

Title: Migration, Economy, Identity: Haitian Migration and The Bahamas

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Haitian migration to the Bahamas has been an issue for decades, and it has certainly caused the 'national' identity to become hard and fast in response to what many view as a cultural threat. It is with this in mind that the Bahamian population's negative response to free trade and CSME must be received.

The Bahamas presents an interesting paradox seemingly intolerant to cultural hybridity, but an extremely hybrid culture camouflaged under cultural homogeneity. It is the anxiety about economic hardship and the possibility of a cultural remapping that makes the paradox even more poignant for Bahamians.

This paper explores attitudes to intra-island migration and the reality of cultural creolisation in the Bahamas today. It uses Haitian migration as a point of departure to explore the negative reactions to perceptions of being 'taken over' that inform a great deal of the Bahamas's response to CSME.

I interrogate the idea of Bahamian identity as it is currently being constructed as 'not Caribbean', as a cultural myth held over from the colonial period.