

Can courageous responses contribute to Caymanian masculine identity?



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INTRODUCTION

This qualitative study explored Caymanian masculine identity by discussing and analyzing specific events in the community. These events highlighted unusual courageous actions in response to aggravated assault as witnessed in viral social media footage and popular stories. Local men who repelled or ignored their attackers were discussed and these events used to frame perceptions of masculinity and to encourage discussion of these incidents as related to the man's role.

OBJECTIVE

To explore Caymanian masculine identity through discussions of acts of courage.

METHODOLOGY

- Semi-Structured interviews
- Purposive Sampling
- Five Interviews

THE VIDEOS AND STORIES

Table 1: Descriptions of Videos and Stories of Caymanian Men Responding to Aggressive Assault

Event	Description of Event
E1	Story of men who were in a liquor store when two assailants came in to burgle the store with guns. The men said "Not today Bobo" and disarmed them.
E2	Video of the owner of a convenience store assaulted with a gun in an attempted robbery. The shop owner used a machete to deter the attacker saying "What you goin' do with that?" and caused the assailant to run out of the store.
E3	Video of four men playing dominoes when an armed man came in waiving a gun and demanding money. The men continued to play without interruption and ignored the attacker. One man then came into the frame and interacted with the attacker. The men playing dominoes continued their game.

Participants witnessed these events prior to the interviews

THE PARTICIPANTS

Table 1: Demographic Information for Participant Population

Pseudonym	Age	Married/Unmarried	District	Kids
Mark	42	M	West Bay	Y
Xavier	48	M	Bodden Town	Y
Baccerat	67	M	West Bay	Y
Steve	24	U	George Town	N
Hawk	25	U	George Town	N

ANALYSIS

Courage may be a concept that is slightly different for Caymanian men than traditional definitions dictate, this may be due to an understanding of desperation, born historically out of a harsh economic climate and seafaring heritage. Men expect other men to be strong in upholding what is right, and fearless in their emotional responses. Age appears to be very significant in discussions of Caymanian masculinity, it is reasonable to suggest that age may even be described as a precursor to the ability to function as a man. Responses indicate that men grow into the ability to be calm, to be patient, and to wait until the right moment to take action. Caymanian men appear to be very determined to support and provide for their families however for men of this country it appears to seamlessly fit together with a recognition that women are capable and independent. However the protection of women against violence was explored as a powerful component of masculine identity.

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

Identity and its maintenance can be observed through the actions of men in the society. Men's explanations, therefore, of the actions of other men may help to unpack some complex themes within identity. Videos of courageous acts allow for discussions of aggression and courage and can build discussion about identity. Masculinity is traditionally associated with dominance of men over women and identity in Cayman has been linked to xenophobia. Within this study however, non-traditional approaches to some themes were observed. This was speculated to be due to a unique cultural heritage that forced large numbers of Caymanian men away from women for long periods.

RESULTS

After analysis, four key themes emerged that could help inform a conceptualization of Caymanian masculinity. (a) courage, (b) self-control, (c) men's role and (d) response to women.

CONCLUSION

Themes that may be present within Caymanian masculine identity are: an understanding of courage and male strength, as it applies to standing in the community and emotional fearlessness. Self-control due to age and the ability to use patience and calm to solve problems and a man's response to women as protection, and support for the woman's needs. The islands seafaring heritage may be foundational to these themes and may still be influencing masculine identity in the present day. Evaluating courageous responses allowed for meaningful contributions in exploring Caymanian masculinity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ADDITIONAL STUDY INTO IDENTITY, LARGER SAMPLE SIZE, EVALUATE POLICIES TARGETING YOUNG MEN TO DETERMINE SUITABILITY