SELLING MEXICO: RACE, GENDER, AND AMERICAN INFLUENCE IN CANCÚN, 1970-2000

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department

of History

University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

Tracy A. Butler

May, 2016

SELLING MEXICO: RACE, GENDER, AND AMERICAN INFLUENCE IN CANCÚN, 1970-2000

Tracy A. Butler

APPROVED:

Thomas F. O'Brien Ph.D.
Committee Chair

John Mason Hart, Ph.D.

Susan Kellogg, Ph.D.

Jason Ruiz, Ph.D.
American Studies, University of Notre Dame

Steven G. Craig, Ph.D.
Interim Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
Department of Economics

SELLING MEXICO: RACE, GENDER, AND AMERICAN INFLUENCE IN CANCÚN, 1970-2000

An Abstract of a Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department

of History

University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

Tracy A. Butler

May, 2016

ABSTRACT

Selling Mexico highlights the importance of Cancún, Mexico's top international tourism resort, in modern Mexican history. It promotes a deeper understanding of Mexico's social, economic, and cultural history in the late twentieth century. In particular, this study focuses on the rise of mass middle-class tourism American tourism to Mexico between 1970 and 2000. It closely examines Cancún's central role in buttressing Mexico to its status as a regional tourism pioneer in the latter half of the twentieth century. More broadly, it also illuminates Mexico's leadership in tourism among countries in the Global South.

First, it focuses on early tourism projects in Mexico in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It also highlights the changes in relations between Americans and Mexicans, in part as a result of the Good Neighbor Policy, during this period. The increased friendliness between Americans and Mexicans was important in Mexico's ability to garner more tourism from the U.S. during this period. As a result, Mexico became more dependent than before on American tourism and tailored its hospitality holdings to American tourists' market demands.

This study also examines the role of ideologies in Mexico's state-led tourism development, including Pan Americanism, internationalism and nationalism. It studies Pan Americanism and internationalism in tourism promotions abroad and at home. It also looks at the state's attempts to foster pride in national patrimony in order to promote a unified national identity and encourage more Mexican nationals to travel throughout their nation. This coincided with the government's development of the "social tourism"

sector in the 1970s. In this way, *Selling Mexico* expands the historical record on the state's post-revolutionary nation-building projects and promotes a re-examination of tourism in relation to nationalism and Mexico's cultural history in the latter half of the twentieth century.

In addition, this study analyzes state-led tourism planning and its historical relationship to the development of Cancún. In that same vein, it illuminates the state's motivations for tourism development, interpreting it as a strategy to promote economic development as well as a method to quell leftist resistance movements which were surging in the Mexican countryside during the 1960s and 1970s. It also contextualizes mass tourism during the Jet Age. In addition, *Selling Mexico* analyzes the intersecting relationship between capitalism, race, class, and gender in tourism. It promotes a critical analysis of these connections by examining the impact of indigenous communal *ejido* land expropriations, city planning, beach privatization, hiring practices, and tourism promotions on the development of Cancún.

Selling Mexico interprets Cancún as a cultural borderland. It closely studies the convergence of foreign and domestic people, culture, and capital in Cancún. It looks at Cancún's identity as a transnational "no-place," where culture and "authenticity" take on new meanings in the age of globalization and free trade. It also interrogates the tensions between Mexican ownership and international enterprise, arguing that in the era of neoliberalism, they are often unified due to the growing presence of large and ever-expanding international partnerships and conglomerates.

Finally, it examines the state's control of its international image abroad. In an industry susceptible to perceptions of public safety, image was considered to be essential to

expanding tourism. Therefore, it carefully examines how the state dealt with international reports of drug trafficking, natural disasters, violence, and kidnapping in Mexico. As an in-depth study of Cancún, *Selling Mexico* uses tourism to more closely examine the intersections between race, class, gender, capitalism, culture, and international relations.

