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"Studying Up" In Tampa Bay: Globalization And Business Elites

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"Studying Up" In Tampa Bay: Globalization And Business Elites

by

Jennifer Laurel Avery

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Anthropology
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

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“Studying Up” in Tampa Bay: Globalization and Business Elites

Jennifer L. Avery

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents results of research I conducted during Spring 2003 through an internship with a private economic development organization (called here the TBEDO) that markets the strategically branded, seven-county region known as Tampa Bay domestically and internationally. This internship provided me with the means to conduct research about Tampa Bay’s international economy and explore the elusive topic of globalization. It provided me with networking opportunities needed to “study up” on business elites and to understand what their international development agendas are, how they accomplish these objectives, whether they subscribe to the belief that the world has undergone a qualitative change called globalization, and how their global agendas are expected to impact Tampa Bay residents.

My work at the TBEDO revealed that this high-profile organization has only recently begun to formulate a strategy for marketing the Bay Area internationally. Its internationally oriented activities are few in number and reflect no long-term goals, and its connections with internationally affiliated organizations are uneven. My key informant interviews with professionals working in international development and marketing allowed the exploration of issues including the consistency of my respondents’ international agendas with those of the TBEDO, the relevancy of the globalization concept to the Bay Area, and my respondents’ understanding of this concept. I also

explore the difference between globalization as a perceived set of pressures determining how business must be done and globalization as a marketing strategy employed by business elites.

More important in terms of the applied implications of this research is the impact that the international business agendas of the TBEDO and my key informants have had on the lives of Tampa Bay residents. This last component of my research provides the most important contribution to policy and the debate concerning the costs and benefits of globalization. Both the officers at the TBEDO and my interview respondents do not concern themselves with the impacts that their activities could have on Bay area residents because their jobs are in the service of a specific population: Bay area business people.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Much has been written on the often ill-defined topic of globalization in recent years. It is a buzzword that has come to be used rather loosely by academics, journalists, and politicians alike in ways that are frequently inconsistent. Generally being regarded as having to do with a new age of global capitalism in which time and space are less restrictive than ever, globalization is viewed as a process by some and either a cause or consequence by others. Anthropologists, like social scientists from many other disciplines such as geography, economics, and political science, have had much to say on the subject. Indeed, if globalization is a phenomenon that is having the considerable effects on human cultures throughout the globe as it is reputed to have, it is no wonder that anthropologists, especially applied anthropologists, would have an interest in studying it. As it is yet to be fully understood just how the costs and benefits of globalization are being felt by different populations across the world from transnational migrants to factory workers in offshore plants, it is imperative that anthropologists participate in the globalization debate given that our primary research tool, in-depth ethnographic fieldwork, is so uniquely suited for analyzing the causes and impacts of globalization, if it actually exists, at local sites. It is further necessary that anthropologists maintain a wide scope in selecting their research populations. While the discipline has paid considerable attention to the most marginalized populations experiencing the alleged effects of globalization (migrants, *maquila* laborers, service workers, etc.), it has neglected populations who may be at the reigns of the phenomenon and, at the very least, reap its

rewards. One of these populations, business elites working in international marketing and business development, is the subject of this thesis. This master's thesis presents the results of research I conducted during part of the Fall semester 2002 and all of the Spring semester 2003 as a graduate student at the University of South Florida's Department of Applied Anthropology. During this period, I began to do research through an internship with a private economic development organization whose mission is to market the strategically branded, seven-county region known as Tampa Bay both domestically and internationally. This internship provided me with the means to conduct some independent research about Tampa Bay's international economy and explore one of my areas of interest, the elusive topic of globalization. It provided me with critical networking opportunities in that my primary goal during this "studying up" of business elites was to come to some kind of understanding of what their international development agendas are, how they operate and organize to accomplish these objectives, whether they subscribe to the belief that the world has undergone a significant qualitative change that affects, among other things, how international business is done and that is called globalization, and, most importantly, how these global agendas are expected to impact Tampa Bay residents.

The impetus for this research project came from Dr. Mark Amen of the Globalization Research Center at USF, who, at the time, was organizing and contributing with Dr. Martin Bosman and Dr. Kevin Archer from USF's Department of Geography, three chapters to a thematic volume to be published by Routledge Press in the "Re-Thinking Globalization" series. This edited volume was intended to examine globalization processes in peripheral cities in an attempt to broaden the study of

globalization that has been primarily focused on cities at the core of the global economy. The volume included a case study of the Tampa Bay Area that examined three local globalization strategies that have been identified by these researchers—the City of Tampa Technology Initiative, the Florida High-Tech Corridor, and the private economic development organization examined here that, for the sake of confidentiality, will be referred to in this thesis as the Tampa Bay Economic Development Organization (TBEDO) or, more simply, the Organization. As I was very interested in the subject of globalization and hoped to explore this topic from a more anthropological perspective (i.e., one that involves looking at the globalization issue at a local site), Dr. Amen helped me to establish a relationship with the vice-president of marketing at the TBEDO, the organization that, because of its organizational structure, its regular meetings of various types, its extensive calendar of events, the proximity of its headquarters to USF, and its active mission to market the Tampa Bay Area internationally, afforded the greatest opportunities for participant observation of local globalizing processes.

During the two semesters of my master's thesis project, in addition to internship responsibilities to be further outlined in Chapter 3, I conducted many hours of participant observation at various meetings of the TBEDO. This entity is the region's self-described principal private, independent, not-for-profit economic development marketing organization. This region is comprised of seven counties (Hillsborough, Polk, Pasco, Pinellas, Manatee, and Sarasota) and five cities (Tampa, St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Lakeland, and Pinellas Park), and this multi-county organization's mission is to “work with its partners to market the region nationally and internationally, to conduct regional research, and to coordinate efforts to influence business and government issues

that impact economic growth and development” (*citation withheld to protect confidentiality*). Its partners are vast and include the multitude of funders who enabled the Organization to operate in 2003 on an annual budget of \$2, 640,496 and range from large public institutions and organizations (such as county level chambers to local universities) to companies large and small (such as Brandon Dogde and United Health Care). Given the Organization’s stated goals to market the Tampa Bay region internationally, to attract business, workforce, and investors from around the world to the area, and to promote the infrastructural developments that will facilitate these objectives, the TBEDO is an organization comprised of individuals who may legitimately be identified as agents in the process of global city formation. My internship and master’s research project therefore represents an examination of the TBEDO as such an entity and represents a case study of globalization processes at the local level.

My internship obligations and my attendance at staff, marketing, and, most importantly, international task force meetings, in conjunction with archival research into the Organization’s history, enabled me to make contacts with ten individuals working with but outside of the Organization in, for the most part, international business development. My goal was to supplement my participatory research at the Organization with key informant interviews with people working in or with the TBEDO in an attempt to understand their perspectives on the Organization’s agenda, the community it serves, and its outlook on its place and the place of Tampa Bay in the globalizing world. I further hoped to examine general attitudes about the local, the regional and the global as well as the ideologies of these businesspersons and their priorities for Tampa Bay and to analyze whether they are consistent with arguments in the literature surrounding the concept of

globalization. A key issue here is cultural change. Are current changes in beliefs and behaviors—if these changes actually have occurred— reflections of the impact of globalizing forces or ideas? Are these changes in keeping with the literature that suggests that something new is occurring in the way in which people view the world and the possibilities for engaging with it beyond their local communities?

My research population, largely composed of economic developers and marketers, is a particularly fascinating group to examine in terms of the construction of image and meaning in a globalizing economy. What the majority of my respondents actually do is city marketing, a unique brand of social marketing designed to raise a city's competitive image and attract inward investment (Holcomb 1993; Archer 1996). Marketing a city is not quite like marketing a specific product or service, and the ambiguity of the "product" is another induction toward a regional approach as the impacts of city marketing are likely to be felt beyond any one city's borders anyway (Paddison 1993). But what are the effects of marketing a city or region in the way that my research subjects do? Further, do they lobby for infrastructural changes that simply make their product more marketable or do they actually improve the lives of Bay Area residents? This research is attempt to understand the goals, strategies, and business ideologies of a group of elite subjects who operate under the assumption that the strengthening of Tampa Bay's international connections and image is the inevitable path toward economic growth in a globalizing world. More so than a thorough analysis of my subjects' actual activities, this research focuses primarily on their perspectives as to how they are responding to these global business imperatives. The following is a brief summary of how this thesis will present the results of my research.

The chapter to follow is a literature review that will situate my research in the anthropological discussions of globalization. It will include some discussion of definitions of globalization and the controversy surrounding the legitimacy of the “new” phenomenon. It will discuss some of the exiting research on globalization and how anthropology is an ideal discipline for the study of the alleged causes and effects of globalization on a local level. I will explore the issue of agency in bringing about the changes associated with globalization as well as the issue of equity in the distribution of the costs and benefits of globalization. I will discuss the role of elites as agents and beneficiaries of and believers in globalization. This will also involve some exploration of studying up in anthropology, why this kind of research is so pertinent to research on globalization, and what the impediments are to doing this kind of important research.

Chapter three will discuss each of the methodologies used during my internship and research. Archival research into the history of the TBEDO and the various county level economic development agencies as well as their current activities in the international arena will be discussed as the basis for the other methodologies. This research, combined with the literature review, provided the structure for my participant observation and key informant interviewing. These last two methodologies will also be discussed separately. I will provide details about my participant observation at various meetings of the TBEDO—marketing meetings, staff meetings, and most importantly, international task force meetings. I will discuss how this participant observation, along with the work I did for the Organization updating their International Organization Directory, helped me to identify candidates for my semi-structured interviewing. Finally, I will discuss this interviewing, including my sampling methods, which provided the largest portion of my

data. I will provide details about the kinds of subjects that I interviewed, where and how they work in the Tampa Bay region in general, and how they were identified as research subjects. I will explain how each methodology suited the research questions I asked throughout my internship, and I will provide detail as to how I analyzed the data produced by each of my methodologies.

The fourth chapter of my thesis will present the results of my internship research. The results will be broken down partly by methodology and by theme. I necessarily have to discuss the results of my participant observation and my key informant interviewing separately because I have found opinions expressed at group meetings to differ in some ways from opinions expressed at individual interviews. Topics will include my subjects' definitions of globalization, their characterizations of the Tampa Bay Area as an international city, their ideas about what changes have occurred in international arenas (social, political, and economic) and how those changes came about, their postulations and expectations for future changes in the Bay Area, and how Tampa Bay residents have been affected and will be affected by these changes in international activity. This chapter will include both the results and discussion/interpretation of those results.

The final chapter of my thesis will present the conclusions of my internship research as well as my recommendations for future research and applied work. This section will summarize my research findings and discuss how these findings relate to and expand on the existing body of anthropological and applied anthropological literature. I will suggest avenues for future explorations for local-level globalization research in Tampa Bay specifically and in the world in general and will discuss the reasons why

applied research on elite subjects, although still seriously lacking in our discipline, is so necessary.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

What is Globalization?

Even a cursory review of the literature arising out of such disciplines as anthropology, political science, and geography reveals the many inconsistencies in the way globalization is defined. Much of this literature focuses on the more economic features of globalization, and definitions of the phenomenon include discussion of the proliferation of neoliberal policies on international trade and investment – the latest phase of global capitalism. Often globalization is regarded as a “justification of the inevitable victory of neoliberalism,” an assertion that more critical analyses tend to contest (McBride and Wiseman 2000: 6). More comprehensive definitions incorporate some idea of “the increasing flow of trade, finance, culture, ideas, and people” that has resulted from the spread of neoliberal economic policies and advancements in communication and transportation technologies (Lewellen 2002: 7). Implicit in this process is the marked interconnectivity of human populations in a world in which the restrictions of time and space have shrunk. In Scholte’s meta-terminology, globalization is the “supraterritoriality” of human social relations (2000: 48). It is the modern condition in which geography is assumed to be, more so than during any other period of history, less of a defining principle for human political, economic, and social existence.

Globalization, however, is very infrequently defined with such neat and tidy phrasing. While some authors offer definitions as succinct as Scholte’s – such as the “transnationalism of human affairs” (Ho 1993), “technoeconomic

supranationalization”(Nieto and Franzé 1997), or “the intensification of worldwide social relations” (Pieterse 1995), it is more common to find globalization characterized with a laundry list of components that are alternatively viewed as either causes or effects of the phenomenon. The most relevant among these include: the rapid expansion of trans or multinational organizations, accelerated flows of migrants, increased capital flows through globally diffused markets and exchanges, the decreased power of the state in the wake of global governance and finance, and the accelerated commodification of cultural life (Kalb 2000).

The rapidity and expanse of such processes that defy geographical boundaries is not necessarily held, however, to be enabling the unification or homogenization the citizens of the world. Indeed, the world’s frequently cited cohesive, supraterritorial institutions, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Trade Organization (WTO), or the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), are accompanied by the kind of fragmentation exemplified in the USSR and the Balkans as well as numerous recent ethnic separations and fundamentalist movements (Hackenberg 1999). In fact, such “counterideologies of territorialism” are conceived of by many authors as part of the narrative of globalization in so far as such movements frequently call upon global networks or utilize advanced communications technologies, such as the internet, to resist the rule of a state more concerned with the agendas of other “territorial and cultural interests” (Kalb 1999: 5). Less territorial, but still engendering heterogeneity, is the development of global communities forged on the basis of some aspect of identity such as class, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation. That is, globalization has encouraged the adoption of non-national forms of collective identity

such as global labor organizations, internet-based feminist groups, and transworld homosexual organizations such as the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) (Scholte 1999). Defying the traditional boundaries of states as well and utilizing advancements in communication and transportation technologies also are the many transnational localities around the globe in which migrants maintain social and political contact with their communities of origin and come to define themselves as members of borderless communities as opposed to citizens of any one nation (Smith 1998; Basch, Schillar, and Blanc 1994).

