hall’s (2006) articulation of post-colonialism, we can ascribe the reluctance of the Dominican Government to publicly release details of its concessions to these foreign film producers as symbolic of a post-colonial dilemma where citizens in many poor developing countries, like most SIDS, must remain protected from the awareness of the real limits of the state’s sovereignty as a means of maintaining order and avoiding disillusionment over nationalism.

Hollywood film producers care little for this tension. In the end, what matters to them is not the places that endure these spaces, but their temporary colonization by fictional narratives, neoliberal markets, and movie audiences. One of the likely consequences of this practice is the erasure of important cultural signifiers that give these places their very meaning (Elmer & Gasher, 2005). When these foreign film productions occupy these localized spaces, they live an indelible mark on them that often conflict with their original identity. As Hozic (2001) points out, foreign film producers do not need to retain direct control of physical structures or places in
order to have protracted influence on how residents who regularly interact with these spaces understand and use them.

The production of these films created places that acquired new significance and value to the local population and the state, demonstrating the utility of Massey’s (1994) theory that insists we approach space through an engagement with time. For Massey (1994), space is continually undergoing change and transformation which makes history central to its character. In this study, we are able to appreciate Massey’s (1994) perspective by understanding how the island’s colonial history and post-colonial contradictions allowed its passive compliance to a corporate imperial project that undermines its sovereignty and development. These Hollywood producers were able to create production spaces by exploiting not only contemporary socio-political realities of the island, but also by drawing on historical vestiges of its colonial history and post-colonial anxieties.

Through Massey’s (1994) ideas, we can understand the spaces that these production companies created on the island not simply as closed, isolated activities filling otherwise flat or empty areas, devoid of other forms of identities or interactions, but more usefully we can understand them as loaded with transformative energies, where the past and present interface to produce a starkly different future. The encounters between the spatial identity before, during, and after the colonization of Hollywood through its production spaces create new realities that are relational to time and the island’s socio-cultural dynamics: not just products of Hollywood’s capital power, but loaded with fluid identities, geographies, and histories.

When the Dominican Government became interested in retaining the Hollywood sets for its national tourism program and private landowners prevented it from doing so, this not only highlighted tensions over the enclosure of the commons in poor SIDS countries and reignited
local debates of imminent domain, but it also highlighted Hozic’s (2001) point on how Hollywood, though its systems of spatialization, pushes the boundaries of public and private spaces, even to the point of generating conflict. It also exemplifies Harvey’s (2001) observation on how capital functions to create spatial appropriation and enclosure.

The foreign film productions that used the island did not only reorganize physical spaces but they also reconfigured cultural spaces. I found an appropriate representation of this in the conflict over cannibalism that divided the country along cultural lines. Academic literature and historical documents are replete with contentious accounts of Carib cannibalism (Whitehead, 1984) and the contemporary stigma associated with such historical narratives frequently lead to discrimination and harassment of the indigenous populations implicated in them. From the data, I reason that these foreign film productions have the capacity to seriously undermine the governance of indigenous peoples, their resistance to Eurocentric historical narratives, and their ongoing efforts to develop empowering forms of cultural articulations that counter colonial narratives.

Despite the unpopularity of Chief William’s opposition to the cannibalism tropes that the producers of the Pirates of the Caribbean recruited the Kalinago people to endorse, I find it disingenuous and insular to dismiss his resistance as flippant and baseless. Not only do the Kalinago people suffer from higher rates of unemployment than their fellow compatriots, with mean incomes below national levels, but they continue to be the subjects of the types of informal indiscrimination (“Adverse conditions experienced by Kalinago,” 2007) of the very kind that inspired the Kalinago Chief’s ire.

While Chief Williams argued convincingly that the scene in question could potentially undermine the cultural empowerment of his people, the justifications provided by the local
government, the majority of his compatriots, and the filmmakers were tenuous. In fact, the chief’s efforts were not in vain. At the least, he was successful in getting the film producers to change the name of the film, which was originally titled Pirates of the Island: Cannibal Island. Not an insignificant feat by any means.

While the local population mostly left the chief and his supporters high and dry, these Kalinagos had a convincing case: that the film, its tropes, and narratives are fictional does not whitewash their impact on the public sphere. Furthermore, the production designer of Dead Man’s Chest, Rick Heinrichs, confirmed that the search for historical authenticity was an important motivator in shooting the film in the Caribbean. He noted, “What I love about ‘Pirates’ and working with Gore is the fact that the history and period are backdrops, something that gives us a sense of time and place. But everybody is excited to take that to the next level of stylization and reimagining (as cited in “A Pirate Odyssey,” 2005).