Acknowledgements Page

There are many people and institutions I would like to thank for their contributions to the completion of this project. First, this dissertation could not have been accomplished without the sacrifices and support of my family. I thank my parents for supporting me throughout my many years of study, believing in me, and instilling in me from a young age the personal qualities of determination and self-discipline. I owe my sisters special thanks for being my cheerleaders, encouraging me to challenge myself and follow my dreams. I especially appreciate the sacrifices made by husband and my son throughout the research and writing process. I owe a big thanks to the History Department at the University of Houston for their financial support of this project through the Murray Miller Dissertation Research Grants. Also, I want to thank the University of Houston Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies and Friends of Women's Studies, from whom I won several research travel grants. In addition, I thank the Clements Center for Southwest Studies and DeGolyer Library at Southern Methodist University for their financial support of this project. I also thank the many archivists at the Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico City), the Hemeroteca at Universidad Nacional Autónoma (UNAM, Mexico City), the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection (University of Texas at Austin), the Pan American World Airways Collection (University of Miami), the DeGolyer Library (Southern Methodist University), the Cancún Municipal Archive, the Universidad del Caribe Library (Cancún), the Universidad la Salle Library (Cancún), and Mark Young at the Hilton Hospitality Industry Archive (University of Houston) for their help in locating sources. Finally, I most appreciate the many rounds of feedback provided by my advisor, Dr. Thomas F. O'Brien, as well as some input from committee members Dr. Susan Kellogg, Dr. John Mason Hart, and Dr. Jason Ruiz. I also thank other faculty members including Dr. Natalia Milanesio, Dr. Philip Howard, Dr. Kristin Wintersteen, and Dr. José Hernández, as well as my many colleagues in Latin American History, who helped immensely in providing feedback during the early stages of writing this dissertation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication Page

This study is dedicated to the Mexican *ejidatarios* whose land was expropriated by the state for the purposes of tourism development.

Introduction

In the northeast tip of Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula lies Cancún, Mexico's most successful international tourism resort. Today, Cancún is incredibly important for Mexico's international tourism sector, as it produces one-third of Mexico's overall GDP garnered from tourism. In addition, it provides employment for eighty percent of its residents.[1] Cancún is the realization of a government plan hatched in the 1970s to bring economic development to some of Mexico's most impoverished regions by constructing a series of five carefully designed tourism resorts from the ground up.[2] *Selling Mexico* provides a useful framework for understanding how the government's role in tourism changed during this period in comparison to the past. In that same vein, it also examines the effects of those changes for state-led tourism as an economic development strategy in Cancún and Mexico as a whole. In addition, it looks at Mexico's role as a tourism pioneer in Latin America, and how Cancún's success buttressed its emerging reputation as a regional leader.

Most other studies of tourism in Mexico focus on periods of time which precede the height of mass tourism around the world.[3] Thus, an in-depth study of Cancún offers a

---

[1] Matilde Córdoba Azcárate, "Tourism Development, Architectures of Escape and the Passive Beloved in Contemporary Yucatán," in *Moral Encounters in Tourism (Current Developments in the Geographies of Leisure and Tourism),* edited by Mary Mostafanezhad and Kevin Hannam, (Ashgate: 2014), 61.

[2] Cancún is one of five planned tourism resorts which began in the 1970s. The others include Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo (Guerrero), Loreto (Baja California del Sur), Los Cabos (Baja California del Sur), and Huatulco (Oaxaca).

[3] Some of the major works to consult related to tourism in Mexico include, but are not limited to: Dina Berger, *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry: Pyramids by Day, Martinis by Night,* Palgrave MacMillan, 2006; Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood, Eds. *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourist Encounters,* Duke University Press Books, 2010; Nicholas Bloom, ed. *Adventures into Mexico: American Tourism beyond the Border*, Landham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006; Andrea Boardman, *Destination Mexico: A Foreign Land A Step Away, U.S. Tourism to Mexico, 1880s-1950s,* DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, 2001; Dennis Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America,* University of North Carolina Press, 2009; Héctor Manuel Romero, "Miguel Alemán Valdés (1905-1983): Arquitecto del turismo en

valuable framework for understanding the historical phenomena of global mass tourism in the mid-twentieth century. The Mexican government developed the resort when mass tourism was expanding quickly in the Global South. The Jet Age was also accelerating the speed and increasing the affordability of travel. In addition, international hotel firms were more readily adopting high-volume, low-cost models of hospitality in order to accommodate the growing global middle-class tourism.

Selling Mexico also offers a useful lens through which to view cultural exchanges, race, class, and gender. Given Cancún's reputation as an "Americanized" resort in Mexico, it supports Dennis Merrill's assertion that tourism allows western nations, especially the U.S., to wield influence and "soft" cultural power abroad.[4] *Selling Mexico* also illuminates the gendered nature of the tourism industry in Cancún by examining the labor structure and tourism advertisements. It supports Cynthia Enloe's argument that international tourism in its current state *needs* patriarchy to survive, since the industry has been buttressed by gendered ideas related to sexualized pleasure and low-paid, feminized labor.[5] In addition, it promotes a critical analysis of race and class in tourism through a study of city planning, land expropriation, labor, and tourism promotions.

Historiography: Studying a Different Border

In the past ten years, the study of tourism has emerged as an important new topic among sociologists, geographers, anthropologists, and historians, among others.

