

RE-IMAGING PITCAIRN ISLAND

Examining dualities of conflict and collaboration between island/metropole through Tourism

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ABSTRACT: Islands have been described in terms of their ‘nervous duality’. This statement aptly describes Pitcairn Island, the last remaining British Overseas Territory and smallest jurisdiction in the Pacific. By its very existence as ‘colonial confetti’ Pitcairn denotes the concept of cultural realignment as it relates to relationships of power. Geographically isolated, accessible only by sea and with a population of less than fifty, Pitcairn is famous as the refuge of *Bounty* mutineers and Polynesians who settled the island in 1790. But Pitcairn’s more contemporary notoriety stems from ‘Operation Unique’, the United Kingdom’s investigation of sexual abuse against women and subsequent trials held on the island in 2004. The court case became a battle over the island’s way of life and a contested case of imperial domination over a tiny, vulnerable community. The trials were a critical point of (dis)juncture that threatened permanence of island place, while global media negatively branded Pitcairn as an island dystopia. The latter has prompted this article’s examination of current plans to grow tourism and attract new immigrants to Pitcairn. As a tool of analysis cultural realignment facilitates an understanding of the dynamics leading to community resilience, the restoration and re-imagining of island place/space, and the changing significances of Pitcairn’s socio-political and cultural landscape.

Introduction

Pitcairn is in the news and for all the wrong reasons. (Angelo and Townend 2003: 229)

The British Overseas Territories (BOT) have, by and large, been regarded “as of no political or economic significance, distant and quaint relics of Britain’s imperial past – except when a crisis propelled them to the front page of daily newspapers” (Aldrich and Connell, 2006: 1). This quote fittingly describes the subject of this article Pitcairn Island, one of 14 BOTs and the last remaining BOT in the Pacific. Maritime enthusiasts will recall Pitcairn as the refuge of mutineers of the British ship *HMAV Bounty* and their Polynesian consorts who settled the island in 1790. More contemporarily, this small Pacific Island made international headlines when it emerged, as a result of investigations of a history of sexual abuse against Pitcairn women and young girls headed by the British Police under the auspice of ‘Operation Unique’ (OU) and subsequent trials held on the island in 2004 (Farran, 2007; Fletcher, 2008). Such negative media coverage branded Pitcairn as an island dystopia; a feature detrimental to developing a tourism image.

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Geographically isolated and accessible only by ship, Pitcairn is one of the most isolated and smallest subnational island jurisdictions (SNIJ) in the world. With an ageing population of less than fifty and little prospect of re-population, Pitcairn relies almost wholly on United Kingdom (UK) aid. But Pitcairn's relationship with its erstwhile benefactor could best be described as a 'nervous duality' (Baldacchino 2005: 248) of conflict and collaboration, past and present; dualisms which underpin my application of MacLeod's (2013) concept of cultural realignment. The latter embraces phenomena such as cultural representation, stereotyping and branding but more importantly, in the case of Pitcairn, embraces the way it impacts on the identities of the communities subject to the realignment. There is a strong link between cultural realignment and power in the sense of changing the lives of subject populations through tourism development. Here I draw on MacLeod's (2013: 79) interpretation that cultural realignment becomes an aspect and manifestation of power that reveals the relationship between the agents of change (in this case, The UK) and those subject to it (ie Pitcairners). As a tool of analysis, cultural realignment facilitates an understanding of the dynamics leading to community resilience reflected in Pitcairn's current plans to diversify existing livelihoods through tourism.

Based on longitudinal fieldwork on Pitcairn I use the lens of colonialism to examine dualities of conflict and collaboration between island and metropole in light of the impact of OU and the changing significances of Pitcairn's socio-political and cultural landscape. As a SNIJ, increased cooperation between island and metropole plays a key role in facilitating economically sustainable development, including tourism, whilst the needs of both must straddle the geographical, socio-cultural and political divides. In the broader context of this special issue of *Shima* and its contribution to nissological knowledge, Pitcairn offers insight to the *problems, prospects* and *cultural realignments* that small islands confront.

Colonial Confetti: Subnational Island Jurisdictions

Small islands are places without power. (Royle, 2001: 53)

Islands were the first territories to be colonized in the European Age of Discovery, and have been the last to seek and obtain independence (Baldacchino and Royle, 2010). Of the 17 territories on the UN list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, 15 are islands, six of which are in the Pacific, including Pitcairn (United Nations, 2016). There are of course definitive advantages in *not* being independent represented in the politics of "upside decolonization"; the norm rather than the exception in today's non-independent (mainly island) territories (Baldacchino, 2010: 47). Empirical economic research shows that sub-national dependencies tend to enjoy higher living standards than independent states (Armstrong and Read, 2000; McElroy and Pearce, 2006); albeit that BOTs like Pitcairn, Montserrat and Tristan da Cunha are exceptions due to significant natural and structural barriers to growth (Clegg and Gold, 2011). SNIJs face many challenges to economic development, sharing common problems such as isolation, small scale, weak economies, and difficult access to markets, limited infrastructure and dependency on external forces. For very small islands, the end result is often the MIRAB economic model, whereby migration, remittances, aid and bureaucracy are the key parameters (Bertram and Watters, 1985). MIRAB has ensured the viability of many tiny marginal islands, accompanied by a gradual transformation from subsistence to subsidy, most evident in

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outer islands and politically dependent ones such as Pitcairn (Connell, 2013: 256). Given such limitations, it is not surprising many small islands, including Pitcairn, have chosen tourism as the engine of development.