Alexander Kluge would likely side with Chief Williams, since his more inclusive framing of the public sphere explores how “phantasy” functions to create an oppositional public sphere, arguing that “in addition to language, which is public, the public sphere should grant phantasy the status of a communal medium, and this includes the stream of associations and the faculty of memory, the two main avenues of phantasy” (Kluge, 1981-1982, p.215).

According to Kluge, the real power of “phantasy” is the multiple perspectives that it offers by breaking free of the confines of reality, opening up to examine life in order ways than simply its current form (p.215). It is this very power of fantasy and fiction to enter and even dominate discourses in the public sphere that Chief Williams was aware of in his opposition. The chief would have likely also received support from Nir and Mutz (2005) who concurred with Kluge, emphasizing that fictional media artifacts hold tremendous potential for understanding
political phenomenon and expression.

In his expositions on films’ capacity to facilitate public discourse, Kluge repositions the focus of analysis from the filmmaker’s production agenda to the audience’s reading. For Chief Williams, the connections that the audiences are likely to make subliminally or consciously between the fictional narrative and the pervasive discourse on historical narratives of Kalinago cannibalism compound the very problems of discrimination that his people face regularly. Kluge’s theorization, which posits that audiences never attend to a film as a singular stimulus, but read it as part of a cluster, based on their knowledge of other films and genres, supports Chief Williams’ position. Kluge writes, “The real product is thus neither the single shot nor the combination of shots in one film, neither the relationship of the filmmaker to the spectators nor even the reception by the spectator – but rather the production of a public sphere” (Kluge, 1981-1982, p.218).

From a wider developmental context, by not having a consistent and organized strategy for accommodating foreign film producers on the island, the Government of Dominica denies its people the opportunity to maximize the benefits from these short-term investments. From analysis of the data, I argue that this recurrent mismanagement of investment opportunities has dire consequences for both the short-term economic performance of the country and its sustainable development. Additionally, while I concur that many aspects of the Dominican context fit within most of the extant theories of international film production practices, I propose that the island’s experiences present some important nuances and drifts that offer a richer understanding of how foreign film productions unfold in developing countries, particularly in SIDS.

Through a political economy lens, my research highlights the agency of the state in
dealing with transnational media corporations. Despite the legitimate issues raised by Beamish (1988) and Kennedy (1992) about the imbalanced power relations between the nation-state and multinational corporations in business dealings, or the more cynical speculations of several scholars on the diminishing role of the state in globalized markets (Amin, 1997; Strange, 1996), the data in this research support Haslem (2007), who argued that the state retains considerable power in mediating these transactions.

For me, popular perceptions of the state’s disempowered sovereignty may be less important than its consistently sheepish loyalty to neoliberal principles and its wholesale application of economic programs proscribed by IGAs and international economic agreements. Obviously, my analysis does not discount the countless studies, including that of the World Bank (2007), which document the proven disadvantages faced by poor countries when they deal with transnational corporations and developed countries. My contention is that, as supported by the findings in this research, these challenges do not portend the diminished role of the state, but rather they highlight transformations in the articulation of state power.

I agree with Wasko (2003) when she argues that a preoccupation with the weakening of the state by global neoliberal forces misses its complex involvement in facilitating transnational media ventures. In Dominica’s situation, her advice to follow the role of lobbyists and the multiple other influences sustaining regulatory platforms that undergird the workings of the state is useful. More specifically, it seems to me that local elites in Dominica do not presume a weak state, but rather they conceive of the state as loaded with considerable capacity to advance their own interests whenever they interact with foreign film producers. After all, it may well be that the dormancy of civil society institutions and deficient forms of democratic governance play a bigger role than previously imagined in increasing the difficulties of SIDS to prioritize the
interests of their citizens over markets and self-serving, myopic political agendas.

**Policy Recommendations**

It would be remiss of me if I did not propose a few policy recommendations based on my engagement with the data, since even on the surface some basic policy adjustments are obviously necessary if the island is to truly benefit from hosting big-budget, foreign film productions. I offer nine recommendations randomly, not in order of priority or based on their prominence in the data.

First, the island needs to improve its knowledge of the international film industry and acquire more solid and useful information about the productions with which it negotiates and offers concessions. Parallel to this, the island also needs to seriously improve the skills and industry knowledge of the local team negotiating with these major film producers. In such cases, the government should perhaps secure the services of an experienced entertainment lawyer with substantial experience working within the international film industry. A professional of that caliber would be able to moderate more effectively the needs of the island’s sustainable development programs and the direct economic benefits accrued from allowing these productions on the island.