México," México, D.F.: Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística, 1993; Jason Ruiz, *Americans in the Treasure House: Travel to Porfirian Mexico and the Cultural Politics of Empire,* University of Texas Press, 2014; Paul J. Vanderwood, *Satan's Playground: Mobsters and Movie Stars at America's Greatest Gaming Resort,* Duke University Press Books, 2009.

[4] Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise.*

[5] Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics,* University of California Press, 1989, 41.

Historians have begun to produce significant works related to the history of tourism, but the field remains vastly underdeveloped with regard to this topic. Mexicanist scholars have published important works, examining the evolution of tourism from 19th-century American travelers' accounts to President Lázaro Cárdenas' 1940s sun-and-sand tourism promotions, but these studies do not extend beyond the 1960s. More generally, the history of tourism in Latin America lacks historical works related to tourism and gender. While in recent years transnational studies of history have begun to surface, they require further development. *Selling Mexico* aims to fill these gaps in the historical literature.

My dissertation offers a fresh perspective on Mexico's cultural and economic history. There are not many books which frame Mexico's cultural and economic history in the context of tourism. While there is a small collection of historical works concerning the history of tourism in Mexico, the majority of these works examine early tourism in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands region. A few look at the evolution of tourism in Mexico City over the years. In contrast, my study will examine a cultural borderland—a place where cultures, people, and identities (but not geographical borders) meet, therefore offering a view of tourism without the complicating factors of immigration, maquiladoras, and the like. To date, there has not been an academic work written exclusively about the history of tourism development in Cancún and the significance of Cancún's success in the context of Mexico's national history. Considering that Cancún is a top international tourism destination and tourism is one of Mexico's highest generators of foreign capital, there is a need for a major scholarly study. Cancún undoubtedly played a central role in the advancement of Mexico's twentieth-century tourism industry,

which served as an example for other Latin American countries to follow. Thus, this dissertation represents an important addition to the historical record.

Historiography: The Theory of Tourism

The earliest works related to tourism propose theories of tourism and its meaning for society. In one of the earliest works, Dean MacCannell published *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976), which provides an analysis of travel and sight-seeing related to the growth of middle-class travel in the post-modern era. He also engages discussions of authenticity and culture. He released a new edition in 2013, in which he warns against tourism's propensity to suck the "difference out of difference," thereby flattening foreign culture and tourists' experiences abroad.[6] This study examines this concept more closely, as both nationals and tourists note the palpable American influence in Cancún and its effects on local culture. Almost simultaneously, Valene Smith introduced an anthropological study of travel through her book *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* (1977), which contains various essays related to anthropology, society, culture, and tourism. Of particular interest, it contains Dennison Nash's article "Tourism as a Form of Imperialism," an essay whose influence still can be seen in recent studies of tourism.[7] Later, John Urry proposed a theory of "the tourist gaze" in his book *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (1990).[8] Through sociological theory, Urry argues that there specific modes of analyzing what tourists see by analyzing tourism and tourists in the context of history, economics, society, and

---

[6] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, University of California Press, 2013, xiii.
[7] Christine Skwiot's *The Purposes of Paradise* (2010) and Dennis Merrill's *Negotiating Paradise* (2009) are two examples of recent works which tie tourism to the spread of imperialism. Valene Smith, *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989.
[8] John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, SAGE Publications, 1990.

culture. In relation to history, Urry argues that tourist sites can be classified as romantic or collective; historical or modern; and authentic or inauthentic. *Selling Mexico* challenges this static notion of authenticity, instead arguing that authenticity is relative and constantly changing in a modern, globalized world. In addition, it engages both the foreign "tourist gaze" and the Mexican "native gaze," thereby expanding Urry's theory. These works served as a theoretical foundation for the study of tourism, and their influence is still evident among new works.

Historiography: Tourism and Latin America

In recent years in the field of Latin American history, scholars have begun to produce important works related to tourism. In 1997, Rosalie Schwartz published *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba,* which examines Cuba's tourism industry between 1920 and 1960 as middle-class international travel steadily began to increase. Schwartz argues that as middle-class tourism grew and spread abroad, tourists' ideas of leisure and recreation evolved as well to include cabarets and similar night life. She also explains Cuban tourism's busts and booms through the Great Depression, World War II, and the Cuban Revolution.[9] Schwartz's later study *Flying Down to Rio: Hollywood, Tourists, and the Yankee Clippers* (2004) illuminates the important role of film and aviation technology in the rise of American tourism abroad in the early twentieth century.[10] Meanwhile, Christine Skwiot's *The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawaii* (2010) compares Hawaii and Cuba as twin objects of imperialist desire from the mid-nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century, but