Britain's remaining dependencies are, without exception, those still seen as too small to become independent and, in most of them, there is no significant support for this course. Various conflicts affecting BOTs can be associated with the notion of cultural alignment including the Falklands' War (1980s), the imposition of direct rule on Turks and Caicos due to widespread corruption among ruling elite (in 2009); while the controversial and unresolved forcible removal of indigenous peoples from Diego Garcia (in the 1960s and 1970s) is an extreme case of political and cultural realignment by agents of change (ie the UK). Arguably, SNIJs present creative, often unique, dynamic expressions of the dyadic asymmetry within federal relationships, which are ultimately tied to a centre-periphery relationship. These relationships are often far from smooth or settled but are not necessarily disempowering for members of island states (Amoamo, 2013). By itself, Pitcairn provides insight into one of the last remnants of colonial confetti (Guillebaud, 1976), whereby shared and self-rule are complex constructions that are continually being negotiated.

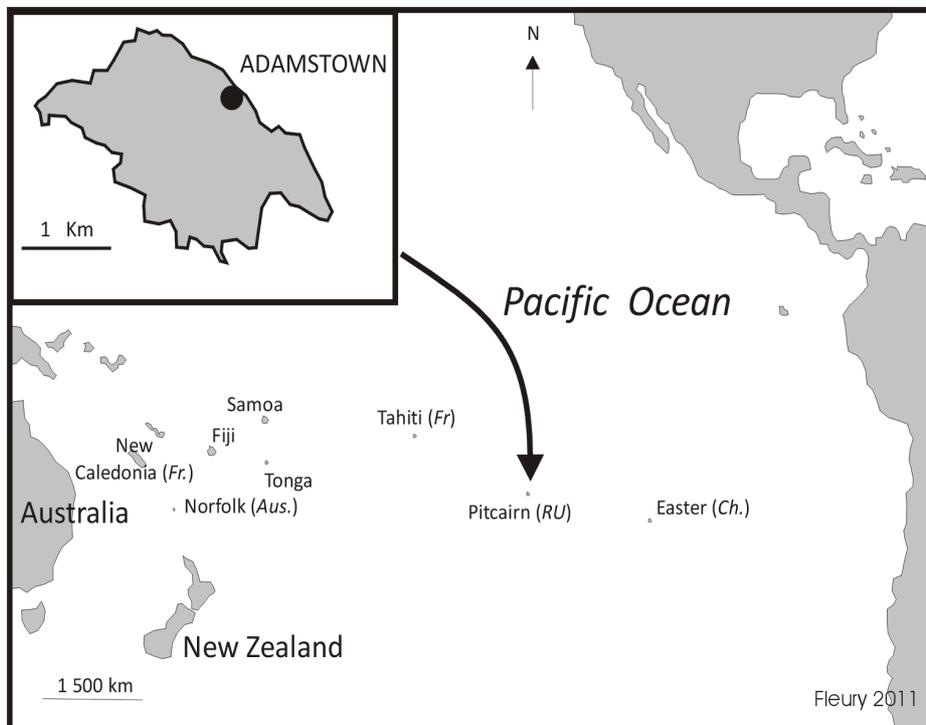


Figure 1 – location of Pitcairn Island (map by Christian Fleury)

Conflict: Pitcairn Past and Present

It is Pitcairn's Island, the setting in 1790 for the final act of one of the greatest sea dramas of all time, the mutiny aboard His Majesty's Armed Transport Bounty on 28 April 1789. Inch for inch, it is the repository of more history – romantic history, bloody history, bogus history – than any other island in the Pacific. (Ball, 1973: 4)

The Pitcairn Island Group comprises four islands: Pitcairn, Ducie, Henderson and Oeno. Oeno (127km northwest of Pitcairn) and Ducie (470km east) are low-lying atolls while Henderson is a raised coral atoll and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Pitcairn is the only inhabited island of the group (Figure 1). Due to its remote location and difficult terrain, air travel is not possible, with access via Mangareva¹, a journey of 36 hours by boat. The current service operates three-monthly, bringing supplies, a few tourists and administration personnel to the island. Pitcairn has no safe harbour or anchorage and the difficult access mean ships must anchor offshore while freight and passengers are transferred to the island by longboat. Adamstown is the original and only settlement on the island, named after the last remaining *Bounty* mutineer, John Adams.



Figure 2 – aerial shot of Pitcairn Island source (www.visitpitcairn.pn)

Two main events are central to my discussion of conflict and collaboration relating to Pitcairn's cultural landscape. The first was the infamous and well-documented story of the mutiny on the *Bounty* – a ship that in 1787 embarked on a colonial mission to collect breadfruit trees from Tahiti and transport them to the West Indies as food for slaves. The second is OU, initiated by UK authorities in 1999. To this day the reasons for the mutiny are of considerable debate and the subject of several Hollywood movies, hundreds of books, magazine and newspaper articles, documentaries and numerous website groups (Hayward, 2006). Fleeing retribution from British justice, the mutineers

¹ Situated in the Gambier Islands, French Polynesia's furthest eastern archipelago.