Second, negotiators in host countries, like Dominica, should be more insistent on bargaining hard to secure direct benefits for their people. The data show that only when the island insisted on conditions was it able to secure real and sustainable benefits for its people. For instance, by the time it had hosted the Pirate Master TV series, Dominica had become more confident about insisting on specific numbers of local film production personnel that it wanted incorporated into the technical crew of the foreign film production operating on the island. As a
result, this production contributed significantly to the momentum towards developing a fledgling local film industry.

Third, developing countries like Dominica that host foreign film productions must ensure that their laws, regulations, and bureaucracies function to maximize the benefits of these projects and not against national interests. In Dominica’s case, one of the most profound examples of this was the indiscriminate donation or disposal of valuable goods by the foreign production companies, mainly to escape liability from breaching local laws and agreements. By instituting more appropriate and practical regulations, valuable items left behind could be distributed to sectors of the local population who could make more effective use of them that fall more closely in line with national development priorities. In no case should foreign filmmakers have to throw away left-over food in a country with high unemployment and poverty, such a practice is counterintuitive and counterproductive to national development.

Fourth, although insurance coverage is a staple of the international film industry, Dominican legislators and policymakers should amend current laws that now make local insurance coverage by such companies optional. They should repeal this law and enact new ones that make such coverage mandatory, ensuring that the regulatory processes make it easy for locals to benefit from the best possible insurance packages accompanying these projects.

Fifth, the country needs to make the processes and procedures for negotiating with and organizing for these productions more transparent and inclusive, supported by more effective systems of accountability. In this study, I noted that community leaders and localized municipal institutions have been more willing than the national government to reasonably table before these foreign film producers the development needs of the communities directly hosting these productions; therefore, any framework for negotiation with these film producers should involve
the active participation of these grassroots leaders. Their role in the process should not only be consultative but participatory, allowing them sufficient agency to make reasonable demands, with insurances that they will be honored.

Sixth, for SIDS countries to effectively use the experiences of foreign film productions undertaken within their borders as a strategy for developing a local film industry they must develop an unambiguous comprehensive framework for maximizing these benefits. My research clearly shows that integrating local filmmakers as part of these productions to shadow cast and crew offers real potentials for doing so, but these frameworks ought to be even more aggressive, perhaps to the level of local governments directly tying subsidies to a project’s potential to realize these objectives. When foreign producers are unwilling to compensate locals who understudy them, it may be in the national interest of the host county for the government to meet that cost, justifying it as part of its human resource development expenditure. These opportunities could also extend beyond the local filmmakers to locals providing ancillary services to the film industry, such as artisans and caterers.

Seventh, the first order of business for the Dominica Audiovisual Association of Dominica has to be petitioning government for some type of subvention to facilitate training of local filmmakers and for opening opportunities for cost-effectively exhibiting the work of their members. Goldsmith & O’Regan (2008) note that this one of the most effective strategies used by countries with definitive goals for improving their local film industries.

Eighth, Dominica’s framework for exhibiting local film productions is weak; therefore, in order to encourage and stimulate the intensifying energies towards the development of a local film industry, the government ought to revisit the Broadcast Bill that it proposed in 2008 (“Broadcast Act under fire,” 2008), with amendments that unambiguously facilitate local film
and video production. Currently, there are no legal provisions or regulations that seriously encourage any of the cable companies to air artistic and creative productions produced by locals. When these companies do, they often take a highhanded approach to negotiations with the local producers, and seldom, if ever, compensate them for airing their work.

Ninth, the government should make the independent assessment and review of every foreign film production on the island mandatory. To absorb the cost of this, it could include such a fee as part of a national film permit. For SIDS with limited resources, whose governments need to administer public resources on smaller margins of error than their larger, more developed counterparts, inculcating a habit of independent assessment offers an important and useful model for reducing risk, improving capacity, and realizing savings.

Conclusion

In this study, I outlined the unique ways in which the island of Dominica accommodates the production of foreign, big-budget films. I explained how the island’s antiquated legislation and regulations pertaining to film production open up opportunities for international film producers to exploit its resources, including its people and physical environment. I also explained how Dominica’s weak policy framework makes it difficult for governmental authorities and special interest groups to adequately represent and advocate the best interest of the country.