Given the complex and often contradictory outcomes that are attributed to globalization, it is not surprising to find that some theorists question the validity of the globalization concept outright. Several authors (e.g. Kearney 1995; Mintz 1998; Trouillot 2001; Friedman 2002) regard globalization as the continuation – on a grand scale – of a process that has been going on at least since the sixteenth century. They frequently hesitate to accept globalization as a phenomenon that exists outside the minds of academics and the world’s political and economic elite and often cite such seminal works as Eric Wolf’s *Europe and the People Without History* that demonstrate the extensive influence of Western economies, political systems, and culture on “isolated” societies in prior historical periods (Lewellen, 2002; Amselle, 2002). The current globalization debate may very well rest on a gross exaggeration of prior degrees of boundedness or isolation from Western capitalist influences in non-Western societies (Trouillot 2001; Friedman 2002; Amselle 2002). For a novice, taking sides on the debate is complicated as scholars present entirely contradictory views of the state of the allegedly globalized (or globalizing) world. Pries (1999), for example, argues that more

migrants are present in the world now than in any other point in time in human history, an observation in keeping with current ideas about globalization, while Friedman (2002) asserts that less than 2% of the world's population is on the move and that these movements do not compare with international movements at the turn of the last century. Friedman further asserts that similar discourses about the new world abounded at this time in the midst of new technologies such as the telephone, radio, automobile, and telegraph — and later faded in a period of deglobalization from 1920 to 1950. Indeed, one of the most common assertions throughout the multi-disciplinary literature on globalization is that the concept has not been consistently fleshed out nor has its novelty been demonstrated and that the empirical evidence for its existence has not been satisfactorily presented or examined (Hackenberg 1999; Durrenberger 2001; Friedman 2002).

Studying Globalization at the Local Level: The Applied Link

Increasing attention is being paid to how globalization can be studied— its causes identified, its outcomes analyzed, its future predicted— at the local level. Globalization, whether one accepts its existence or not, is an issue that has received considerable academic and media attention in the last decade. Further, it has infiltrated the discipline of anthropology in both its academic and applied discourses (Cleveland, 2000). In fact, as Kearney (1995) reports, the department chair predictions from the American Anthropological Associations' 1994 Survey of Departments included the projection that, in the next 25 years, the processes of global change and global interdependence and internationalization would become some of the principal foci of the discipline. If it is the business of anthropologist to understand culture and if certain global processes are

impacting human beings, then it is must also be our business to understand these global processes (Durrenberger: 2001). Further, our primary anthropological tool, in-depth ethnographic fieldwork, may offer the most comprehensive means by which we can gain “insight into the lived experience of globalization” (Burawoy 2000:4).

One scholar, in a recent “Advancing Applied Anthropology” commentary in *Human Organization* even characterized globalization as the concept that could be “the touchstone conceptual frame for revitalizing applied anthropology[‘s]” contribution to the general discipline in terms of both theory development and policy formation (Hackenberg 1999: 212). The many social policy issues toward which globalization studies can contribute are outlined in this piece. One of these is the threat of increased marginality for populations of the world for whom the priority of information production, the new source of power and wealth, is irrelevant. Another is the restricted upward mobility between the two dominant labor groups to grow out of the global economy, i.e., information professionals and service workers. In broad terms, the globalization debate is riddled with issues of equity or, as Scholte (1999) discusses it, justice. It is within the domain of anthropologists to determine if the costs and benefits of globalization are evenly distributed. It is especially within the domain of applied anthropologists to influence policy decisions to ensure equity in global processes. Indeed, anthropologists are uniquely suited to conduct research on “the interface between the global force field and selected points of impact,” i.e., the point at which we could contribute to intervention policies (Hackenberg 1999: 212).

As researchers, however, anthropologists should be the most wary of generalizing about the causes and effects of globalization in the absence of empirical data. Friedman

(2002: 32) even suggests that the “transnational discourses” of globalization reflect “an ideological agenda rather than a scientific discovery” that has arisen out the experiences of the few elites who actively participate in global finance or, as Tomlinson (1999) describes, have had the opportunity to appreciate the brevity of a transatlantic flight and the similarity of airport terminals around the world. Globalization scholars are now calling for a “grounded social science perspective” in which the focus of our research moves from the deterritorialized flows of culture and capital to “the dynamic, territorial, human institutions and networks that produce them in the first place and re-territorialize, translate, and resolidify them into concrete forms of social and spatial change” (Kalb 1999: 7). It is the more specific case studies of local social institutions and networks, as opposed to general theoretical frameworks, that will enable predictions about the outcomes of globalization processes. Anthropologist have the tools to accomplish this research and have begun to examine globalization’s effects on transnational migrants, refugee populations, factory workers in multinational enterprises, and tribal and peasant communities (Lewellen 2002). However, as this thesis will allow me to demonstrate, there are other kinds of social institutions and networks involved in the globalization debate that anthropologists should investigate.

Given the TBEDO’s stated goals to market the Tampa Bay region internationally, to attract business, workforce, and investors from around the world to the area, and to promote the infrastructural developments that will facilitate these objectives, the TBEDO is an organization comprised of individuals who may be identified as agents in the process of global city formation. My internship with this organization and my research into the beliefs and behaviors of international business professionals affiliated with it

represent a preliminary case study of globalization processes at the local level. It is an example of the kind of institution and network of agents who take up (or perhaps create) a dialogue about the global economy and doing business in a world in which space and time are less of a hindrance than ever. My internship and this thesis provide just a cursory example of what this kind of research could be like and what it could contribute to the understanding of how globalization is impacting people at local sites. Further, this thesis will examine if and how the activities of my research subjects reflect beliefs that business practices have been forever altered and that certain avenues of economic development are both inevitable and beneficial for those who wish to take full advantage of the opportunities that exist in the world today.

This research population – businesspersons, investors, and marketers – is not typical of the kinds of subjects that anthropologists generally target in globalization-related research, such as transnational migrants or factory employees in multinational enterprises (Lewellen, 2002). Rather, my population appears to be more representative of the elites that Friedman (2002) describes as subscribing to a beneficent concept called globalization on the basis of limited personal experience and welcoming the opportunities it affords. However, as Nader (1972: 284) discusses, anthropologists “have a great deal to contribute to our understanding of the processes whereby power and responsibility are exercised in the United States.” The TBEDO is a self-described, private economic development organization which actively markets Tampa Bay nationally and internationally, takes an active role in attracting business from within the United States and around the globe, and influences legislative decisions to achieve its own goals for the infrastructural development (education, transportation, water, etc.) of the Tampa Bay

region. It further claims a considerable degree of success in its nine years of existence. It is an organization committed to changing the Tampa Bay region, and it has the power and influence to see its agendas carried out. My research project is therefore an example of “studying up” – an examination of how an economically and politically powerful organization like the TBEDO operates, what its agendas are, and who are people they intend to serve.

Studying Elites: The Case for Studying Up

Although several case studies of globalization at the local level have been attempted, it has not become common for anthropologists to “study up” in their examinations of the causes and effects of the phenomenon. Despite Laura Nader’s (1972) call more than three decades ago for research on those who wield power, the relative paucity of such work in relation to that more focused on marginal populations remains. An examination of the literature on elite research provides some explanation of why this shortcoming persists. Chris Shore situates anthropology’s failure to study elites within the traditions of the discipline itself. He asserts that anthropologists have created their own disciplinary elitism with “particular discourses, rituals, and exclusionary practices” and that anthropology has historically focused on exotic others and shown a “comparative neglect of social institutions and political processes in its ‘own’ societies” (2002: 1). Further, the historical links between anthropology and European colonial rule helped create a disciplinary culture in which research subjects are objectified and viewed as simple (Shore 2002; Grimshaw and Hart 1995). Such disciplinary traditions have long delayed an anthropological focus on elites.

But the insights that can be gained by doing elite research and the consequences of avoiding it receive considerable attention from authors throughout the social sciences—providing impetus for more anthropologists to attempt it despite the difficulties inherent in doing it. Hertz and Imber (1995) examine the political factors that help to explain why elites are studied so infrequently, asserting that social scientists have long identified and sympathized with more disenfranchised subjects and have conducted research at this level of the class structure in order to publicize the inequities and propose solutions. There is obviously little incentive to empower elite subjects through studying them. However, elite studies can help to elucidate the extent of their power over those who lack it as well as help to inform social policy for governmental and workplace activities.

Moreover, as Ostrander argues, a failure to adequately obtain data about elites “contributes to obscuring and therefore maintaining their position in society” (1993: 7); the failure to understand their operations adequately enables elites to carry on activities that may not be in the best interests of all. An even harsher critique to anthropologists is the assertion by Albert Hunter, among others, that the focus of social scientists on the poor and disenfranchised actually contributes to inequality by furnishing elites with “knowledge about the masses” (1993: 56). Indeed, it is not a coincidence that large-scale research programs often receive funding from elite organizations. The wealth of knowledge that has been gathered on the exploited enables elite groups, whose own operations are shrouded by mystery, to more effectively carry out their activities. In this sense, applied anthropologists have a critical obligation to widen the scope of their research activities if long lasting social change is desired. If certain elite actors are

orchestrating and benefiting from globalization, for example, it is necessary to study them if anthropological theories pertaining to globalization are to develop a modicum of explanatory power and if policy that promotes equity and justice is to be developed. This obligation, however, introduces particular ethical considerations. Hugh Gusterson (1993) discusses the dilemma that an elite researcher faces when the people who have consented to be studied have viewpoints that may differ radically from those of the researcher. His research on military elites working in nuclear arms development presents an extreme version of this situation. However, even when working with elites whose activities are considerably less egregious, the ethics of writing critically about consenting participants is something that deserves careful consideration by the researcher. Gusterson (1993) suggests that the anthropological standard of cultural relativism could suffice to ease the dilemma, but he concedes that this task is much easier when the people we study come from cultures far removed from our own. He also asserts that failing to adequately criticize elite subjects only reinforces their power and priorities.

Doing Elite Research

How does an anthropologist conduct elite research? How does it differ from more traditional anthropological studies? What defines an elite individual? These are all questions that must be explored if anthropologists wish to coherently flesh out this important but neglected area of study. There are some who argue that anthropologists are no less suited for elite research than any other kind. As George Marcus (1983) points out, anthropologists doing ethnographic research on elites have rarely considered themselves to be part of the groups they studied, a situation that mirrors the more prototypical anthropological study of “isolated” cultures. Further, the labeling of individuals or groups

as elites — much as the labeling or categorizing of humans in any social situation — is precarious. Smith argues that the term is so “protean and porous that is almost devoid of all meaning (2002: 4). “Elite” is rarely a self-referential concept but a label applied to those perceived as having power (Marcus 1983). For purposes of comparison across and within cultures it is best qualified with adjectives such as ‘business,’ ‘military,’ ‘governing,’ ‘religious,’ ‘academic,’ or ‘bureaucratic’ (Watson 2002). In general, the term can be safely applied to those who occupy influential positions in important social spheres. Elites make decisions and control or have access to the machinery that enforces them, and they possess the capital that places their decision-making capacities above that of the ordinary citizen (Shore 2002). In the case of this study, my research participants are individuals possessing considerable social capital in terms of their abilities to utilize elaborate social networks of powerful individuals in both the business and political communities to accomplish specific goals in the Bay Area.

Studying elites requires a holistic and historical outlook as elites are most realistically understood in relation to the institutions in which and between which they operate—as a plurality of organizations as opposed one unified class of individuals. These relationships are difficult to document, and prior knowledge about the various systems in which elites can meaningfully be labeled as such is a necessary for this kind of study. Before taking on elite research, Marcus (1983) asserts that the ethnographer must determine how the boundaries of the elites should be circumscribed as well how to describe the structure of the social systems of which the elites are a part. This means elites ought to be described in relation to “societal processes that can be best understood at other levels of conceptual abstraction” (1983: 22). Therefore, “the elite research

tradition can be seen as one important attempt to provide holistic analyses of complex societies from a focus on small-group processes” (22). Hunter similarly warns that there is a “positivistic analytic tendency” within the study of local elites and community power to wrench both the structures and the issues out of their community context (1993:53). He insists that because elites arise from within a local system and wield their power through a local system, they must be understood from within the context of this local system.

Such a mandate makes doing elite research a rather daunting task. This research upon which this study is based centers around a private, economic development organization that serves seven counties and has strong ties with an overwhelming number of powerful institutions, organizations, and individuals. These include state legislators, local governments, public and private universities, corporations, airports, seaports, and over eighty regionally located organizations related to international marketing and business development. It is arguably one of the most difficult types of elite groups to tackle in that they represent “diffuse networks or associations of individuals not otherwise rooted in a basic organizational element of a social structure” such as family based factions (Marcus 1983: 21). And how can I even be justified in labeling them as elites for the purposes of social research when the entire concept is so vague? Marcus distinguishes “elites” from classes in that the former refers to specific persons or groups as opposed to formal, impersonal entities and organizations. A key defining characteristic, which provides the validation for my categorization for this project is the idea that elites are generally regarded as the groups that are “the major source of change within relevant levels of social organization---local, regional, societal, and international” (1983: 9). Although exclusivity is a key characteristic of socially elite groups, the ability

to make and enforce decisions that affect the lives of others is the critical defining characteristic of socially and economically elite groups. But one should be cautious in attributing too much power (or blame) to such an ill-defined group. It is imperative that researchers remember “the elite focus is only a partial theory, necessarily linked with broader issues and complementary concepts concerning institutions and classes” (Marcus 1983: 18). That is, one should be careful not to extract elites from the larger contexts in which they operate. Such an attitude going into the research can help the anthropologist avoid generalizing too much about elites or exaggerating the extent of their ability to bring about change.

The Pitfalls of Elite Research

There has been much written about the particular difficulties in doing research on elites, and a review of available case studies provides researchers with many useful tips for doing this kind of project. In a multidisciplinary publication on studying elites, Hertz and Imber (1995) note that it is the inaccessibility of elites that has discouraged social researchers from focusing on such groups. They note that “elites establish barriers that set their members apart from the rest of society,” rendering participant observation and interview opportunities relatively uncommon. (1995: viii). In fact, community and political elites have by far been the most frequently studied by sociological and political science researchers—as opposed to professional or business elites—most likely because they have the highest public visibility and have political interest in creating public constituencies, especially with academics. Professional elites, i.e. elites who work in prestigious fields such as law, medicine, and clergy, are more difficult to access but at the very least share with the academics who try to study them the experience of lengthy and

intensive study which can facilitate rapport and accessibility. Business elites, however, “have been traditionally the most difficult settings to gain access to by social scientists” as their organizations are hierarchically designed to protect those at the highest levels and prevent outsiders from “learning more about how they operate” (Hertz and Imber 1995: x). Gaining access frequently involves the use of personal ties or even, in the most difficult circumstances, asking the researcher to submit to background checks. On the optimistic side, however, Hirsh (1995) argues that the new business elites may be more accessible for social-scientific study because the organization structures are undergoing rapid transformation, blurring the boundaries in organizational hierarchies.