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together with their Polynesian companions settled on Pitcairn where they remained undiscovered for 18 years. But within a decade, all but one of the men (Adams) was dead, murdered mostly in quarrels over land and women (Marks, 2012). The story of Pitcairn's bloody beginnings is one now firmly embedded in the literary genre of utopia/dystopia myth-making (see Edmond and Smith, 2003; Selwyn, 1996). Tourists who seek it out are often motivated by a desire to experience something of the "story", to glimpse something of its past and meet descendants of those notorious settlers.

Pitcairn nominally became part of the British Empire in 1838 although for the majority of the island's colonial history it could be said that British central administration was marginal. Taken broadly the term marginalisation evokes a dynamic between two social analytic categories: the centre and the periphery or margins. The centre is normally associated with dominance, privilege and power, and the margins with relative powerlessness. Thus, in Pitcairn's case, both geographical isolation and social dislocation are constraints that have contributed to the formation of a somewhat insular society, with its own laws and mores. Evidence of the latter played out in dramatic form in the events of OU and culminating trials whereby issues of sovereignty, rule of law and indeed, the very cultural landscape that defined Pitcairn Island were contested.

On a day in the hot London summer of 2006, the smallest of all those colonial shavings, Pitcairn Island, took center stage for the first and surely the last time (with the venerable Privy Council). But it also carried with it – or the case never would have reached this archaic pinnacle – a subplot of a powerful government stumbling out of centuries of neglect. (Prochnau and Parker 2008: online)

In 2004 criminal charges of sexual abuse were laid against a number of Pitcairn men and, after protracted legal proceedings, they were found guilty and jailed on the island. The events divided the community, raised questions about the application of British law on Pitcairn (Lewis, 2009) and fueled legal debates over issues of cultural relativism and moral universalism (Marks, 2008; Letsas, 2009). Some commentators argued that the Pitcairn trials represented the imposition of a set of external and alien legal norms by a dominant and overbearing metropolitan authority upon a small and vulnerable community (Trenwith, 2003). The UK was accused of ineffective long-range benevolence and past neglect over its administrative duties of Pitcairn; according to Oliver (2009: 11) until 2004 there had been "no effective civil authority presence on the island" at all. It is not this paper's intention to expand on extant literature written about OU, nor judge its outcome, but to state the latter brought Pitcairn into the global domain and caused sweeping changes to the islands' socio-political situation.

The following sections discuss tourism as a vehicle of cultural realignment, image building and reinvention of Pitcairn's cultural landscape. Tourism has been identified as offering the islanders the only viable means of economic growth and prospect of a sustainable future. The actual processes of cultural realignment have a distinct element of intentional agency and objectives combined with more local and specific image building and reinvention with a view to "change something to a different position or state" (Macleod, 2013: 77). As such, collaboration rather than conflict will be vital to cultural realignment of island identity.

Collaboration: The Socio-Economic and Political Context

Today, the most critical adaptation for the Pitcairn community is socio-economic recovery from publicity around OU. This relates to Hollings' (2003) adaptive cycle whereby the island community moves through processes of reorganization, renewal and growth. Notwithstanding these aspects, the existing members of the community have strongly expressed their determination to remain on the island, and to preserve their ability to live as an economically self-sustained community. Efforts to repopulate the island by targeting both members of the diaspora and new immigrants have to date, been unsuccessful (see Amoamo, 2015). Barriers to repopulation include transportation access (infrequent and expensive), lack of primary health care and few job opportunities (Solomon and Burnett, 2014). The challenges for Pitcairn's future are not only dependent on creating greater diversity of economic activity, reducing isolation, and re-population, but also include a strong measure of social resiliency. Resilience in this respect provokes in people a "capacity to insert and reinsert them-selves into changing space relations" (Harvey, 1996: 318). In terms of cultural realignment, Pitcairn could therefore be considered a model of impact analysis in which tourism becomes an agent of change.

The term "collaboration" refers to working jointly with others or together; to co-operate with or willingly assist to create or achieve goals advantageous to all parties. In recent years, the UK has made concerted efforts to re-engage with BOTs, issuing two White Papers – *Partnership for Progress and Prosperity: Britain and the Overseas Territories 1999* and *The Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability 2012* with the aim to address the needs of the territories and to instill confidence in Britain's commitment to the territories' future (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1999). Policies focus on issues of self-determination, responsibilities of Britain and the territories, democratic autonomy and provision for help and assistance with a clear commitment to good governance and democracy. In order to progress beyond conflict toward collaboration, the challenge for the Pitcairn community is the adoption of generalised reciprocity (Putnam, 2000: 134). Generalised reciprocity is the foundation of cooperative behaviour both within and amongst groups (Wynne, 2007) while confidence, trust and transparency are fundamental principles for groups faced with challenges. In this, Massey (1993: 64) refers to a "progressive sense of place" whereby place is no longer confined/defined by its static boundaries, but is articulated by the structures and institutions of a metropole and necessitates a re-alignment beyond the strict geographic parameters of the island (Wynne, 2007). The nature of this relationship can work to empower SNIJ identity, or conversely, create dependency. Economic prosperity is likely to be compromised if development initiatives are generated - rather than imposed - from the grassroots.