Focusing on major developments of the Dominica Film Commission, I highlighted the uncertainty of public institutions in their engagement with film productions that are undertaken within the island. My study revealed significant gaps and loopholes in the procedures and policies that the island implements when interacting with foreign film producers. I also examined
some of the specific management strategies that the island adopted in hosting these productions and explained the many ways that foreign film producers take advantage of local labor.

Moving from descriptive expositions, I extended my analyses of Dominica’s engagement with foreign film productions to examine the consequences of it doing so. From that platform, I identified some of the most conspicuous benefits that the island derived from hosting these productions, presenting the main direct economic benefits as their ignition of a temporary increase in local spending across various sections of the economy, their contributions to stimulating the development of a local film industry, and their facilitation of unexpected local philanthropy.

Following this layout of benefits, I gave detailed explanations of some of the most negative implications. I outlined how the highly secretive agreements and transactions surrounding these foreign film productions undertaken on the island lay the foundation for possible corrupt and unethical practices that mostly alienated the Dominican citizenry. I reasoned that the national government’s desperate attempts to embrace the potential economic benefits of these projects inadvertently abandoned democratic processes, bypassed critical public accountability mechanisms and exposed local communities to high degrees of risks, while also presenting a range of difficulties for local government entities and community leaders. By locking out the public from critical details of these transactions, state institutions and private entities with vested interests in these projects are easily able to mislead the public on their impact on the country.

I examined the details of fiscal incentives and procedural concessions that the government granted to the biggest foreign film production on the island and questioned whether these arrangements were in the national interest. My analysis also identified the rarity of some
these fiscal compromises, drawing attention to the significant ways in which these foreign film productions are able to extract valuable gifts from poor, developing countries. I pointed out that the state does not only give these gifts through tax exemptions, short circuits of procedures, or even the use of public buildings, but also by facilitating the exploitation of local labor and the granting of unimpeded and gratuitous access to treasured public spaces.

I also drew attention to the means by which these foreign film productions use their alliances with local elites to colonize cultural and physical spaces throughout these host locations, requiring significant adjustments in human interaction and reconfiguring places by substituting them with new identities. While addressing the many ways in which the localities of these productions assimilate to the production logic inscribed on them, I also identified some of the inescapable cultural clashes that emerged not only between the non-resident workers and their local counterparts, but also among different segments of the local population.

By drawing on some of the peculiarities of SIDS, I indicated how Dominica’s interactions with foreign film productions match extant theories of cross-border film production, but I also showed how they are different. To highlight the differences, I focused on the uniquely pivotal role of the nation-state in facilitating these productions at almost every level.

I also emphasized the exceptionally powerful role of local elites in SIDS, not only through their ability to secure enviable benefits for themselves, but their valuable contribution towards securing the compliance of the state and the general public to the business objectives of the foreign film producers. In SIDS, local elites are particularly influential in helping foreign film producers reduce their labor costs.

In the study, I also pointed out how SIDS, particularly Caribbean countries have a different approach to business that makes them vulnerable to avaricious film producers. I argued
that these film producers are quite adept at transferring many of the communal and social values of SIDS locations into market value. One of the less conspicuous ways in which they tend to do this is by manipulating these values to develop creative solutions to many of the logistical challenges that they face during production.

I reasoned that one of the most significant ways in which Dominica is different from other locations in facilitating foreign film productions is the ways in which it uses them to develop film tourism. To highlight this difference, I developed the theory of episodic film tourism, explaining how the concept captures the historic realities of the island’s brushes with foreign film productions. Generally, the island’s development of tourism opportunities to these projects is temporary and reactionary.

In this study, I did not present critiques without suggesting possible solutions for helping the island improve its capacity to positively integrate its experiences with these foreign film productions into its sustainable development plans. Based on my analysis, I provide nine concrete suggestions for improving the island’s regulatory and policy framework for accommodating these projects. These recommendations run the gamut, from proposing the strengthening of the capacity of key local institutions to stipulating the need for a coherent and standardized national framework to address both foreign and domestic film projects.

**Future Research**

This study could benefit from additional research in a number of areas related to the experiences of SIDS countries accommodating foreign, big-budget film productions within their borders. One such area could focus on the perspectives of these foreign producers. This study extracted data mostly from Dominican sources, leaving it somewhat skewed towards the
viewpoints of the host countries. Including data from different types of sources from the film producers’ angle would add richness and more balance to an inquiry of the subject. Data based on feedback from the non-resident workers of these productions, added to my analyses in this study, would not only provide new ways of examining some of the salient issues, but also help clarify some of the questions that I was unable to answer adequately.