Robert Thomas (1995) discusses some of the difficulties in accessing elite subjects for study, particularly top corporate elites, in his essay, “Interviewing Important People in Big Companies” and provides some useful hints for overcoming them. He notes how important it is for the researcher to project common experiences or interests with the individuals she plans to interview as his position as a faculty member in a management school enabled him to do. Suggesting an interview date relatively far into the future, such as a month, is an effective way to compel executives to be far more accommodating to any research project. He also asserts the importance of suggesting that the person with whom the researcher wishes to speak is uniquely qualified to tackle the kinds of questions she has developed. Thomas suggests personalizing the questions in any interview protocol in order to communicate that the researcher is particularly interested in the insights of that individual as well as framing the questions in such a way that the interview subject feels that he or she is teaching the researcher about the topic at hand. While such tactics are part of any basic interviewing technique, Thomas asserts that it is

even more imperative that elites perceive that they are being regarded as “experts” because it is a position to which they are quite accustomed and feel that they have earned.

Scholarly opinions on doing elite research are far from unanimous, however. Ostrander (1993) argues that the accounts of the inaccessibility of elites have been exaggerated and that discussions of such issues have loomed too large in publications about elite research. Luck and a willingness to take advantage of opportunities is more fundamental to gaining access to an elite community. She provides more advice on grappling with elites during interviews than on actually obtaining interviews, a feat that is relatively easily accomplished, in her experience, through direct and tactful means of developing rapport and trust. She warns that elites, more than other types of interviewees, tend to “converse easily, freely, and at great length but not necessarily with the kind of substantive content the researcher requires as they have received training as to how to simultaneously put others at ease and convey confidence (1993:18). Ostrander notes that elites are generally used to being in charge and receiving deference from others. Their opinion matters in the eyes of others, and they are frequently asked for it. She cautions that it is an error for a researcher to be too deferential, to be overly preoccupied with establishing good rapport, or to overestimate the expertise or importance of what elites have to say. Her advice mirrors that of Albert Hunter who asserts that social researchers can “draw upon the prestige of their academic status, their cultural capital, to create a greater symmetry in the power relationship between elites and themselves (Hunter 1993: 56).

Elites in Tampa Bay, Economic Development, and the link to Globalization

What is the relationship between elite businesspersons in Tampa Bay, economic city development and marketing, and globalization? Economic development professionals working in cities throughout the United States (indeed around the globe) increasingly accept the idea that in the face of global change in the ways in which business is being done — the disappearance of borders on economic exchanges, the mobility of capital and workers, etc — cities must increasingly compete within the international marketplace in order to prosper and maintain or improve the standard of living of their residents. Increasingly, cities are responding to these pressures not as municipalities but as metropolitan regions resulting in “new forms of collaboration between public authorities and businesses” (Morin and Hanley 2004: 369). These urban agglomerations seek to attract investments, skilled workers, corporate headquarters, international figures, professionals, and high profile events to become full-fledged global cities or, at the very least, sub-global or regional cities (Molotch 1988; Sassen 1991). The necessity to compete at this level has resulted in new collaborations between the public and private sectors and the local “growth elite” as Molotch calls them—the kind of actors studied for this thesis. Such adherents to the regionalism strategy view the formation of an integrated region as the only productive solution to the social and economic changes resulting from globalization processes, and, as a result, ideas that such elites have about regionalism and globalization tend to be intertwined (Hodos 2002).

The desired end result of such collaborations, despite whatever disagreements may arise over various specific issues, is growth — productive growth of the city or region’s economy in the form of development and expansion of desirable industries such

as tourism, technology, and finance (Ward 2000). Such elites actively work to change the cities in which they live and view the strategies they adopt as the most viable options for growth in this age of globalization. Critical issues regarding agency and structure come into play in analyzing the activities of such individuals. That is, a debate exists between those who emphasize individual consciousness and will and those who emphasize institutional structures as the determinants of social outcomes. Indeed, as Logan and Molotch argue (1987:12-13), attention must be paid to the “strategies, schemes, and needs of human agents and their institutions at the local level” although “the focus on parochial actors is not meant to slight the obviously crucial linkages between local urban phenomena on the one hand, and cosmopolitan, political and economic forces, on the other.” Theories about such elite activities must consider the likely possibility that individual actions and strategies matter without concluding that such individuals are not themselves subject to the constraints of their environments. As MacLeod and Goodwin argue (1999:503), theories explaining the operation of business elites need to be flexible enough to recognize that urban actors and institutions are not “passive recipients of some logic or national interpretation of that logic but are, through the actions of their constituent properties... active agents in the structuration of globalizations.”

Indeed, the members of the TBEDO are in Molotch and Logan’s typology the most assertive type of entrepreneur in that they put themselves in the path of the development process and actively participate in both policy development and political decision-making. Such elites are obvious, although neglected, subjects for the anthropological study of globalization at the local level. They are engineering cultural realities for themselves, city residents, and foreign prospectors, and they produce a script

about particular places which introduces and reifies “a common language and conceptual vocabulary... shared and adhered to by actors involved in all aspects of urban regeneration: a script which crosses institutional and political lines” (Quilley 1999:187).

CHAPTER 3: METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Introduction

Given the complexity of the issues surrounding this research project (globalization, local economic development, “imagineered” place identities, etc.), it is a daunting task to develop a means to study such topics for within the guidelines of a master’s thesis (Holcomb 1995: 37). Like most forms of anthropological research, this study employed several methodologies, each enabling the collection of distinct kinds of data that contribute to a more holistic picture of the cultural phenomenon in question. This chapter will describe my three complimentary methodologies and the reasons they were chosen. It will further explicate the research questions addressed during my project and the methods of analysis used to interpret the qualitative data.

Archival Research

The first step in my research process was to familiarize myself to the greatest extent possible with information about the TBEDO through archival research. As this organization had not yet been the subject of any published, scholarly work, I began with the source in which information about this organization is most concentrated: its own website. This extensive site which serves largely as a promotional tool and is alluded to in all radio spots and print ads produced by the TBEDO is useful in that it provided me with a description of what the Organization views itself to be, what its mission is, and what its most current activities are. More importantly, the Organization makes public on this site much of its promotional and research material such as its monthly newsletters,

annual reports, marketing surveys and other research. It provides information about its investors, board members, marketing campaigns as well as contact information for interested parties and much useful information (often through links to other websites) for businesspersons looking to relocate to Florida such as tax information and labor market data. The website was also crucial for my interest in the international aspects of the Organization's activities as one link from the site labeled "International" led me to the very few internationally oriented projects in which the TBEDO is involved and/or promotes. The most prominent of these is the online version of its International Organization Directory to be discussed below. Unfortunately, the majority of my archival research data was not pertinent to my research questions concerning globalization in Tampa Bay and, as a result, will not be presented in this thesis. However, the exercise of becoming familiar with the Organization and its history, current activities, and self-promotional strategy better prepared me to follow along during the briskly paced staff meetings that I attended later.

Although the Organization's website provides much useful information for a researcher wishing to familiarize herself with its general activities and overall mission, my archival research into the Organization had to go beyond this resource in order to obtain data about the TBEDO that was not self-generated. The most productive archival source turned out to be the Lexus Nexus search engine of non-scholarly periodicals. A keyword search of articles back to 2000 using the Organization's full name produced over 20 articles in which the TBEDO was mentioned. Disappointingly, over 50% of those articles were press releases generated by the Organization itself and made available over PR Newswire. However, that left a number of articles written in both the *St. Petersburg*

Times and the *Tampa Tribune* mentioning the TBEDO which ranged from brief mentions such as in the case of its sponsoring of newsworthy research about the Bay Area with marketing potential or as in full editorial articles about the Organization's mission and accomplishments. A fuller description and analysis of the content of these articles will be presented in Chapter 4.

Participant Observation: Internship Responsibilities

As discussed in Chapter 1, the actual research upon which this thesis is based began with my internship at the TBEDO, the initial focus of my research on globalization processes in Tampa Bay. Given that the Organization, through its various activities in the Bay Area, connects with professionals working in international business arenas — from private entrepreneurs to local governmental representatives -- this internship provided me with the most efficient way to get my foot in the door and become acquainted with many of the people with whom I was to later conduct interviews and, in the process, obtain the bulk of my data.

My internship at the Organization consisted of the time consuming job of updating their International Organization Directory, a pocket guide to business resources to assist global commerce in Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Sarasota Counties. This directory, containing 86 entries, was first compiled in 1998 and had not been updated since its original publication. The directory is divided into eight categories of organizations: bi-national business (groups that forge connections between the Bay Area and one specific foreign country), economic development, government, independent focus (mostly private organizations falling into no other category), professional (business associations), schools and universities, foreign consulates, and

transportation. Each entry in the directory can contain, if applicable, up to nine sub-categories of data including basic contact information, email, website, mission statement, a brief description of projects and/or services provided by the organization, a list of target countries for their international efforts, names and titles of representatives, contact information for membership, and a list of current marketing and promotional materials produced by the organization.

My preferred method for obtaining the updated information for each entry in the directory was direct telephone calls to the previously listed contact person for the organization. As I was considering these individuals, already identified to me by the Organization as persons working in international areas, as potential interview candidates, I thought it best to contact them in person as opposed to email so that I would make a more memorable impression as an official Organization employee in the hopes that this rapport would facilitate their understanding of and consenting to participation in my research project some time later.

This strategy was very effective. Although often requiring several callbacks, frequent referrals to other persons who had taken over the positions of my original contacts, and much patient persistence in ultimately obtaining the information I needed, most the people with whom I spoke were cooperative and friendly. Many of the people with whom I talked were not in frequent contact themselves with the TBEDO and asked me to relay messages or make inquiries about various activities for which they hoped to obtain the Organization's sponsorship. I have since received several calls and emails requesting copies of the old directory and inquiring about the publication of the new one. Several of the people with whom I spoke referred me to organizations that were not

included in the original directory but that would most likely have an interest in being included. I collected several such new entries and delivered them to the Organization, thus helping to improve the directory's overall comprehensiveness. And, finally, the majority of the people I interviewed later can, in fact, be linked to the Organization's directory. This internship task not only enabled me to familiarize myself with the various internationally oriented organizations in the Bay Area (at least according to the TBEDO), but it provided a stepping stone for my future research endeavors.

More Participant Observation: TBEDO Meetings

My efforts updating the directory were indeed the most participatory components of my work at the Organization. I supplemented this work by attending various meetings at the TBEDO at which I was more or less a participatory observer, although my participation was frequently quite minimal. Beginning at the end of the Fall semester of 2002 and throughout the Spring semester of 2003, I attended weekly Organization staff meetings — a total of 15 meetings, each about an hour long. At these meetings, I would provide updates of my work on the directory and troubleshoot any problems I may have had (locating contacts, for example). More importantly, I would familiarize myself with the general operations of the Organization, identify their current activities, and isolate the items pertinent to my focus on their plans for the development of Tampa Bay international business. I was most interested in identifying agendas toward augmenting Tampa Bay's international business sector and establishing foreign contacts (through travel and hosting foreign visitors, for example) and analyzing if and how globalization and related issues (world organizations, free trade zones, global networking, the internet, etc.) are discussed during Organization meetings.

My goal was to examine, to the greatest extent possible at such meetings, the behaviors of various actors within the TBEDO. I wanted to determine if their activities reflected efforts to create a regional economy integrated with the global economy and to promote a global outlook in the Tampa Bay Region. Further, I wanted to use my opportunities for observation to gain perspective on the various kinds of interactions that exist at the Organization – among the office staff, among investors, partners, and political contacts, and between the TBEDO and the Tampa Bay community. My observations at Organization staff meetings were conducted in the hopes that they would enable me to determine who initiates discussion of international issues, what portion of Organization activities is dedicated to them, what plans are being made to promote this agenda, and how the Tampa Bay community is expected to be impacted.

It became immediately apparent that the most useful events to attend, aside from the weekly staff meetings, would be the meetings of the International Task Force, a group composed of the Organization employees in charge of marketing as well as other individuals interested in formulating the TBEDO's plan to invest the dollars allotted to international development. The majority of these individuals were representatives of economic development organizations from Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Polk counties , although other interests, such as the Port Authority and the Tampa International Airport, were also represented.

My attendance at these meetings was extremely important in terms of both my identification of the Organization's plans for international development in Tampa Bay as well as for my familiarization with individuals whom I would later interview. I was able to witness the committee's inception at an Organization marketing meeting—one of two

of such two-hour long meetings I attended, and I was present when this task force outlined its own mission statement and determined the best course of action for the dollars allotted to it for international development. The International Task force meetings, two of which were conducted during the Spring of 2003 each for approximately two hours, brought together major players in the Bay Area's international arena in one room to discuss the very topics in which I was most interested. The issues discussed at these meetings provided me with an array of topics to be further explored during my interviews.

In terms of data collection procedures, I was not allowed to tape record any of the meetings I attended, as the V.P. of Marketing, the Organization officer with whom I had the most frequent contact, understandably felt that it would be too intrusive and interfere with meeting proceedings (as well as make non-Organization attendees uncomfortable at marketing and task force meetings). This was disappointing to me in that I had hoped to do more detailed discourse analyses particularly when international issues were discussed. But not wanting to stunt meeting procedures any more than necessary by my presence, I fully supported this decision. I was allowed, however, to take hand-written notes and was often able to organize my note taking with the assistance of pre-made agendas produced for virtually all meetings. Quite a bit of supplementary paperwork was produced at meetings from memos to full reports to pieces of new marketing material, and the TBEDO was kind enough to let me have copies of virtually all documents used at the meetings.