As with many Pacific island countries, both size and limited human resources leave Pitcairn vulnerable to developing an autonomous and self-reliant economy. Pitcairn's nano-economy is globally isolated, limited to a few activities and dependent almost entirely on UK aid (Figure 3). Community life revolves around a largely subsistence lifestyle borne by the common effort of everybody – the only way such a society can continue. Economic activities on island include a limited tourism market (mostly based on home-stays, visiting yachts and passing cruise ships), honey and craft sales, and basic agriculture and fishing. While Pitcairn exports honey as far afield as the UK and Europe, capacity is limited by the bee/pollen ratio on a small island of 4.7 square kilometres with other potential export items (eg dried fruit) limited by economies of scale and shipping service. Off-island economic activities consist of international sale of postage stamps and

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coins and domain registration (.pn) but these traditional streams of income have struggled to maintain current levels and provide minimal revenue to offset costs incurred in keeping the island running: electricity and telecommunications, among other things, are expensive. By 2012 tourism was clearly identified as the main area of revenue growth for Pitcairn and since 2014 it has become the main source of revenue for the island (Pitcairn Islands Tourism Department, 2015).

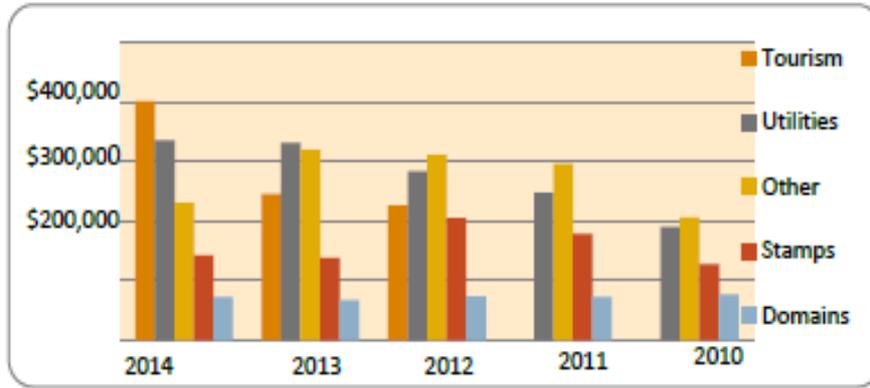


Figure 3- Pitcairn Island Revenue Streams
 Source. Pitcairn Islands Tourism Department (STDMP 2015-2019: 3)

Fiscal support to Pitcairn is provided by the Department for International Development (DFID - UK's aid agency) and the European Union (EU) without which essential public services and access would not be possible. Shipping, via the three-monthly *Claymore II* vessel, is the costliest service at over half the annual budget. By 2025 budgetary aid is forecast to be NZD\$6.6million per annum, or \$175,000 per person (Solomon and Burnett, 2014: 48). Following OU, the jurisdictional capacity of Pitcairn, although limited, has improved while a programme of strengthened cooperation was agreed on between the UK and Pitcairn to support Pitcairn's financial, legal, health, education and law enforcement sectors, as well as economic and social development such as fisheries, agriculture and local government. Infrastructural improvements include the paving of roads, better harbour facilities, new telecommunications, including internet, and the addition of water storage tanks and heavy machinery for ongoing construction work. In addition, several joint environmental projects, socio-cultural initiatives and cultural/heritage projects have been undertaken (Table 1).

Political changes include a new governance structure (2009) with the creation of four departments (Finance and Economics, Operations, Community Development and Natural Resources), and a revised Constitution (2010) including a bill of rights (Eshleman, 2012) and appointment of an Island Administrator (2014). These changes are seen as a combination of autochthonous and exogenous processes; aimed at developing a self-sufficient local economic model involving closer relationships with DFID, the EU, and a number of NGOs and other stakeholders. Funding from the 11th European Development Fund (EDF11) Regional envelope encourages OTs toward greater cooperation with others in their regions of which Pitcairn is part of the Pacific Region along with French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna.

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	Stakeholders /Funding	Projects and Development
Infrastructure	DFID / UKG / EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hill of Difficulty concrete construction of roadway to Adamstown (2005) - Bounty Bay jetty reconstruction - Alternative Harbour landing site -Upgraded telecommunications (including internet) - Installation of water storage tanks (to help combat drought conditions)
Environmental	EU / SPC UK Darwin Initiative Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB) PEW / PIC / UKG PIC / Trinity College Dublin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - INTEGRÉ Soil erosion project and education programmes(regional project with other Pacific EU OTs to combat effects of climate change and biodiversity loss) - Sustainable Fisheries Management Plan (2012 - 2015) - EU Overseas Territories Sustainable Energy Roadmap (signing of communique 2015) - Rat eradication and restoration project on Henderson Island (2008 - 2015) - PEW Global Ocean Legacy Project – proposed marine protected reserve - ‘Rose-apple’ tree eradication on Pitcairn - Eco-trail developed near Adamstown
Social /Health	UKG / DFID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New medical centre & appointment of on-island doctor (in 2004) - Bi-annual Child Safety Reviews - Elderly care support & social welfare initiatives (e.g. emergency housing) - Funding for secondary school education in NZ
Heritage/Culture	UKG / DFID / EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New museum - New cultural & community centre including Tourist office and library facility - Tourism interpretation signage erected at heritage sites - Upgrade of Pitcairn cemetery including ‘mapping’ of graveyard sites and installation of headstones