From the issues arising out of this research, I would be curious to learn from a study that adopts a cost-benefit analysis framework for investigating implications of the island’s hosting of these major film productions, especially Pirates of the Caribbean, since in my study that case raised some critical questions on the sustainability of the practice. A study that relies on financial variables for providing a monetary valuation of the fiscal concessions that the island gives to these productions would be invaluable for gauging the real economic benefits accrued by the island. When combined with the more conspicuous calculations of expenditures, this may give a better picture of the economic characteristics of these transactions. It would also help demystify many normative conclusions on the multiplier effects of such film productions on these host locations.

Building from this study, further research into the similar experiences of other islands in the Eastern Caribbean would also add greater value to wider representation to SIDS countries. The producers of Pirates of the Caribbean also established production centers in St. Vincent and the Bahamas, and I am curious to find out the similarities and differences of their experiences in these Caribbean countries compared to those in Dominica.

Finally, an examination of Dominica’s hosting of low-budget, foreign film production could also lend some depth to the focus of this study, especially as public authorities on the island seemed to have adopted a policy framework that gravitates more towards attracting these
types of productions, rather than the more traditional Hollywood-type productions. Knowledge of the contrasts and similarities between these two types of foreign film productions would provide a better contextual framework for analysis, not only of the island’s capacity to benefit from these productions, but also its platforms for linking them to more sustainable development strategies.
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DATE: May 28, 2013

TO: Anthony Frampton
FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: [448562-2] CROSS-BORDER FILM PRODUCTION: THE NEOLIBERAL RECOLONIZATION OF AN EXOTIC ISLAND BY HOLLYWOOD PIRATES.
SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision
ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: May 28, 2013
EXPIRATION DATE: May 23, 2014
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review
REVIEW CATEGORY: Exempt review category # 2

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

You have been approved to enroll 100 participants. If you wish to enroll additional participants you must seek approval from the HSRB.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on May 23, 2014. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.
This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board's records.
APPENDIX B. CONSENT LETTER

Informed Consent for Research Participants

Introduction: I am Anthony Frampton, a PhD candidate in the School of Media and Communication at Bowling Green State University in the United States. I am being advised by Professor Oliver Boyd-Barrett, a faculty member at the school. I am conducting research on foreign films with big-budgets that were filmed on the island of Dominica. The title of my research project is “Cross-Border Film Production: The Neoliberal Recolonization of an Exotic Island by Hollywood Pirates.” I am requesting your participation in this research because of your experience with and knowledge about Dominica’s hosting of foreign film productions.

Purpose: The purpose of this research project is to help provide information that could assist those who make policies for governing and developing Dominica, and other small islands, understand the ways in which foreign films shot on an island affect its development. Although the research provides no direct benefits to you, it allows you the opportunity to contribute to information that would be useful to those who make decisions on strategies for developing small islands like Dominica.

Procedure: In this research, I use interviews, focus groups, and archival documents as my major sources of information. I will collect information from these sources from June 2013 to August 2013. You will participate in the research either as an interviewee or as a focus group participant. The time duration of your participation should be no less than 30 minutes and no more than an hour. With your permission, I will perform a digital audio recording of the interview/discussion so I don’t have to make so many notes. I start the interview/discussion by asking a few open-ended questions and follow with on-the-spot questions or comments. Before concluding the interview/discussion, I will offer interviewees/participants the opportunity to add any further information.

Voluntary: Your participation in the interview or focus group is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time. You may decide not to answer any question or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University or any other institution or person involved in the research.

Confidentiality/ Risks: The information that you share in this research will have your name attached to it and I cannot guarantee to protect the confidentiality of the information that you provide during the course of the research. Neither can I guarantee that other participants will keep your responses during focus group discussions confidential. The data collected from the research will be stored on my personal laptop, which is password protected and monitored by a professional anti-software program. Only three people will have access to the data: I, Prof. Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Prof. Radhika Gajjala.
The consent forms will be stored temporarily at my residence in River Estate, Canefield while in Dominica, thereafter at 709 5th Street, Apt 9, Bowling Green, OH while in the United States.

**Contact Information:** I can be contacted at Telephone No. (011)-419-908-6730 in the United States and Telephone No. 265-0560 in Dominica or by email at abframp@bgsu.edu. My advisor can be contacted at Telephone No.(011)-419-372-8349 or by email at oboydb@bgsu.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board at (011)-419-372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research.

I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to have all my questions answered and I have been informed that my participation is completely voluntary. I agree to participate in this research.

________________________
Participant Signature