After every meeting I attended, I would transcribe my own meeting notes more fully on a word processor and organize the documents obtained as soon as possible in

order to facilitate future qualitative analysis. Although I collected a great deal of data through my meeting attendance, a considerable majority of it, as will be discussed in the chapter to follow, was not pertinent to my particular research interests. Again, it was never the goal of this research to provide a full analysis of all Organization activities. Rather, I attempted to isolate the select portions of these meetings that involved international issues for my analysis, taking into account the percentage of issues not related to international largely to assess the degree to which the Organization is dedicated to such endeavors.

Key Informant Interviewing

The participant observation I carried out within the TBEDO set the stage for my own collection of data through the use of a semi-structured interview instrument that I designed and based on my original research interests informed by my experiences within the Organization. My interview protocol, a copy of which is located in the appendix, was designed to take about an hour to conduct. In actuality, it ended up taking anywhere from forty five minutes to an hour and fifteen minutes to complete depending upon the subject. I designed the protocol to be relatively brief given that I knew my subjects, the majority of whom were full-time business professionals, would most likely be pressed for time and unwilling to participate if my questions demanded too much of their day.

Given the exploratory nature of my research and the complex organization of my research population, my sampling was consequently confined to a kind of selective snowball sampling. Beginning with my key informants who consistently attended the International Task Force meetings and who were recommended to me by TBEDO staff whom I spoke to about my interview themes, I was directed toward other pertinent

interview candidates. I also selected key informants who represented groups from the International Organization Directory who were referenced by my other interview subjects and proceeded to snowball sample from there.

Although admittedly not ideal for representative social science research, snowball sampling is acknowledged as suitable for “a relatively small population of people who are likely to be in contact with one another” as well as studies of social networks and “elite groups” and may even be utilized “to build an exhaustive sampling frame” (Bernard 1995:97). This short-term project, with an accomplished goal of 10 to 12 interviews, was not based on the intention to exhaust any sample. Be that as it may, I found that even among my small sample of key informants, whether they worked frequently with the TBEDO or not, my interview subjects made consistent references to each other.

My protocol was designed to allow examination of the local, the regional, and the global in internationally oriented business in Tampa Bay. My goal was to try to understand the philosophies of such businesspersons and their priorities for Tampa Bay and analyze whether their priorities reflect a belief in a new phenomenon called globalization . I wanted my protocol to elicit discussion about economic, social, and cultural changes that have occurred in the Bay Area and about whether or not these changes are in keeping with the literature suggesting that something new is occurring in the way in which people view the world and access the possibilities for engaging with it beyond their local communities.

A key purpose of my protocol was to elicit how my respondents characterize their international business agendas, the opportunities that exist for engaging with the global

economy, the foreseeable impacts of these globally-oriented agendas for themselves, the world, and the Tampa Bay region, and, if they were able to comment, the changes that they perceive to have taken place in the last decade or two in the way that international business agendas are conceived of and approached. Further, my protocol was designed to illicit discussion not only about perceived changes in the past but about desired changes for the future as well as about who — whether it be individuals or organizations — wields the power to effect those changes.

Although my research interests pertain to the concept of globalization, no question in my protocol contained this term. My questions were developed with the intention to illicit discussion about globalization-related issues in the hopes that the term would, as it frequently did, surface on its own, allowing me to probe about this phenomenon in greater depth when and if my subjects mentioned it. The point of these acrobatics was to avoid irrefutably validating the existence of an arguable subject by assuming for my subjects that globalization even exists. Part of my design was to understand if and how subjects would utilize this term of their own accord.

All of my key informants consented to having their interviews tape-recorded with an unobtrusive audio recorder. Although I took some organizational notes during the interview, I refrained from extensive note taking in order to maintain a more comfortable interaction with my key informant and to pay attention to opportunities to probe into the issues that I wanted him or her to address. I transcribed these interviews verbatim, although not with enough detail for microanalysis. I began my qualitative analysis simply by organizing all the portions of all the interviews under the themes that became apparent to me as I read over the interviews again and again. Given that my sample of ten

interviews was small, I was able to do my analysis without an elaborate coding system as I became very familiar with each and every interview. I used, however, key word searches to insure that I was not neglecting interview passages relevant to all the themes I examined. My data, because of both my small sample and the nature of the data, do not lend themselves to quantitative analysis. The results of my qualitative analysis are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 3, my master's thesis project utilized a number of different methodologies at different stages of the research and for different purposes. Not every methodology contributed equally to the acquisition of information concerning the internationalization of the Tampa Bay Area and my respondents' attitudes about it. This chapter will, for the most part, present and analyze the results relevant to the research questions laid out in the previous chapter. For greatest coherence, the results are presented by methodology and then organized by theme.

Media Coverage about the Organization

A Lexus-nexus search of all media articles and press releases related to the TBEDO since the year 2000 revealed a striking lack of internationally related activity, or, at the very least, a lack of discussion and promotion of it. The Organization's own press releases pertain largely to the development and successes of Tampa Bay's high tech economy. They quite frequently contain synopses of research, conducted both with and without Organization participation ranging from internally generated surveys to national studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, that place the Bay Area as one of the strongest or fastest growing high tech regions in the nation. Many of the press releases are recaps of articles printed in specialized business publications, such as *Southern Business and Development* magazine, most of which are oriented toward Florida business in general or the American South. Consequently, the rapid growth of Tampa Bay's high tech industry is lauded in comparison not with other nationally known regions, such as

Silicone Valley, for example, much less regions outside the United States, but with local competitors.

Comparisons of the Bay Area to any other region, local, national, or international, however, are relatively infrequent in relation to the more general discussion of the Bay Area's high tech status within the nation. The Organization's press releases most often contain information about the activities of specific high-tech oriented companies or other entities in the region. They report about University of South Florida (USF)-technology related development such as the opening of the MEMs (microelectromechanical systems) Technology Center or the USF Center for Biological Defense. They provide updates of the development, relocation, or expansion of technology-related business such as Enporion, a global supply chain for the energy industry, and Comcept Solutions, a software tools developer for automotive paint distributors.

Non-technology related press releases by the Organization are less common, but also include reports of specific high-profile business developments in the Bay Area such as the relocation of Boar's Head Provisions Co. Inc. headquarters (the deli food company) from Brooklyn, New York to Sarasota in July 2001, and the completion of the upscale shopping center International Plaza. Another significant trend is the reporting of positive image-related items, i.e., news about how Tampa ranks or is perceived by locals and outsiders through various kinds surveys, most of which are not conducted in cooperation with the Organization.

News articles generated by the outside press related to the Organization address quite similar themes and demonstrate the same lack of international focus. Technology, again, is the hot topic as evidenced by articles covering the Organization's participation

in technology-related funding projects. Recaps of what the Organization is all about are common when articles report on events such as annual conferences or changes in officers. The various image surveys, i.e. the image of Tampa Bay as a positive business climate, a good location for families, a source of inexpensive labor, etc., that the Organization helps develop, conduct, or contract have also received media attention, such as the 2002 Image Study cosponsored by the Organization and the Tampa Chamber of Commerce. Local news articles also provide editorial ground for the critical examination of the Organization's marketing strategy or, more commonly, the marketing of the region in general as a business strategy. These articles are much more likely to focus on the shortcomings of the Tampa Bay region in regard to attracting national attention such as its weak education systems, heavy traffic congestion, and the low number of Ph.D. scientists and engineers in the local work force. Likewise, articles by Bay Area columnists such as Robert Trigaux and Dave Simanoff are more critical than Organization generated items in terms of the reasons why businesses might choose to locate in the Bay Area that are not advantageous to Bay Area residents, such as a cheap workforce. Indeed, Trigaux (2002) has described the findings of such surveys as having a "rah-rah spin" or being "at times euphoric." Despite the fact that journalists tend to be much more measured in their enthusiasm about the Bay Area's business climate, they do share the Organization's view that the area is increasingly gaining national attention for its quality work force, low cost of living, and growing clusters of companies in industries such as medical technologies. Further, they acknowledge the Organization for its effective marketing strategies, as evidenced by the fact that image survey respondents in

areas of the nation in which the Organization concentrates its efforts assess the area more favorably.

Participant Organization Within the TBEDO

Organization Staff Meetings

My semesters' worth of participant observation within the organization was structured under two central goals: the first being my actual internship obligations to the Organization in the updating of its International Organization Directory and the second being my general desire to understand how the Organization approaches international business activities and how its representatives connect with professionals doing international business in the Bay Area. The first goal enabled me to attend the weekly staff meetings at Organization headquarters, held for about an hour every Monday morning and attended by all Organization staff from its president to the administrative assistant.

The staff meetings proved useful to me in that they allowed me to better understand the daily operations of Organization staff members as each person took turns updating the others on their activities as the meeting progressed usually through eight topics: administration, marketing and business development, public policy, research, regional leadership, investor relations, fundraising, and other business. It is not the goal of this thesis to describe and analyze in detail the various activities that the Organization participates in or spearheads. Rather, my objective was to find out how many of their activities were related to international marketing and business development. It became very clear at the first meetings I attended in September that such activities were virtually nonexistent. This was not a surprise as, during our first interview when we discussed my

research goals relating to globalization, the vice-president of marketing for the TBEDO had already indicated to me that the international objectives of the Organization were only recently being addressed formally through the creation of an international task force. He characterized the international business activities in the Bay Area in general as being rather loosely organized and asserted that the international marketplace was not the principal target of Organization promotions of the Bay Area.

Nevertheless, it is important to discuss, if only very briefly, the kinds of activities the Organization was involved in at the time of my observations at the end of the year 2002 and the beginning of 2003 in order to understand how the promotion of the Bay Area as an international region fits in to their objectives. The TBEDO was finalizing at this time its phase three plan for the next five years of operations and planning the fundraising activities for the year 2003 that would enable it to function.

Economic development marketing is the acknowledged primary goal of the TBEDO, and I witnessed staff discussions about various marketing endeavors in 2002 and 2003 that included the placement of Organization generated promotional materials in various business publications and the development of radio ads to be aired on National Public Radio. I was present when new promotional materials were presented to the entire staff by the V.P. of marketing, consisting mostly of glossy one-page or half-page ads and web banners that juxtaposed factoids about the strength of the Bay Area business climate with appeals to its comfortable meteorological climate through slogans such as “Tampa Bay Shines” and “It’s The Way This Place Makes You Feel” printed in brilliant, sunshine yellow. It should be noted that none of these promotional materials were produced specifically for international markets.

As previously discussed, generation and delivery of relevant news stories to the PR Newswire was another major priority. Also, the TBEDO participates in and promotes regional cooperation and the organization of unified regional business agendas and objectives for infrastructural issues such as water and transportation. One of its major annual events is its Regional Leadership Conference, a two-day event of programs and speakers from all seven counties (as well as from outside the Bay Area) to discuss various facets of the regional approach to economic development and carve out a vision for the future. At the 2002 conference, a transportation task force was formed and has been organizing regional goals for development in all seven counties for stronger and more unified lobbying efforts for state and federal funding.

Further, the TBEDO contracts research agencies to produce reports about the area that can later be used to promote Tampa Bay. During the period of my observations, an Economic Market Report analyzing workforce growth, in-migration, and wage increase since 1998, a Medical Technologies Clusters study examining the kinds of products produced in the area as well as Tampa Bay's national reputation for medical technology development, a Labor Market Survey compiling regional workforce data and education and recruitment resources in the area, and a sourcebook profiling key leaders of Bay Area economic development were ongoing. Also in development were an annual corporate guide filled with various promotional materials developed by the TBEDO and by individual county-level economic development organizations, articles about the various strengths of the Bay Area (its technology industry, its higher education centers, etc), and a directory of various office and business space in the area to encourage relocation. Finally, the planning of business and social events was another key activity, including a

large hosting of consultants at the St. Petersburg Grand Prix in 2003, as well as trade shows and consultant missions in New York, Chicago, Washington D.C, and Atlanta.

The International Focus

Despite the considerable accomplishments of the TBEDO in its near decade of existence in terms of its realized impacts on the Tampa Bay economy and its promotion and solidification of the regional economic development strategy, its very staff members are the first to say that an international agenda is only beginning to be formulated. Indeed, in the most recent annual report published by the TBEDO, the Organization claims that Tampa Bay “began its global efforts” through the publication of an information booklet called “Descubre [*Discover*] Tampa Bay” for Governor Bush’s mission to the Dominican Republic in 2003. During the most recent regional leadership conference, international economic development was the topic of interest of only one session of the three-day event—a keynote talk given by author Amy Chua. This is a particularly interesting choice on the part of the conference organizers as her most recent book is titled *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability*. The executive summary of the conference describes her talk as potentially controversial “food for thought” that will, hopefully, foster an “open dialogue about world issues and how they relate to our region.” I did not observe any discussions about this seemingly controversial speaker at Organization meetings either before or after the conference, which I did not attend, or witness any expression of concern over how any Organization-affiliated international activities could have social or political consequences overseas. Rather, the inclusion of Amy Chua among the conference presenters appeared to be mostly a politically-correct, public relations tactic

— a gesture of good will successfully promoted afterwards on the TBEDO website and in materials produced about the conference.

By far, the most formally organized attempt to solidify regional international strategy that I encountered through my research involved the development of an International Task Force comprised of TBEDO-affiliated individuals. I was fortunate in that I was able to witness both the formation of this task force at an Organization marketing meeting and to attend the first two meetings of the task force over a four-month period. These meetings provided me with the opportunity to witness Organization-affiliated professionals working in international business development devise their regional mission for the future of such development in the Bay Area.

The first meeting of the International Task Force was convened specifically to address the team's mission and to decide the best way to spend the \$200,000 in Organization funds devoted to this purpose, a sum representing approximately 7% of the Organization's total annual budget. The meeting was first notable in terms of the small number of participants. The chairman of the meeting, an economic developer working on international business development for Polk County, noted how difficult it had been to get certain expected members to attend. Indeed, Sarasota and Manatee counties were not represented at the meeting despite the chairman's professed attempts to encourage representatives to participate. The chairman also noted that his fellow economic developers working on "international" in these counties did not, at the very least, respond to his inquiries about the three principal areas and products (such as phosphorus or medical gadgets) these two counties were most interested in marketing. The chairman and other meeting participants agreed, however, that representatives from the counties

that are really involved in international business development and marketing were in attendance anyway. These included representatives from Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Polk counties along with a representative from Tampa International Airport and Enterprise Florida, a well-funded, public-private partnership that has led statewide economic development efforts since 1996.