Table 1. Development Projects undertaken on Pitcairn since 2004

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With little or no political or managerial training, Pitcairners have demonstrated remarkable tenacity in dealing with the intricacies of self-governance, creating wider regional partnerships and attending overseas UK and EU forums with other OTs. Herein, it could be argued a policy of co-management has developed between UK Government and local people in order to produce flexible systems and build resilience towards sustainability. In this, the concept of adaptive renewal is based on the interplay between disturbance/conflict and the capacity to respond to and shape change.

Despite collaborative external support, tensions remain around UK initiatives like bi-annual child safety reviews and a recently administered goat cull on-island. Regarding the former, islanders have undergone several educational programmes and implemented guidelines to ensure child safety and increased community awareness yet restrictions are imposed on visitors, diaspora and expatriate personnel bringing children to Pitcairn. The islanders feel after several years of compliance such action hinders any UK rhetoric of progress and moving forward, frequently questioning policy and reviews conducted from “a desk in London”. In the example of the goat cull Pitcairners were threatened with budget cuts if they did not comply with eradicating all (but domestic) goats on the island. The goat topic has been the subject of conflict for decades, yet never resolved. External human resources were brought on-island to do the cull rather than island men (overriding traditional hunting obligations). Although goats cause environmental damage, the symbolic meaning of goats as attached to Pitcairn’s heritage with islanders identifying that they arrived on the *Bounty*) - a point intrinsically linked to the island’s cultural landscape. Goats have represented a food source in times of need and are occasionally killed for special events. The intent and action of the UK is goal orientated (environmental sustainability) but also reveals the actor’s orientation and position of power.

Tourism Development and the Cultural Landscape of Pitcairn

Cultural landscapes are derived from the combination and influence of nature and man (Wylie, 2007). As a consequence they reveal aspects of a country’s origins and development. Collectively, cultural landscapes are narratives of culture and expressions of regional identity; organically evolving through historic, vernacular, designed or ethnographic processes (The Cultural Landscape Foundation, 2016). A cultural landscape can be associated with a person or event, such as Pitcairn’s link with the mutiny on the *Bounty*. It could be argued the “storying” of place-myth informs understandings of Pitcairn as tourist space/place through its representation in literature. The corpus of literature in turn becomes intrinsic to the cultural narrative of Pitcairn Island and identity of its inhabitants. As a tourist destination, Pitcairn engages with the assumptions of its audience using particular rhetoric (ie *Bounty* image) to provide a convincing vision. The traveler self is thus mediated as much through the spaces of representation and imagination as it is through “real” encounters and a co-presence in “real” tourist space (Wearing, Stephenson and Young, 2010).

In terms of destination development, Butler’s (1980) tourism area life cycle (TALC) provides a useful analytical framework for Pitcairn. Although tourism *per se* has existed on Pitcairn in a limited form since the early 20th Century in the context of trade, barter and visitation by passing ships, it could be classified as still embryonic. Tourism is

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currently restricted to three forms: day visitors via cruise ships, individual travelers and those who travel on official business via the government supply ship, private yachts and charter/expedition groups. In terms of numbers of tourists and tourism revenue, cruise ships are the most important of these three forms of tourism (Nimmo, 2013). In the wider context the Pitcairn Island Group offers a diverse travel experience. Henderson Island is a UNESCO world heritage site with four species of endemic birds and several species of flora that attract ornithologists and wildlife enthusiasts worldwide. Oeno and Ducie are small coral atolls fringed by reefs and white sandy beaches but visited rarely. In the waters surrounding the islands, sightings have also indicated a large range of reef fish, pelagic game fish, reef and pelagic sharks, as well as green and Ridley turtles and the presence of humpback whales from June to September has been common for the past few decades (Horswill, 2007).



Figure 4 - Christian's Cave (author's photo, January 2009)

On Pitcairn locals have developed a nature trail close to Adamstown that leads to the historic cliff site of Christian's Cave, where reportedly, mutineer Fletcher Christian retreated to brood over his rebellious actions. A Cultural Centre accommodating a tourism information office, community library and day room for visiting yachties has been established in the now empty prison built for the convicted men. The island offers numerous points of interest for more active visitors (Figures 4 and 5). A walk to Ship Landing Point affords a view across Adamstown and Bounty Bay and locations such as Garnets Ridge, Highest Point and the Radio Station Ground are also popular. St Paul's rock-pool is another popular attraction made more accessible by building safer access facilities (a project completed by the imprisoned men). For the able and adventurous, a trip Down Rope, a steep and narrow cliff path of several hundred feet, will reward visitors with a view of petroglyph rock carvings left by earlier Polynesian settlement. Tautama is another site of archaeological significance, despite access also being difficult. For water enthusiasts, there are also two accessible shipwreck dive sites – *HMAV Bounty*

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only 50 metres offshore from Bounty Bay (although little remains of this artefact) and the nearby *Cornwallis* wrecked off Pitcairn in 1875.



Figure 5- St Paul's Rock pool (author's photo, August 2008)

Pitcairn's *Bounty* heritage offers a unique tourism brand for the island, constantly reiterated through the expanse of literature written on the subject and creating a particular image and iconography pertaining to place-making. Remnants of this heritage are manifest in tangible objects such as the *Bounty* Bible housed in Adamstown's local museum alongside Polynesian artefacts and other *Bounty* memorabilia. The physical topography of the island reflects its mutineer history with island place names depicting past events, reminders of people and actions. Examples include "Bang on iron," the site of the *Bounty's* forge; "Isaac's Stone" is an offshore rock claimed by mutineer Isaac Martin. A Polynesian male who arrived on the *Bounty* was murdered at a place called Timiti's Crack. Many places recall accidents and death, Where Dan Fall, McCoy's Drop, Broken Hip and Where Minnie Off, or are descriptors of man-made structures like Big Fence, Down the Grave, and The Edge (Ross and Moverley, 1964). In this, mapping, naming and imagining islands determine the way in which geographical place informs the location of culture (Amoamo, 2013). Both English and Pitkern² names constitute an integral part of the idiolectal or specific vernaculars of Pitcairn culture. This example is extended to the naming of houses (eg 'Flatchers', 'Big Flower', 'Up Tibi', 'Big Fence') and longboats (*Tin*, *Dumpy*, *Parkin's Boat*, *Stick*, *Ho Ho*). In this sense, places and artefacts not only feature inhabitants' narrative, they are narratives in their own right.

² The local creole language that incorporates various Tahitian words into an English grammatical structure and lexicon.

Re-branding/Re-imagining Pitcairn

Assessing, developing, communicating and measuring a destination brand identity is a complex business involving symbolic, experiential, social, and emotional values of place (Yusof, Ismail and Omar, 2014). Although Pitcairn's *Bounty* brand identity is well established - repackaging the mythical allure of the past is not enough. Undoubtedly Pitcairn's image has been tarnished by OU and re-branding can support a new destination image, leading to a new customer perception and tourist gaze (Urry, 1990). Here, cultural realignment requires not just transformation of physical heritage but also transformation of the written and spoken forms (MacLeod, 2013). The Pitcairn Tourism marketing strategy has now adopted the new slogan *Come Explore... Legendary Pitcairn Islands* (note the plural) with an emphasis towards promoting the island group as a whole. Other examples of textual realignment are evident in enhanced on-line advertising. The Pitcairn website attracts around 10,000 hits per month, *The Guide to Pitcairn* book was revised and reissued in 2013 and several tourism brochures and a local information booklet have been produced for visitors. Diversifying its tourism product will also enable Pitcairn to re-formulate a set of impressions, and imaginations, expectations (Buncle, 2009; Rajesh, 2013) that can stimulate new target groups and markets. In order to encourage a transition for Pitcairn Island from tourism as a marginal economic activity to one that has potential to become a primary and sustainable future source of income, first and foremost a basic structure of a tourism department was necessary.

By way of context it must be noted that until 2011 Pitcairn was not marketed internationally as a tourist destination, tourism infrastructure was minimal and any tourism department functioned on a voluntary and ad hoc basis. In 2010, the Pitcairn Islands Tourism Department was established. EU funding supported the appointment of an on-island tourism coordinator and development and implementation of its first five-year Tourism Development Plan in collaboration with a DFID funded marketing consultant. Commissioned tourism reports (Nimmo, 2013; Tourism Research Consultants 2005) have identified the main potential for Pitcairn to be carefully managed cruise tourism, long-stay VFRs, study/volunteer tourism, special interest (eco-tourism) and yachting tourism. Collaborative efforts with NGOs in the past few years have also led to exciting new developments that aim to capitalise on both cruise and ecotourism, thus enabling Pitcairn to progress toward the next stages of the TALC model. The following section discusses these options and describes Pitcairn's tourism capacity.

Cruise Tourism

Cruise tourism has seen unprecedented growth in the last 30 years due to a number of factors including ever bigger ships being built, diversification in ship design, activities, themes and length of trip, as well as market expansions and mass market pricing (Sletvold, 2014). This form of tourism offers Pitcairn one of the most manageable and sustainable products for the island's limited resources. Pitcairn annually receives around eight cruise ships during the summer season (November to March) and provides an opportunity for Pitcairners to sell handicrafts and provide some land-based activities and services. Improved communication and marketing strategies has more than doubled the number of cruise ships from six in 2011 and 2012 to sixteen in 2014. It is estimated cruise ship sales generate between US\$6,000 to US\$10,000 per household. When Pitcairn is able to land cruise ship passengers in a progressive and sustainable way, each 1000 cruise ship passengers landed at US\$50.00 per head will provide the government income of

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US\$50,000. Those passengers who remain on board can have their passports stamped at US\$10.00 per head (Pitcairn Islands Tourism Department, 2015).