These participants then brainstormed how to effectively utilize the task force budget to accomplish their collective goals. The formation of the International Task force occurred at an Organization marketing meeting that I had attended the previous month, and it was understood by all that the task force was actually a subcommittee of the marketing committee. Consequently, the budget was to be utilized for marketing as opposed to other internationally-oriented activities, such as organizing trade missions or flying-in foreign visitors. This effectively circumscribed the mission of the International Task Force, and the first meeting was largely about defining the most desirable markets for all parties concerned.

This goal is not a simple one, however. Given that so many different organizations from all over the Bay Area are being represented at the meeting, it was clear that designing collective strategies that would be equally beneficial to all would be difficult if not impossible. A considerable amount of time of the first meeting was spent (and perhaps wasted) considering whether or not the group would like to participate in an advertisement/brochure developed by Enterprise Florida to be published in a business publication widely circulated in Canada and representing Florida counties that wish to provide some funding. However, because the deadline for submission of materials for the “advertorial” was the following day, it became apparent that all of the complications

involved in the development of such a piece could not be resolved immediately. These complications included some hesitancy on the part of the Hillsborough County and Airport representatives to accept a general Tampa logo as opposed to the inclusion of separate logos for each participating county or organization; they indicated that their supervisors would not approve.

Further complications arose as the task force moved on from this issue and attempted to get to the central mission of developing a strategy to be delivered to the Organization marketing committee. The chairman expressed the need for the task force to develop its goals to fit the Organization's general mission as well as to focus its goals in terms of what countries would be targeted and if trade promotion or reverse investment is the principal concern. This last issue proved quite complicated as both the representatives from Hillsborough and Pinellas counties expressed an opposition to a strategy looking toward Europe for foreign investment as the majority of their "face time," as one respondent put it, is devoted to promoting local trade with Mexico and Central America. I began to see how these business professionals view the European markets differently from the Latin American markets. Several people remarked how foreign investment from Latin America tends to come from individuals or families who want to move out of their countries as opposed to companies looking to expand. It was noted quite matter-of-factly that Europe is a more "sophisticated" market with which they can better relate, although the chairman also conceded that the bias toward seeking investment from Europe and Canada stems largely from the likelihood of being able to do business in English.

In order to keep the task force mission in line with that of the Organization, the chairman suggested that they keep their strategy directed at investment as opposed to

trade and it was generally conceded that promoting the Tampa Bay brand internationally may indirectly lead to trade. There was some objection to this, particularly from the Hillsborough and Pinellas county representatives, who indicated that they deal only in trade — specifically selling the idea to Europe that Tampa is the gateway to Mexico for trade. This issue was the critical source of tension during the meeting as all present generally agreed that promoting the Tampa Bay brand as opposed to individual county brands was the best way to go, especially in international markets where potential business interests are not likely to recognize or remember, for example, Hillsborough or Polk county alone. This meeting, which ran long, ended rather abruptly with all recommending to the Organization marketing committee the development of a marketing tool kit that could help promote both trade and investment in a variety of international markets and a commitment to come to the next task for meetings with ideas for materials for such a toolkit.

At this next meeting, the trade vs. reverse investment issue again arose. This meeting was chaired by the Organization's vice president of marketing, who had reviewed the recommendations submitted by the task force after its previous meeting. Although I had not seen the recommendations officially, the chairman began this second meeting with the assertion that its objective would be to create a plan for marketing overseas that would specifically build a case for foreign direct investment. The Polk county representative agreed with an anecdote about how he recently convinced a British high tech company to relocate in Tampa using such selling points as its strong air and sea ports and how nice a place it is to live. He asserted that this is exactly what the task force needs to do—attract good business that creates high-paying jobs.

Again, the Hillsborough county representative expressed the importance of trade, forcing the chairman to ask a direct question about whether it is investment or trade that this task force wanted to promote. In attendance for the first time at this meeting was a representative from the Port of Tampa who agreed that trade — especially with Mexico — could most definitely benefit from marketing. It became clear to me that the outcome of these meetings would depend quite strongly on whom was present. The Organization's V.P. of marketing had been sick on the day of the last meeting, and now he seemed rather hesitant about focusing the task force's energy and budget on Mexico. He even asked skeptically if there was any money in Mexico—i.e., money for reverse investment—to which both the Port and Hillsborough county people responded vehemently in the affirmative. These two, as well as the Pinellas county economic development representative, indicated that the counties that do international business development lack the dollars they need to do marketing. Further, they argued, more has to be done to promote the idea that Tampa Bay has key connections with Mexico, South America, and perhaps the Caribbean that distinguish it from Miami.

It was apparent that the lack of a clear-cut goal across these various counties and organizations was a source of irritation to the Organization V.P., who wanted a more specific strategy to be developed out of these meetings. The very basics of a collective international agenda were not at all obvious even to a group of business professionals who had worked with each other on many occasions. They set out to define just what the markets were and what was to be marketed to them. Again, their individual interests in terms of the organizations they represented did not necessarily coincide. For example, the Port Authority person argued that what he wanted to market was a service—the ability to

export almost any kind of item to Mexico. The TIA representative, on the other hand noted that the airport does not see a lot of traffic to Mexico just yet; direct flights to Europe and Canada are seen as a priority. The Hillsborough county person noted that this lack of direct flights has complicated some of her dealings with business people traveling out of Mexico.

The complications brought a critical issue to the forefront in terms of deciding just what the international task force wanted to market. How can they market the Bay Area as a gateway to Mexico and South America, for example, when the area lacks the flights to adequately sustain business travel? The Port representative and the airport representative both asserted that they could increase traffic to Mexico if the need was demonstrated. The Organization chair, however, expressed doubts that a marketing strategy that sells Bay Area connections to Mexico would be an effective technique. This has not been the Organization's general marketing strategy in the past, i.e., this strategy is not in keeping with overall attempts to market Tampa Bay itself as a great place to do business in order to attract companies to the area. The Polk county representative agreed that the people with whom he has worked in Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands have expressed a great deal of interest in Tampa Bay's quality workforce, low cost of living, and high tech industry, but they have not expressed a desire to do business with Mexico. Interestingly, the Hillsborough representative responded by saying that 95% of the international inquiries that the county receives are from "Joe Blow in Britain who wants to know how to set up a cappuccino kiosk in Tampa." All present were in agreement that most potential business people around the world do not even know where Tampa is and

that it will be necessary to introduce the city as distinct from Miami and Orlando before even attempting to sell the more complicated message about trade relations with Mexico.

Attempting to bring the meeting to some kind of conclusion, the chairman suggested “blitzing” the international markets with some ads. He jotted down on a dry-erase board an outline of the state of Florida with the caption “No Ears, No Fears . . . Just Tampa Bay.” This spontaneous burst of marketing acumen that capitalizes on Miami’s internationally notorious crime rates and Orlando’s overly-touristy atmosphere was well-received although it did not seem to be so spontaneous to me and did not take into account any of the specificities discussed during the meeting. The meeting ended with the chairman suggesting that he would draw up some similar ads to be evaluated at a later date.

Quite clearly, the international task force meetings that I attended demonstrated just how incipient is the formation of a collective strategy for marketing the Bay Area internationally. The interested parties are few and their collaborative potential is hampered by obligations to local superiors who are less enthusiastic about regional branding. Further, interests are divided between attracting reverse investment and making use of Tampa’s proximity to Latin America to increase trade through the port. It would not be an overstatement to describe the international business activities of the Bay Area as quite loosely organized at this point, and it is not clear whether the strategies being promoted by this task force reflect the interests of the majority of people doing international business development in the area or the desires of the select few who attend the meetings. Finally, the perceived differences between Europe/Canada and Latin American countries as potential business partners with Tampa are striking. The

perception that Latin American markets are somehow unsophisticated and that doing marketing there would not result in productive reverse investment is well-entrenched. Rather, Bay Area connections to Latin America are viewed as selling points for European companies whose resources and employment opportunities we would like to recruit to Tampa, perpetuating a core-periphery dichotomy in which profits accrue to the established and wealthy.

Key Informant Interviews:

International Business Activities and Relationships with the Organization

The persons whom I interviewed regarding their views about the development of the international economy of Tampa Bay (five white males, four white females, and one Hispanic female) ranged in age from the early 30s to mid-60s and represented varying degrees of participation with the TBEDO. The most intimately involved were those persons who participated with the Organization in the development of its international strategy at the International Task Force meetings. This includes representatives working on international affairs from the principal economic organizations of Polk, Pinellas, and Hillsborough Counties as well representatives from Tampa International Airport and the Port of Tampa. Also providing me with interviews were representatives from other private organizations more loosely connected to the TBEDO but still working on some facet of international development. One of these interviewees represented an organization that focuses its efforts on cultural — rather than economic—development, but four others were top members of bi-national organizations working in the Tampa Bay Area with foci on specific areas of the world: the U.K., Canada, Scandinavia, and Germany.

Although my respondents represented a number of different organizations and job descriptions, one of the central professional objectives of all but one of them (the cultural organization previously mentioned) was simply to help businesses in the Tampa area grow and develop, often both domestically and internationally. Obviously, the business audiences that each respondent targeted varied depending upon the organization with which he or she was affiliated; such targets ranged from Bay Area-wide business development in the case of the TIA official to specific counties in the case of the economic development representatives to a targeted foreign-affiliated audience in the case of the bi-national organizations.

My three respondents working with county level economic development organizations understandably described very similar operations when asked about the local, national, and international activities of their respective organizations. These organizations provide various forms of assistance from grants to legal aid to help local businesses grow internationally. My respondents most often serve to assist local business by connecting them with interested customers, suppliers, or distributors around the country and around the world, utilizing both their long-established professional networks and the plethora of new business contacts that seek out the services of these public officials. A major goal is promoting exports out of their counties ranging from chemicals to high-tech medical equipment. Another central mission is to make Tampa a great place for national and international business, and my respondents strive to increase the likelihood that any inquiry made from an interested party outside the area will find the people and resources it needs to do business in Tampa Bay. My respondents doing economic development assist foreigners establish and expand their businesses in the Bay

Area in an attempt to increase their bottom line: jobs for Tampa Bay residents. Also, they spend a good deal of time recruiting foreign direct investment for Bay Area businesses. Leads are generated through a variety of sources including Enterprise Florida and the Organization.

My four respondents working for bi-national business organizations operate in much the same way, i.e. in a business assistance capacity but with a specific country focus and usually at a much smaller scale. All of my respondents worked for these bi-national organizations on a volunteer basis in addition having other jobs that may or may not be related to international business development. One respondent, for example, in addition to his role with a Canadian bi-national organization, worked with the World Trade Center. Another, in addition to his work with the British Chamber of Commerce, ran his own web-design company. In general, however, these organizations operate primarily as networking vehicles, linking up potential partners in business, as well as promoting a collective business identity among professionals with ties to a specific foreign country through both formal business activities, such as trade shows, and informal social activities.

My final three respondents, who cannot be grouped together in terms of specific international activities, each worked for organizations with international interests but not for bi-national organizations or economic development enterprises. They include a person in flight development at Tampa International Airport, a marketing representative for the Port of Tampa, and a volunteer with Sarasota Sister Cities, a local arm of a national organization that promotes cultural exchanges between U.S. cities and specific cities outside the U.S.

Finally, part of the interview protocol involved identifying how, if at all, the TBEDO collaborates with professionals working in international development in the Tampa Bay region. Although there was a mixed level of involvement ranging from persons who might attend Organization-related events or meetings at least once a week to persons who had never worked with them in a direct fashion, the majority of respondents regarded the TBEDO as a reputable generator of publicity materials to be used on trade missions and trade shows both domestically and internationally. One of the principal occupations of these professionals is to sell the Tampa Bay Area to foreigners as a fruitful place with which and in which to do business.

To this end, the TBEDO puts together presentation materials highlighting the selling points of Tampa Bay's economy as they see it: skilled workforce, low cost of living, low taxes, etc. My contact at Tampa International Airport's Flight Development Department informed me that the Organization put together all the economically-oriented research for its recent presentation for Delta Airlines concerning why the airline should increase its flights in and out of Tampa. TIA Flight Development simply does not do its own research regarding the business climate of Tampa Bay because the materials that the TBEDO provides fulfill this need. My key informant for Polk County Economic Development, in describing how he prepares for presentations of Tampa Bay overseas noted, "I do presentations overseas, the [Organization] works the presentation up for me, and I take the disk and there I go." My key informant representing the bi-national organization fostering business relationships between Tampa Bay and Canada demonstrated his opinion of Organization materials by noting how colorful, professional,

and glossy they tend to be; he also noted that they were provided free of charge to his organization for trade missions.

The effect of this reliance on Organization materials to promote the Tampa Bay region's business climate is an amazingly unified message presented to potential trading partners and investors overseas. Having obtained numerous samples of such promotional materials through my participant observation, I became familiar with the various selling points and tag lines used to promote Tampa as a good place to do business. In response to many of my interview questions, as will be discussed below, respondents frequently provided me with answers laced with prepared statements, quick facts, and statistics that appear on Organization materials.

Tampa Bay in Comparison with other International Cities

The interview protocol, intentionally and successfully, generated the most lengthy responses revealing respondents' perceptions of Tampa Bay's international economy, particularly as it can be compared with other U.S. cities and international cities such as New York, Tokyo, or London that are well-known for their global connections. Again, responses were varied, ranging from one key informant's assertion that "Tampa can hold its own against anybody" to a less optimistic "we've got a long way to go." In general, however, respondents consistently depicted Tampa as a kind of second-tier international city with a strong foothold in the global economy. Supporting evidence for this claim frequently included discussion of Tampa Bay's international airport as well as the Port of Tampa, our production of goods for export, particularly agricultural, medical, and technological ones, and the relative diversity of the Bay Area population.

“We’ve Got All the Elements”

Because it is the job of the vast majority of my interviewees to sell the image of Tampa Bay as a great place to do business to both national and international audiences, it is understandable that their responses to my question asking them to characterize Tampa Bay’s international economy frequently began with rather positive assessments of the area’s international status and potential. Respondents would often begin their answers with an enthusiastic laundry list of the components they believe to characterize well-known international cities and the Tampa Bay region alike. An example of this type of response is provided by one of the country economic development professionals:

I think we have all the elements, we certainly have the airports, we have the seaports, all within the region. We have, I think, a nice and growing diversity of culture, population that’s important to foster international. . . We have some international flavor in our community. Be it Ybor city and the Cuban connection, the overall Spanish connection. Again, a lot of Brits in the area. So, you have to have those things as part of the infrastructure in my opinion to have a truly international community that then can solicit international business.

This appeal to the diversity of Tampa’s population was by far and away the most frequently utilized when presenting Tampa’s internationalism in a positive light. Quite clearly, one of the criteria for a city to be known as an international city in terms of its business climate, according to my respondents, is the presence of a diverse population in general. It is something that they took for granted, as if a city with a rather uniform population could not forge strong international economic ties. During my interviews, I would often have to probe for more specific answers regarding the strength of Tampa’s ties to the international economy. These probes would most frequently be answered with nods to the international airport, the seaport, and the growing number of internationally affiliated organizations such as the foreign chambers.

At this point in my interviews, it was not uncommon for my respondents to buffer their assessment of the Tampa Bay's potential to be an internationally recognized city for doing business with appeals to many of the same characteristics so avidly marketed about the area by the Organization, particularly the easy-going (but lucrative) business climate and the spectacular weather. One bi-national organization representative, speaking as a foreign-born citizen characterized the Bay Area as follows:

Crime-wise it's good for families. It's a relaxed atmosphere for doing business and it's a good entrée into North America. And from Tampa, you can look north or south or east or west. And if you are looking to South America, it's a good base. Or if you're looking at just generally coming to America, the chances of survival are better here than in large communities...because it's actually easier to establish and understand America here. From Florida comes the good weather. You tend to get hot, but coming from a cold climate, it's very attractive.

As enthusiastic as my respondents were about Tampa Bay's current good "footing" and, more importantly, its potential to become a major player in international business, the analysis of the interview data revealed a much more detailed discussion about what holds back Tampa from realizing this potential. One consistently mentioned deficiency was the lack of large corporations with headquarters in the Bay Area that tend to draw more international attention in more prominent global cities even if those large companies use our ports to export their products abroad:

And I think the biggest reason we're not known as an international city is our lack of actual headquarters. We have a lot of city-area operations. The Committee of 100 and the [Organization]—we both recognize that as a kind of infrastructural short-falling that we have. We don't have a lot of headquarters...international is generally the more visible players—the big guys—and we don't have those big headquarters here. Even though we've got international activity, it's kind of below the radar screen. (Economic development representative)

Tampa Bay has more small companies, more entrepreneurial companies that don't have a big name. And even when you see one that does start to get medium sized—that does start making a name for themselves, a lot of the time they get bought out. But that is what

happens a lot everywhere in the country, but because we are such an entrepreneurial area here you see that happening. We're not made up of one or two or ten major corporations—Fortune 500 companies. It's made up of thousands of smaller operations. There's no one name, or half a dozen names that shine. (Bi-national organization president)

More important than actual deficiencies in our international business potential for my respondents, however, was the lack of credit the Bay Area receives from international audiences for the assets it already possess. In other words, marketing our current strengths is the most certain route to gaining international status.

You got to get them to take a look at you first, so I think we are doing a better job of being, of branding ourselves to the rest of the world that this is a place where people from other countries can come. I don't think we are there yet, but when you think of international cities for us—we're probably gonna say Tokyo, London, Frankfurt, whatever if we're gonna name names like that. The people outside of our countries would name those names. I don't think we're on that list yet. But on some secondary list, we certainly are. (Economic development representative)

Tampa Bay is kind of a sleeping giant. I don't think people realize how many connections Tampa has internationally. And how many Tampa could have if they were developed properly. (Economic development representative)

Interestingly, respondents tended to make unsolicited comparisons of Tampa not with the world's most well known “globalized” cities but with Miami and Orlando, the two cities that compete with Tampa Bay for notoriety within Florida, the former because of its strong economic and cultural ties to Latin America and the latter because of pull as an international tourist destination. Frequently, respondents would express a competitive attitude toward Orlando and Miami, displaying a simultaneous desire to take advantage of their attractiveness to tourists and resentment of the perpetuated image of Florida as a tourist — and not a business — destination. A Polk county economic developer noted,

We have to do a continuous jobs of marketing Florida as a business state because the first thing that comes to mind is vacation, Disney, the beaches, the nice weather, and that's fine. If that's the draw, that's just fine. An area like Orlando gets international attention

because of Disney — things like, “Where is Disney located? Oh yeah, Orlando.” It’s like riding the coattail of Disney, but so what? If that brings them then, you sell them when they get here. We have to do things a bit different. Good place to live, great place to do business.

A similar tone of resentment came across in an interview with the representative from TIA’s flight development department when she commented on the lack of international flights to Tampa in comparison with more prominent Florida cities:

And I think another part of it that is hurting us is that we have Orlando so nearby which attracts all the tourists. I mean, everybody knows about Disney World. Nobody markets like Disney World. You know, *that rat!* He does a great job, every little kid has to go there. It’s just their dream. So we have to realize our limitations. And then, of course, Miami. Everybody knows Miami. So I wish we had more but I think it will come.

In spite of this perceived competition with Miami and Orlando, the majority of respondents simultaneously emphasized the importance of a Florida-wide effort in promoting international business. Such an outlook was reflected in the general approval of Miami as the location site chosen for secretary for the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) as well as a cooperative orientation toward developing productive relationships with statewide economic development organizations, such as Enterprise Florida. My respondents were in general agreement that Tampa Bay, as a second-order international city, must utilize all of the resources at its disposal to bolster its reputation as a recognized center for global business.

Perceived Changes to Tampa Bay Business Over the Years

In characterizing Tampa Bay’s international economy, I also wanted my respondents to reflect on changes that have taken place over the past few decades and paths for future developments for the purpose of exploring whether or not they believe that any of the qualitative changes that are associated with the globalization concept have

occurred and to assess the degree to which they employ the concept, if at all. Again, the term “globalization” was purposefully not included in the interview protocol in order to see if respondents would employ it on their own. About half of them did utilize the term to describe the set of pressures that make an international business strategy mandatory today as opposed to previous decades. However, when asked to describe and pinpoint significant changes in the way international business is done in Tampa Bay, respondents varied widely in their assessment of when the most significant changes in the general mentality toward international business in Tampa Bay have taken place from two to twenty years ago, largely depending on how long they had worked in the area.

However, one very consistent trend in these discussions dated a profound change around seven to ten years ago, coinciding (sometimes explicitly, sometimes not) with the beginning of the TBEDO. This change consists of the multi-county cooperative international strategy that is the basic mission of the Organization. This strategy involves a collaborative effort among the seven counties in their relations outside the United States which attempts to create a more recognizable Tampa Bay “brand” as opposed to trying to sell foreigners a specific message about the Polk or Pinellas business climate, for example. All respondents working closely with the Organization characterized this message as the strongest one for international business development and a rather successful one. However, respondents with the longest working histories in the Tampa Bay Area (over seven years) traced back the development of this collaborative effort to other such efforts preceding the Organization such as the Florida Department of Commerce and Enterprise Florida. Respondents frequently described this most significant perceived change as a general “focusing” or “concentration” of previously haphazard

international business dealings. One key informant, an economic development professional from Polk County, sums up this opinion:

It's kind of brought the whole thing together, and it's positive. Now I think we're much more focused. I used to do my thing in Polk County—my trade missions and all that. And a lot of years included Tampa when the Chamber didn't have a strong international presence. But I made sure that I included them and companies from Tampa, but I did my thing. Pinellas did their thing, Tampa did their thing. Some of us did work together. Enterprise Florida tried to pull that all together. Said, 'Hey, let's do more.' It concentrated on the state level and then, 'You guys do it as a region.' Because if my interest is Mexico, and I take a group to Mexico and I'm running around saying I'm from Polk county, and then a month later Tampa takes a group and their running around saying their from Tampa, and then Pinellas takes a group—'We're from Pinellas.' They're [the Mexicans] sitting there with their heads spinning: 'Well, you guys are all from Florida. Why don't you come together?' But we've come a long way in doing that. I think we all support each other's efforts. We have a much much better message, a concentrated message.

Although all of my respondents who served on the Organization's international task force uniformly expressed such opinions, a clear distinction between the responses of seasoned Tampanians and relative newcomers to the area was apparent: newcomers perceived the changes to be much more recent and perceived that they had had brought with them a more internationally-oriented business strategy to their respective organizations. My most recently arrived respondent, working on economic development in Pinellas County, which had significant interaction with the Organization prior to her arrival, provides a clear example of such a perspective:

Well, I've only been here two years, but there was someone before me. And I'd say it's changed two fold since I've started because I have a different strategy. No one else really in this office is devoted to the international strategy. We have a business development team manager. He oversees everything, but I am the only one who is writing the strategic plans for international. So I kind of took it and created my own little baby out of it because the person before me, he looked at things a little differently. He didn't really have a plan. That's what I see changing. It's kind of like I got to do what I wanted to do with it, and in the past—the person before me—didn't devote 100% of their time to trade. They were doing local incentive packages to help companies expand or relocate here. I actually don't have to do local anymore. I am just devoted to international endeavors, so I can actually focus on more countries.

Respondents who did not work as closely with the Organization tended to emphasize other changes, most notably in the absolute growth of all kinds of internationally affiliated organizations. Frequently cited were the Brazilian, German, French, Canadian, and British Chambers of commerce. Respondents commenting on these chambers but not actually representing them frequently employed conflicting lines of argument to explain the relatively recent explosion of such organizations in the last fifteen years. Some attributed it simply to the collective organization of foreigners from various countries who have come to make their homes in the Bay Area for quality of life reasons (fine weather, low cost of living, etc.). Others asserted that business-minded foreigners are drawn to the Bay Area because of the local expertise in areas such as law, health care, and engineering that is displayed as Tampa business professionals travel abroad.

Interestingly, but not surprisingly, two respondents officially representing some of these foreign chambers attributed a general change in attitude to the efforts not of established Tampa actors but newcomers like themselves who have stimulated interest in doing international business development among locals through their own activities. As one representative from the British Chamber of Commerce explained:

There's been a change of attitude towards Europe, and I think that has a lot to do with our organization and the German American and French American chambers of Tampa. We are quite active and have consistently lobbied the community leaders for those countries. Now we have infiltrated the Tampa Chamber through (*name withheld*) and vice versa. The Tampa Chamber has targeted the U.K. and Europe as a growth market for Tampa Bay and as such has put resources into it. It used to be where I would be politely recognized by Mayor Greco at the time at parties. Now, under Mayor Iorio, we've had several very successful meetings that have opened up opportunities for the opening of the British consulate here in Tampa. Whereas the business community leaders five or ten years ago gave us lip service, now they are very seriously putting resources behind that development. There's been a change of attitude. I think the leadership in Tampa is

coming around to understanding that there's money in *them thar hills*. Money in investments in both directions. Investment and trade.

In a similar manner, a representative from the German chamber explained the impetus behind the change in attitude of Tampa Bay businesspeople about internationally oriented business:

I believe by the continual sort of drip, drip, drip effect of our existence here in Tampa Bay. Both the German American Chamber, the British American Chamber, the French American tend to be the three organizations most active of the international organization. And the Canadian Americans. But we're all the same group in that we're all members of each other's organizations, and we do a number of events in the community together as well.

In general, my respondents all expressed the opinion that the Tampa Bay Area had indeed undergone serious changes in the way international business is prioritized, conceptualized, and accomplished over the last two decades. Responses tended to emphasize either the growth and diversification of various internationally-affiliated organizations if the respondent did not work closely with the Organization or the concentration of international business efforts among the counties if the respondent had a more direct working relationship with the Organization. Without exception, each respondent tended to espouse a relatively egocentric explanation for such changes, emphasizing the influx of new ideas if they were new, foreign influence if they were foreign, and long developing collaborative efforts if they were old-guard.

The Development of a Global City: Local Theories

A critical objective of this research was to understand, at least among this small sample of subjects, how Tampa Bay players in international business view the development of the area's international economic ties and understand the processes through which a city might define itself as an active participant in a globalized economy.

Several questions and probes in the protocol attempted to get at what (or who) is responsible for the changes that have strengthened Tampa's business connections around the world, what it means to be in economic development in this age of globalization, and what steps need to be taken to increase Tampa's foothold in the global economy.

What is globalization?

The general topic of change in international business was intended to extract my respondents' opinions about the disputed topic of globalization. While only five out of ten of my respondents utilized the term of their own accord, all of my interview subjects expressed a belief that recent, unprecedented changes have taken place in the way international business is conducted. A common way of characterizing these changes was to emphasize the lack of distinction between domestic and international business practices today:

There are a number of companies in the Tampa area that do international but they don't really look at it differently from their domestic business. It's just another market. In other words, if I'm a construction company, and I build big huge buildings like stadiums and airports and high rises, what's the difference if I'm building one in Florida or in California or in Mexico? I mean, there are some differences, but in terms of the internal processings of the company, there's not that much difference. So, they don't tend to . . . they don't segregate that activity all that much. . . the international marketplace is more seamless. No question about it. It's a different world. (Economic Development representative)

In general, however, respondents tended to emphasize improvements in transportation and communications technologies as the general markers of the new global economy, supporting a definition of globalization in which modern life has undergone changes only in scale or degree. Only one informant expressed a view of the globalized world in which qualitative changes (regarding identity formation, in this case) have taken place:

I have a hard time pledging allegiance to the American flag because I am a global citizen. And that's the way I am. I've been that way because I've been raised all over. That's my vantage point.