But with no harbour, landing passengers is only possible with the island's two longboats and/or a cruise ship's own tenders, with all passengers landed at Bounty Bay. Of the 16 cruise ships that visited in 2014 only four landed passengers. The majority of larger ships often receive Pitcairn Islanders aboard rather than risking the difficult and dangerous landing facilities while small expedition ships (less than 100 passengers) manage the latter using their own vessels. The consequence of this means minimal negative socio/cultural and environmental impact on Pitcairn; essential until such time Pitcairn develops the necessary infrastructure to manage large numbers of cruise ship passengers.



Figure 6 – Cruise ship arriving off Pitcairn (author's photo, February 2013)

The EU is currently supporting efforts to improve tourism development financed under sector investment (EDF₉, EDF₁₀) of nearly five million Euro (DFID, 2013). Incorporated within this funding is the Western Harbour Project, with its alternative shore access, being constructed by an island workforce. The new breakwater will safely increase the island's potential to land more cruise ship passengers, overnight visitors and yacht tourists. However, given Pitcairn's sea conditions, it will not guarantee landings and inland access requires extensive infrastructural development of roads and improved ship to shore transfer reliability. EDF₁₀ funds will contribute to a dedicated tender vessel and improved transportation vehicles (4-wheel drive) for sightseeing alongside upgrading of Adamstown Square to support local development and enhancement of visitor experience.

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Figures 7-8 – Cruise ship passengers arriving on Pitcairn (author's photos, February 2013)



Figure 10 – Pitcairners visit a cruise ship to sell souvenirs (author's photo, February 2013)



Figure 10 – Pitcairners farewelling cruise ship (author's photo, February 2013)

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From fieldwork observation it is worth noting the juxtaposition of cultural realignment and island identity with the cruise product. In this, Pitcairn's Polynesian heritage has become more evident through promotion of island crafts such as tapa-cloth making (a practice that had died out a few generations ago) alongside the existing carving (longboats, replica *Bounty* ships, turtles, sharks, fish, etc.) and weaving products made by islanders. Some Pitcairn women now don Tahitian style clothing and hibiscus flowers in their hair when greeting cruise ship passengers. These are not necessarily new traits – historical literature presents similar images of Pitcairn women, but there is a renewed pride in presenting this point of difference to the outside world. Male islanders have also created a new type of image—that of the Pitcairn 'pirate,' a figure replete with abundant jewellery (pierced and otherwise) as well as sporting the renowned 'tatow' (the term used by William Bligh when describing Tahitian body tattoos). Female cruise passengers are especially keen to be photographed beside such male images. Here is an example of the creation of a new myth (pirates were never part of the *Bounty* saga). Furthermore, Urry (1995) links tourism and photography with constituting a self-reinforcing closed circle of representation in which tourist photographs both reflect and inform destination images. This practice also aligns with Barthes (1972) notion that myth is not just confined to oral speech; photography also serves to support mythical speech and both contribute to creating new motifs. Such motifs highlight that locals engage with their audience using a particular image to provide a convincing vision. We might also conclude that a level of commodification is perpetuated through such performative acts.

Developing Tourism Capacity

Managing capacity, available resources and marketing strategies continue to be challenging and central to Pitcairn's tourism development (Pitcairn Islands Tourism Department, 2015: 8). In this, a community-oriented planning approach is intrinsic to any successful, sustainable and effective management of tourism. Pitcairn Tourism Department's first five-year plan focused on maximising existing resources and improvements to local product and service delivery in addition to building key local and international collaboration and developing new and existing travel trade networks. Pitcairn has now progressed to a comprehensive and optimistic Sustainable Tourism Development Master Plan 2015-2019 (STDMP) that continues to promote a phased and managed approach to tourism development. Trade relations within the South Pacific and Australasia region have strengthened and delivered destination training programmes, planned media placements and exposure and increased digital engagement with targeted online customers. Key tourism segments such as birding, diving and cruising have been given special focus and representation in the UK and USA is scheduled for future development. Outsourcing expertise works well for Pitcairn given its capacity issues. In order to actualise the plans of EU sector funding, the STDMP aims to drive tourism product and service development, knowledge and information management, sales, public relations/positioning and branding, environmental, cultural and heritage conservation, access, infrastructure and global visibility. This is envisioned within a strategy of 'blue and green' activities that enable sustainable environmental management, cultural enrichment, longevity and economic well-being alongside a policy to manage tourist capacity in tandem with infrastructure development and mitigate risk (Pitcairn Islands Tourism Department, 2015: 2).

One of the key strategies of the STDMP is to encourage a spirit of local ownership of tourism development. Local-level tourism planning is highly variable, reflecting the

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diversity and perhaps, insularity of local situations in which tourism takes place (Simpson, 2008). Not all community members are in favour of tourism or willing to share the same spaces or resources with others. For example, in its pre-start-up phase, the newly appointed tourism coordinator faced some opposition to proposed growth strategies; recognizing the need to get 'buy in' and take 'slow steps'. As such, a process of self-regulation was fostered with local stakeholders; an example being the introduction of a form of competitive yet differentiated accommodation product. Decision-making and derived benefits from tourism development were key elements of obtaining local buy in from community members. Without this, the likelihood of a coordinated approach toward sustainable solutions for the island community is impacted notwithstanding some conflict and inequities of power and influence exist between stakeholders. Here, the insular nature of Pitcairners reveals characteristics of resistance to change - especially in older folk, and that the power balance within community subgroups is a dominating factor of how policies progress. Conversely, some Pitcairners have embraced tourism, building homestay chalets and improving existing dwellings. There are now 14 registered accommodation providers on-island promoted on Pitcairn's tourism website www.visitpitcairn.pn.