Agents of Change and Agency

When respondents were asked to identify the causes of the changes that they have perceived to have taken place in the way that international business is carried out in the Bay Area, two distinct lines of explanation emerged: one placing the responsibility in the hands of powerfully influential individual agents and the other attributing causality to general changes affecting the global economy the world over. While two out of ten respondents supported exclusively one or the other of these explanations, the rest supported a theory of change based on the interaction of the two. Both respondents who supported a single-cause theory of change worked for county-level economic development organizations. One clearly supported the idea that certain agents are necessary to jump start a local economy into making inroads into the global marketplace and that what is often required is a change of the guard:

It's almost like a new generation of people coming to work. A lot of the older people who are now retiring, they used to say, 'Hey, we're doing great, why bother?' You know, now you're getting a lot of the younger people out on the work force, and they are saying, 'We need to go all over the world.'

This same respondent captures the frustration that all of the economic development people expressed when she describes herself as one of the few attempting to promote a global outlook in her county:

It's tough because I can't educate everyone. I feel like there needs to be more funding on the international side where I could do more of a promotional, more of an educational thing. Teach people there's 18 million jobs that depend on trade in the U.S. Teach people these things of why we have to compete. I feel like I'm a broken record sometimes, and it's not making as much of an impact as it needs to be.

Contrasting with this view, another respondent sees the changes that have occurred in the Bay Area as representing the inevitable changes that have taken place in this age of globalization:

I think these changes are just due to changes in the global marketplace. And the biggest change is globalization and communication. Computers, cell phones, everything. Someone can now do their international operations basically from anywhere and access their customers so much more easily. So it all becomes that much more invisible, sort of. That much more diffused.

In general, however, respondents supported both views to some extent, arguing that changes in the way business is done globally have naturally impacted Tampa Bay business as it keeps up with the rest of the world. This does not mean, however, that influential persons are not needed to direct those changes and compel some of the unwilling to accept them as inevitable. A critical finding should be emphasized here: nine out of ten of my respondents agreed to some extent that the changes that have taken place in the global economy over the past decades and that will continue to take place are simply inevitable, and any successful business venture or economic development scheme must operate with this new world in mind. Also, the majority of my respondents, supporting the idea that certain human agents compel others to adopt these necessary new world views and practices, believed themselves to be one of many such agents currently operating in the Bay Area.

How Does a City Get Global?

As discussed, all of my respondents characterized the Tampa Bay Area as, at the very least, a kind of second-tier city on its way to acquiring greater international status as place to do business and characterized themselves as the people who are helping Tampa to acquire that status. I discussed with them the changes that have been necessary to

further this objective. These changes, as it turns out, are regarded by my respondents as being quite inevitable in the globalizing world. I also asked my respondents to discuss how they expect and desire the Bay Area to develop in the coming decades and what needs to occur to accomplish their goals.

The protocol questions and probes designed to elicit discussion of this topic generated more lengthy descriptions of the Tampa Bay's deficiencies in terms of international business than previous questions asking respondents to characterize the area's international economic connections. Although respondents ranged in their enthusiasm regarding Tampa's progress in acquiring greater international status, all respondents agreed the current business practices that have helped the city secure any present status must be continued and expanded. Critical to this expansion was convincing other actors with powerful influence to adopt a more international outlook when it comes to business. One economic development professional commented:

There should be more people doing [international] because it's more important. For example, I am the only one in this whole county that even thinks about international trade. So I am always trying to get the Chamber to do things with me, always trying to explain the significance, and I'm constantly having to partner with Tampa Bay. There's a few strong people in this county—me being one of them—that you could count on one hand like five that are really gung-go, and they just push and push and push. But it's not enough.

This remark demonstrates not just the need to mobilize agents and promote a global outlook, but the simultaneous support and frustration of the regional partnering agenda. While all of the economic development professionals acknowledge the benefits working at the regional level to make a bolder impression about the Bay Area when working internationally, each also expressed frustration with their county level superiors who are only concerned about local economic development. Each of them agreed that

although the concentrated regional marketing efforts must be continued and expanded, the more immediate priorities of county-level economic development may conflict with their loftier international objectives. Again, a perceived solution to this problem would involve high-profile, internationally-oriented activities of some powerful agents.

I think it really boils down to that headquarters issues. I think that's the bottom line because it takes someone like a Ted Turner or a Donald Trump. I don't know—a really strong leader who's got a lot of bucks whose passion is Tampa.

In order to attract such high profile players and encourage the location of internationally and domestically based headquarters in the Bay Area, however, my respondents maintained their faith in the regional approach:

I think we are going in that direction. It's just marketing all over the world and letting people know we are Tampa. (Port Authority representative)

The Impact of International Development on Tampa Bay Residents

By far, the most sensitive issue brought up during my interviews involved the impacts, positive or negative, that international business development has had and will continue to have on Tampa Bay residents. As discussed, all respondents were overwhelmingly supportive of international business development, seeing only positive outcomes from such efforts even when probed for downsides. Respondents were, however, familiar with many of the arguments against specific courses of international business, such as local job loss when companies move parts of their manufacturing operations overseas or loss of domestic profits when companies buy component parts outside the U.S. As two economic development professionals explained:

A lot of people say we're losing jobs overseas. But I know that for instance we've had several companies that would have closed down if they could not have reduced their costs—if they couldn't be competitive for cost reasons. And they moved parts of their

operations overseas whether it's Mexico or wherever. But it kept the company in business. It kept the headquarters there. So one company comes to mind. . . well, there's like three hundred and fifty jobs. We lost 150 of those jobs, but we kept 150. We would have lost all of those jobs if they had closed down.

You hear a lot of negativity—in the political climate you hear a lot of negative things. For example, it takes jobs away. They don't realize that 18 million jobs in the U.S. depend on trade. They don't realize that for that one company that may have closed down, it's unfortunate, but if another company expands or is exporting, its creating more jobs here. So a lot of people don't realize the strengths.

Unflinchingly, respondents' employed a cost-benefit argument to support international business development, claiming that the advantages far outweighed the disadvantages. Such arguments tended to lack specific statistical/research support but were more often substantiated with common sense, hypothetical, or anonymous anecdotal examples. All respondents were uniformly supportive of free trade agreements and welcomed foreign direct investment. In general, respondents, especially those who work most closely with the TBEDO, consistently argued that an international business strategy, i.e. one that involves selling products overseas and utilizes resources outside the U.S. for product/service production, is necessary to protect oneself from the risks of a fluctuating domestic economy. Again, supporting evidence, if at all provided, tended to be anecdotal and vague, despite the consistency of this opinion.

I think—well, I hear all these numbers that come from the federal government. I don't know how you prove any of this, but they have them on their web sites that companies that do international business on average pay more. I've heard numbers like seventeen percent. That those companies are more profitable, and that those companies are less susceptible to change in the economies, whether it's recession, because you spread your base. (Bi-national group representative)

Many respondents hedged the issue by contending that their jobs involved assisting businesses in taking advantage of resources overseas, i.e., they did not necessarily concern themselves with the lives of residents in general. However,

respondents uniformly subscribed to the belief that international business development provides nothing but positive effects for Tampa Bay residents, the most frequent being employment benefits. Although specific examples were lacking, it was frequently asserted that internationally affiliated jobs paid more, thereby contributing to a higher standard of living. In general, respondents supported a more or less trickle-down theory of benefits to Tampa Bay residents on the economic end.

However, respondents tended to supplement discussion of economic benefits by describing the cultural benefits that a growing international economy provides. It was frequently noted that Tampa's cultural diversity, particularly in regard to its Hispanic population, provides a rich, cultural environment that is a direct result, at least partially, of the pull of its business climate. One representative of a bi-national group characterized the effects of increased international business on the lives of residents as follows:

It benefits the community. As you get more international trade going on, it opens up more awareness internationally of what's going on outside the community as well as what's going on in the community. It brings international people here. Families and kids who've grown up in other countries. It introduces new lifestyle things to this community.

Another such professional described the effects for everyone of a successful international business agenda in a more idyllic fashion:

I don't see any downsides. It's all positive. It's all part of the world globalization. And I think most people benefit probably even beyond the economy because people get to know each other better, you have less likelihood of war because when people get to know each other better, they generally get to like each other. It doesn't always work that way. But, you know, people are people. You hear so many times people travel and say, "The people there were so friendly. They love Americans." Or vice versa even. So, generally speaking, it's very, very positive

Punctuating these discussions, however, was a mixed assessment of how receptive Tampa Bay is to such diversity. More recently arrived respondents were more likely to characterize Tampa residents as "parochial" or "set in their ways" both in terms of their

interest and support of international business development and in their welcoming of the cultural diversity that may come along with it. All respondents were consistent in their views, however, that an increasingly receptive attitude is on the rise. As one native Floridian said,

I think we accept people pretty well in our region without a whole lot of resentment. We've still got a few backwoods rednecks, but I think we are getting past that.

Discussion

Overall, my respondents' discussions on the impacts that their activities and agendas are having on the average Bay Area resident were some of the most stilted and vague portions of my interviews, despite my considerable attempts to probe for more specific information. This was disappointing in that my principal applied objective for this research was to understand how people in Tampa Bay will be affected by the activities of these professional business elites. However, the hesitancy on the part of my respondents to accept responsibility for those people who they do not directly serve but may indeed be impacted by their efforts is a critical, if disturbing, trend among my research population that merits future study.

As an applied researcher, I was particularly struck by such patterns among my interviewees and among TBEDO staff and meeting attendees. That is, what was most remarkable about the issues confronted by my research subjects were the areas that were left unsaid. Although a strong workforce, for example, is one of the critical selling points that my key informants' use to promote the Tampa Bay region, I witnessed a critical lack of concern over how the agendas of the Organization and my interviewees could actually impact the working people of Tampa Bay. Indeed, there were a number of occasions when the marketing potential, positive or negative, of certain surveys illustrating the

quality of the Bay Area working population (in terms of skills, education, etc.) or the disappointingly low salaries that are common in some industries was discussed.

However, these issues were addressed only in so far as to how they related to marketing efforts. Albeit, it is the principal mission of the Organization to market the Bay Area, but it is also its self-described mission to “coordinate efforts to influence business and government issues that impact economic growth and development” of the region. Further, the majority of my key informant interviewees are responsible for marketing only second to helping businesses establish themselves in the Bay Area and prosper. Although the bottom line is, as they routinely asserted, jobs for Bay Area residents, my respondents were curiously reticent when it came to discussing the creation of jobs in more detail.

In fact, the avoidance of the sensitive issues surrounding employment was an intriguing issue derived from my data. There was no discussion, for example, of gender disparities in terms of kinds of employment or remuneration in all of my observations at the Organization or in my interviews. On only one occasion did the issue surface, through a discussion about the results of a survey about Bay Area salaries and job satisfaction, that minorities were least happy with job opportunities in Tampa. When this issue did arise, again, it was quickly glossed over as not having good marketing potential. Not once did I hear discussion, even in this “age of globalization,” of the thousands of Mexican and other foreign workers who keep some of the lowest paid sectors of the Bay Area economy going. In fact, Hispanics in general were only discussed in terms of the marketing potential of historic Ybor City.

In general, what were to me some of the most critical applied issues surrounding the employment-creating activities of these professionals whose bottom line is jobs were not the foci for my key informants as far I observed. Just as their usage of globalization rhetoric tended to be quite shallow, so was their consideration of Bay Area populations living outside the circle of elite entrepreneurs. The potential consequences of these attitudes will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Results

The internship portion of this project, i.e., the updating of the TBEDO's International Organization Directory, served largely as a jumping off point for my interest in understanding the thoughts and actions of businesspersons doing international in Tampa Bay and as a way to reciprocate the Organization's cooperation with my research interests and willingness to allow my presence at many of their meetings. This internship provided me with critical networking opportunities in that my primary goal during this "studying up" of business elites was to come to some kind of understanding of what their international development agendas are, how they operate and organize to accomplish these objectives, whether they subscribe to the belief that the world has undergone a significant qualitative change that effects, among other things, how international business is done and that is called globalization, and, most importantly, how these global agendas are expected to impact Tampa Bay residents. This work, although far from providing conclusive answers to these questions due to the small scale of my research, represents only the beginning of the kind of more productive research that applied anthropologists can do in the areas of local and international economic development, how we can contribute to the understanding of globalization at a local level, and how we can expand our research populations to include the powerful elites whom anthropologists have long neglected.

Methodologically, this research is divided into two components. The first was participant observation at various kinds of meetings of the TBEDO with the goal of understanding the activities and agendas of one organization with an acknowledged interest in the development of Tampa Bay's international business potential. The second was semi-structured interviewing with individuals with various degrees of connection to the TBEDO who actively work in the international arena to understand in more detail what such professionals do to develop Bay Area businesses, how they believe Tampa Bay residents are being impacted, and what are their plans for the future of the seven county area.

As discussed in chapter 4, my work at the TBEDO revealed that this high-profile organization has only recently begun to formulate a strategy for marketing the Bay Area internationally. Its internationally oriented activities are few in number and reflect no long-term goals, and its connections with internationally affiliated organizations are uneven at best. The TBEDO has begun to formalize its activities, however, through the creation of its international task force. Having witnessed not only the formation of the task force and its first two meetings during which long term mission objectives were decided, I began to understand some of the key issues and critical impediments to coordinating an international marketing strategy that would be able to serve the interests of all participating organizations.

The first of these issues is: who is represented by a task force that will have the power to decide how Organization marketing funds will be used to promote the Bay Area overseas? As discussed, the participation of all seven counties was not achieved much to the disappointment of the meeting chairman who had attempted many times to secure full

attendance or, at the very least, to solicit the input of the counties who did not attend on the major issues of the meetings such as the key areas to be marketing to and which products or services to market to them. Although, the meeting attendees seemed to be in agreement that the major international players did show up, it is not at all certain that this task force can and will implement a strategy that will serve the interests of the numerous international organizations in the Bay Area. The simple fact is, however, that the Organization task force cannot achieve this goal as international business in Tampa Bay is so loosely organized, nor would it if it could; the Organization is responsible to its board, its investors, and its mission which is strictly to market the seven county Bay Area.

But what is to be marketed? Even the few meeting attendees had trouble agreeing upon the important goals of any marketing plan. Hillsborough and Pinellas county supported a strategy that would capitalize on Tampa Bay's connections to Latin America (a strategy that the airport representative doubted that the airlines could support) while the Polk county representative and the Organization V.P. felt that a plan that focused on securing inward investment would be more in keeping with the Organization mission and more in keeping with the kinds of messages that would appeal to international business parties interested in the Bay Area. At the end of the day, the marketing plan agreed upon at the task force meetings was basically the same strategy that the Organization has employed in its nationally oriented campaigns, i.e., one that distinguishes the Bay Area from the more well know cities of Miami and Orlando as a good place to do business (and therefore a call for inward investment) as opposed to one selling Tampa's connections to Mexico and other parts of Latin America.

Despite the seemingly important points of disagreement among the attendees at this meeting in terms of the best marketing strategy to employ, the issue was resolved rather abruptly with a slogan only vaguely related to the issues at hand. This seemingly odd acceptance most likely goes to the fact that each individual participating on the task force works primarily for another organization be it Pinellas County Economic Development or Tampa International Airport. The international marketing efforts being formulated by the TBEDO are collaborative in format, and even if all attendees were solidly behind such a collective front, their primary responsibilities are to more specific organizations and superiors who do not necessarily support regional marketing strategies.

The lack of a developed international strategy at the level of the TBEDO further necessitated my key informant interviewing with Tampa Bay professionals who are fully entrenched in the development of Tampa Bay's international business capacities. Because my interview subjects each were actively pursuing their own international agendas and because the in-depth interviewing method enabled a more direct elicitation of ideas about international business in Tampa Bay from my subjects, this portion of my study more fully tackled the research questions with which I set out. Again, my internship obligations and my attendance at staff, marketing, and international task force meetings, in conjunction with archival research into the Organization's history, enabled me to make contacts with ten individuals working with but outside of the Organization in, for the most part, international business development. I developed an interview instrument design to elicit information regarding each participant's line of work, connection with the TBEDO, opinion of Tampa Bay's place in the global economy, perception of changes in the Bay Area over various time spans, ideas concerning the origins of those changes,

assessment of the impact those changes have had on Bay Area residents, and desired outcomes for Tampa Bay business in the future.

Table 4.1 Summary of Key Informant Interview Responses

Tampa Bay in Comparison with Other International Cities

- (1) Tampa is a second-tier international city
- (2) Tampa has the right “elements”: airports, seaport, international chambers
- (3) Tampa has an respectably diverse population
- (4) Tampa lacks large corporations with headquarters
- (5) Miami and Orlando are Tampa’s main competitors for recognition

Perceived Changes to Tampa Bay Business Over the Years

- (1) Respondents employ egocentric explanations for change
- (2) All respondents date a profound change to origin of the TBEDO
- (3) Regional branding is the most important innovation
- (4) Recent, unprecedented changes (globalization) have impacted the way in which modern business is done

Local Theories of Global City Development

- (1) The influence of powerful individuals and the pressures of a global economy interact to bring about change
- (2) Some provincial persons hold back Tampa’s growth with failure to accept new ideas
- (3) County-level priorities often conflict with regional strategies

Impact of International Development on Tampa Bay Residents

- (1) Only positive outcomes result from international marketing and business development
 - (2) Creation of new jobs always outweighs jobs lost overseas
 - (3) Utilizing resources outside the U.S. for product/service production is necessary to counteract the risks of a fluctuating domestic economy
 - (4) Effects of international economic develop trickle down to all
 - (5) Tampa Bay residents benefit from a rich, cultural environment
-

As expected, the information elicited during my interviews allowed for an analysis of a number of issues not directly addressed by my protocol (See Table 4.1).

These included the consistency of my respondents’ international agendas with those of the TBEDO, the relevancy of the globalization concept to the Bay Area, and my

respondents' understanding of this concept. I was also able to explore the difference between globalization as a perceived set of pressures determining how business must be done and globalization as a marketing strategy employed by business elites. Finally, my interview data led me to examine the polarization between the Tampa Bay region and Miami/Orlando as my respondents see it and the obstacles that impede the collaborative efforts that most of these businesspersons extol.

More important in terms of the applied implications of this research is the impact that the international business agendas of the TBEDO and its associated professionals have had on the lives of Tampa Bay residents. This last component of my research provides the most obvious application to policy and its most important contribution to the debate concerning the human costs and benefits of economic globalization. What was very striking to me was the general lack of consideration about Bay residents exhibited both by TBEDO officers and my key informants. This is not to say that I observed any overtly malicious intentions toward the average citizen or even a callous disregard of their interests on the part of my research respondents. Rather, both the officers at the TBEDO and my interview respondents simply did not concern themselves with the impacts that their activities could have on Bay Area residents because their jobs really are in the service of a specific population: Bay Area business people. As discussed in the previous chapter, my respondents expected some degree of residual advantage to be conferred on the average job as a result of their work, i.e. higher paying jobs and greater exposure to cultural diversity, and communicated this belief through rather vague, idyllic responses to my questions. Again, these responses tended to be short and frequently defensive, and this portion of the interview tended to be the most uncomfortable and

awkward. I believe this to be quite an alarming issue, however, in that powerful elites who lobby on a daily basis for certain lines of infrastructural change in the Bay Area so effectively work for such a small percentage of the Bay Area population.

Connections and Contributions to the Literature

One rather disappointing outcome of both my participant observation at the TBEDO and my key informant interviewing with Bay Area professionals working on international marketing and business development was the general lack of discussion among my research subjects that bore the marks of that something “new” called “globalization.” While the TBEDO is launching a new strategy towards bolstering Tampa Bay’s international economy and even though many of my respondents vehemently asserted that changes in technologies have eased international business transactions, is there really something categorically new going in Tampa Bay? Is Bay Area business being altered by the pressures of globalization, or is it just business as usual? As Scholte (1999) asserts, globalization as a concept is not a substitute for internationalization, a term that describes the expansion of cross-border relations between countries. If globalization is to be a viable concept for understanding the world as it exists today, it must be distinguished from long established trends of internationalization, economic liberalization, modernization, or cultural universalization (Scholte 1999). There is little evidence among my research population to strongly support the contention that current changes in Tampa Bay international business reflect a change in quality of beliefs rather than merely changes in rate or degree.

The relative lack of discussion among my research subjects about globalization or its impacts on Tampa Bay is itself, however, important data. Perhaps it is evidence that

globalization is a nebulous and not entirely useful concept if it is not being manifested at local sites such as mine. I cannot pretend to know if the data from my small- scale research project reflects the superficiality of the globalization concept altogether or the fact that Tampa Bay is in some kind of preliminary stages of becoming a global city. Clearly, more thorough and larger scaled research is needed.

I argue that such research would be fruitful and have considerable applied applications primarily because I observed some alarming attitudinal patterns among my informants, whether they reflect the impact of globalization or not. One of these is their attitude toward international business operations in this “age of globalization” (as many of them called it). Although there was a strong tendency among my respondents to express the opinion that they assume a leadership role in bringing new ways of thinking about “international” to their respective organizations, they also asserted that the pressures to think about business in such an innovative fashion was imperative and inevitable given the current state of global business. That is, the majority of my respondents believe that they are the architects of change here in the Bay Area (especially when they compare themselves with more “parochial” residents). Simultaneously, they acknowledge that they are subject to outside pressures when it comes to determining what needs to be done in order for Bay Area businesses to remain competitive and productive. Stated another way, they view themselves as being at the mercy of global pressures that force them to implement specific avenues of change here in the Bay Area. This attitude combined with the belief that their jobs hold them responsible only to Bay Area professionals whose businesses they assist in establishing or expanding (and not the Bay Area residents employed by these businesses) could have potentially hazardous

consequences. They are in control, yet they are not, and their obligations are conveniently limited to an elite audience even though their actions affect many far beyond that circle.

The surprising homogeneousness of my respondents' attitudes toward globalization and their roles in and obligations to the Bay Area is a finding that merits some additional consideration. Do my informants really have such similar goals and attitudes about the most effective strategies toward international economic development and marketing? As was demonstrated in chapter four, there is some disagreement among my respondents as to whether increasing trade or securing reverse investment should be the first priority. By in large, however, their outlooks are strikingly similar in terms of the past and future progress of the Bay Area and the impacts of international development on Bay Area residents. Perhaps these overt similarities mask more hidden disagreements that could be uncovered with more thorough ethnographic research and multiple interviews. It is quite possible that the united front presented by these elites could be dismantled by a thicker description resulting from more long-term ethnography.

Conclusions/Recommendations

This discrepancy between the potential consequences that the actions of my elite subjects are having on Bay Area residents and their disavowal of responsibility to them is an issue that deserves further exploration. For example, both my key informants and TBEDO officers were very keen on the importance of inward investment from foreign sources. While my respondents were well aware of local downsides to outsourcing and movement of parts or wholes of corporations overseas, on no occasion did I detect any opinion that inward investment poses specific consequences for Bay Area residents as

well. Relatively little research has addressed the question of how the ever increasing importance of foreign direct investment (FDI) has impacted the U.S. worker, particularly workers not directly employed by firms with foreign affiliations. Indeed, it is widely argued by economists and public policy makers that American workers employed by foreign affiliated firms enjoy higher wages, increased benefit packages, greater job security, and better training opportunities than similar workers employed by domestic firms (Graham 1996; Krugman 1996; McCulloch 1993). It is scholarly work of this type that has encouraged state and local governments to pursue economic development strategies that include the attraction of foreign direct investment, and it is this attitude that clearly predominates among my research subjects.

Scholars who are more pessimistic about the impact of FDI on workers argue, however, that foreign affiliated firms tend to impose exploitative and anti-union labor environment and rely on contingent labor pools and outsourcing such as in the case of Japanese owned automobile manufacturing plants (Drache 1996; Perrucci 1994). Some researchers suggest that foreign affiliated firms tend to locate in regions where union organization is uncommon. Labor dissent is discouraged at FDI affiliated firms as workers are made aware that relocation of their facilities or redirection of their investment is easily accomplished. In general, foreign direct investment is part of a general pattern of what some scholars call the “spatialization” of business resources that is characteristic of globalization. Spatially dispersed but globally integrated economic organization disrupts worker solidarity along class lines and concentrates power in the hands of a few who take advantage of flexible accumulation and labor processes. Some evidence even suggests that these ill effects of foreign direct investment are not confined

to only those working directly for foreign affiliated firms but that they spill over to generally affect employer strategies in all sectors (Brady and Wallace 2000).

Even more unresolved than the issue of these microlevel outcomes on U.S. laborers is the question of how foreign direct investment impacts all workers at the regional, state, and national levels. Much of the literature focuses on Japanese-affiliated firms despite the fact that two thirds of FDI originates in Europe and Japanese business practices are likely quite distinct from those of other countries (Sassen 1991). As a result, the possible consequences of European FDI are not being sufficiently explored. Further, studies on the impact of FDI tend to focus on the manufacturing sector only even though non-manufacturing FDI in the U.S. surpasses it (Brady and Wallace 2000). The point of this example is simply that there may be serious effects on the occupational and economic well being of Tampa residents as a result of the push for inward investment despite the fact that its supporters among my research population, at the very least, show no sign of concern about it.

I do not pretend to know just if and how the current activities of the TBEDO or my key informant interviewees are actually impacting Tampa Bay at large, nor can I responsibly begin to recommend avenues of change for these business elites for the benefit of all. However, I can recommend that anthropologists begin to take some of this issues raised by research such as the kind upon which this thesis is based into consideration. Applied anthropologists in particular task themselves with understanding and informing real world problems and helping to develop, guide, and correct policies that impact contemporary populations. As I discovered when conducting background research for this project, there is an appalling lack of anthropological contributions to the

study of local economic development organizations as well as to globalization processes at the local level in non-marginalized populations. The continued paucity of elite research conducted by applied anthropologists will have political ramifications in a world where power and money are concentrated in the hands of a few who subscribe to ideologies and pursue strategies that may only benefit elites of their kind.

What is needed from the discipline of anthropology are more comprehensive case studies of allegedly globalizing processes at the level of local institutions, particularly ones that incorporate a least some element of “studying up.” If certain elite actors are orchestrating and benefiting from globalization – as reality or propaganda –we need to study them to bolster the explanatory power of our research. Moreover, if globalization processes are having effects on numerous other human populations, it is our responsibility as applied anthropologists to study this phenomenon comprehensively as our aim is to develop and modify policy. This research project has only been a preliminary step in the examination of globalization in the Tampa Bay region from an anthropological orientation, i.e. one that seeks to understand both the emics and the etics of local globalizing processes, but will, hopefully, be a starting ground for further analyses of the behaviors of potentially powerful agents in those processes and of how the Tampa Bay Area may ultimately be impacted by their actions.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Name of Interviewee:

Date of Interview:

Contact Information: _____

1. What is your occupation?

2. How is/are you/the organization you work for affiliated with the [TBEDO]?
 - 2(a) How long have you been affiliated with the [TBEDO]? How did this relationship develop?

 - 2(c) Please describe how and how often you/ your organization works with the [TBEDO].

3. What is the central mission of your work/your organization?
 - (a) How does your organization operate on a local/regional level?
(Probe for definitions of what is the “local” or “regional” area)
 - (b) How does your organization operate on a national level?
(Probe for specific locations of national operations)
 - (c) How does your organization operate on an international level?
(Probe for specific locations of international operations)

4. How have the operations of your organization changed over the last (one/two/three) decades? Why?

5. How would you characterize Tampa Bay’s international economy? Tampa Bay’s international connections (economic, cultural, political)?
(Probe for definitions of “international” or any other ambiguously defined terms or concepts that may arise, i.e., globalization)

6. How does the Bay area compare to other cities known for their international connections?
(Probe for specific defining characteristics of global cities)

APPENDIX A (CONTINUED)

7. How would you characterize the changes in Tampa Bay in terms of its (economic, cultural, political) relations around the globe over the last (one/two/three) decades?

8. How have these changes come about? Are certain decision makers propelling specific directions of change?

9. How have these changes affected the lives of Tampa residents?

10. How would you like to see the Bay area develop over the next few decades? What changes have to occur to bring about these developments? Who can make these changes?

11. How would Bay area residents be impacted by these developments?