The STDMP is a 'living document' that appears to reflect the consensus of the island populace whilst implementing and acknowledging wider political agendas within its framework. That is, the community is part of an exogenous environment that shapes, and is shaped by tourism demand. That said, there are a number of assumptions made within the strategy, such as continuing budgetary aid from the UK to meet the reasonable needs of the community and that cruise ships scheduled to land passengers do so.

Establishing a Marine Protected Area (MPA)

Although Pitcairn's limited workforce and capacity are continual challenges for tourism development, tourism products such as fishing and dive trips, guided walking tours, and cultural workshops have been established in the past few years. One of the most exciting opportunities resides in the recent designation of a marine protected area in Pitcairn waters. In 2011 US-based Pew Charitable Trust representatives visited Pitcairn with a view to proposing a marine reserve in Pitcairn waters under their Global Ocean Legacy Project (GOL). Working with a team from *National Geographic* Pew undertook a four week expedition in 2012 to film and research Pitcairn's marine environment. Findings revealed Pitcairn's EEZ of 836,000 square kilometers is one of the most pristine marine ecosystems in the world (PEW 2015). A collaborative effort to establish a marine reserve motivated islanders to build new relationships with NGOs, media, scientists and researchers, plus other environmental lobbyists. In a report presented to the island community, Director of Pew's GOL project stated that currently Pitcairn's EEZ was a "non-performing asset" and that a marine reserve offered a number of cost benefits to the community. Pitcairners could consider three options: (1) business as usual; (2) create a marine reserve but allow artisanal Pitcairn-based fishing rights, (3) exploitation via a fishing license regime.

You and the British Government – it's your property, it's your decision.
(Nelson, personnel communication, 14th September 2012).

The Director stated that the cost benefit of having a MPA gives Pitcairn a globally recognized image... together with the *Bounty* heritage this makes Pitcairn a very special

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place. But some islanders had reservations: “why the rush” and “how much say would Pitcairn have versus the British Government?” The latter comment reflected islander feelings regarding the designation of Henderson Island in 1988 as a UNESCO site whereby Pitcairners’ felt they had little or no say in its implementation. Others spoke of the risk of procrastination and that they (Pitcairners) would be “left with nothing” if they do not make a decision... “Better we seek to protect what we have for our children and their children’s children”. Gradually, Pitcairners became more educated, involved and aware of their own cultural landscape, two statements made to author being “I don’t think anyone here realized what was around in the Pitcairn waters” and “We didn’t realize how beautiful our islands were... we must protect this heritage for our future generations”

NGOs team leaders were mindful of Pitcairners’ conservative, insular and somewhat xenophobic attitudes to outside power and influence thus time, patience, personal empathy and importantly, an emphasis on community ownership were factors in securing community buy in. While the UK Government voiced concerns over management, surveillance and costs in establishing an MPA, in 2015 they agreed to its designation. Accordingly, Pitcairn received much needed positive media coverage through entities like the BBC, *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *The Times*, and CBS News. The latter changed Pitcairners’ sense of social identity: reinvesting pride in their cultural landscape, gaining self-confidence and importantly, new prospects for community survival. Underpinned by a distinct element of internal social and external political reasons, the designation of a MPA has become one way for Pitcairners to reaffirm their own territorial and cultural identities.

Conclusion

Pitcairn Island faces negative demographics and an aging and decreasing population. Many authors have predicted ‘The end ever nigh’ for Pitcairn, describing the island as an ‘anachronism in the modern world’ in its ability to maintain viability for its tiny population (see Connell 1988). Indeed, following OU the possibility of voluntary depopulation and collapse of the community (Farran, 2007) was of major concern. Notwithstanding the need for change the centrality of power clearly lay with the metropole, demonstrating how subjects in overseas territories are brought within the scope of British jurisdiction and subjugation.

As discussed in this paper, the dualities of conflict and collaboration have been hallmarks of Pitcairn’s cultural landscape – defining aspects of its past origins and future development. Following OU ‘enforced’ socio- political and economic restructure has resulted in rapidly changing utilities and significances to Pitcairn’s cultural landscape. Tourism offers a potential pathway from which sustainable livelihoods and permanence of place may be secured for the island’s tiny community. The continued negotiation necessary for progress and prosperity lies with Pitcairn and the UK’s ability to invest in both formal and informal structures for the island’s future. Cultural realignment in this respect facilitates an understanding of the dynamics leading to community resilience through the restoration and re(imaging) of island place. In contrast to the quote that prefaced my introduction, the aforementioned positive media attention around the MPA may be an indication Pitcairn is in the news for all the right reasons. Small islands like Pitcairn find themselves poised to take upon themselves increased autonomy and

responsibility for their own future. As a SNIJ empowerment for Pitcairn may reside more in a strategy of (re)engaging with the coloniser whereby the dualities of conflict and collaboration are reconstructed and realigned.

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