---

[9] Rosalie Schwartz, *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba,* University of Nebraska Press, 1997.
[10] Rosalie Schwartz, *Flying Down to Rio: Hollywood, Tourists, and the Yankee Clippers,* Texas A&M University Press, 2004.

that changed after 1959 when Hawaii obtained statehood and Cuba escaped the U.S.'s imperialist grasps upon the conclusion of the Cuban Revolution. She argues that these two key events forever changed the ways in which the U.S. now treats Cuba and Hawaii—one as a shunned nation and the other as a cherished state. She centers imperialism in her narrative in order to reveal the vital role of tourism in state diplomacy.[11] Her study is incredibly valuable to the field. Furthermore, Catherine Cocks' *Tropical Whites: The Rise of the Tourist South in the Americas* (2013) takes a more cultural approach to the study of American tourism abroad. In a study of American travelers between the late nineteenth century and the 1940s, Cocks explains how Americans came to associate the tropics with leisure travel rather than death and disease. Also, she convincingly argues that tourism popularized the anthropological understanding of culture—a new concept at the time.[12] Overall, these works provide valuable groundwork for future studies of tourism—they engage interesting and important questions. However, *Selling Mexico* engages a different period of time and a different country, and it asks new questions related to gender and race, the rise of the middle class tourists in Mexico, transnational identity formation between Mexicans and tourists, the significance of Mexico's 1970s state tourism development, and the importance of Cancún's successful growth on a national and regional scale.

Historiography: Tourism and the Border

Over the years, scholars have dissected the meaning of tourism in a variety of contexts. Within Mexican historiography, scholars have looked at tourism in the context

---

[11] Christine Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawaii*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.
[12] Catherine Cocks, *Tropical Whites: The Rise of the Tourist South in the Americas*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

of larger social and political changes—and the U.S.-Mexico border is often a point of interest for historians. Various works discuss the U.S.-Mexico borderlands as a conveniently-located place of refuge for Americans—a place free from cultural, social, as well as legal constraints on their desire to participate in "borderline" acts, or behavior which oversteps boundaries on traditionally acceptable conduct. Thus, American travelers often crossed the border (and still do) to Mexico to solicit prostitution (a regulated legal profession in Mexico), drink, gamble, and participate in other debaucheries. As explained by various authors, this type of tourism was especially popular during Prohibition (1920-1933).[13] While alcohol temperance may have disappeared from American law in 1933, prostitution and gambling remained illegal in the majority of American states and cities bordering Mexico, and thus, Mexican border towns continued to remain popular with American tourists beyond Prohibition. A few historians have written about tourism in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands after this era. Of particular interest, Eric M. Schantz wrote an article entitled "Beyond the Noir Border: Tourism, the Vice Racket, and Power Relations in Baja California's Border Zone, 1938-65," which is included in the edited volume by Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood, *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourism Encounters* (2010), in which Schantz investigates gambling and other forms of "vice" tourism in post-World War II Tijuana.[14] In addition, Paul Vanderwood wrote *Satan's Playground: Mobsters and Movie Stars at America's Greatest Gaming Resort* (2010), which looks at the rise

---

[13] Oscar Martínez, *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Júarez since 1848*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978; David E. Lorey, *The U.S.-Mexican Border in the Twentieth Century: A History of Economic and Social Transformation*, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999.

[14] Eric M. Schantz, "Beyond the Noir Border: Tourism, the Vice Racket, and Power Relations in Baja California's Border Zone, 1938-65," in *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourism Encounters*, edited by Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood, 130-160, Duke University Press, 2010.

and fall of Tijuana's gaming industry in the early twentieth century. It also illuminates the role of American crime organizations in the resort's development.[15]

In comparison to these borderland studies, this study addresses a cultural, rather than geographical borderland which highlights the mixture and mingling of cultures rather than their division. Due to American culture's palpable influence in Cancún, cultural differences are not as stark for tourists as in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands and other parts of Mexico. This study explores the historic development of Cancún's transnational identity in an international, national, and regional context. Like the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, Cancún also has a reputation for attracting licentious vacationers, and in that way, it too represents not only a cultural borderland, but a legal and social borderland. Due to relaxed laws, tourists are able to solicit prostitutes legally and drink at the age of eighteen (rather than twenty-one). College students often travel on spring break, free of their parents, and traveling abroad for the first time. Thus, temptation sets in and "what happens in Cancún stays in Cancún"—that is, unless your debauchery ends up being broadcast on *MTV Spring Break* or *Girls Gone Wild*. Thus, this study examines how Mexico, and in this case Cancún, has served as a safe space for American travelers to engage in activities that in the U.S. are legally, socially, or culturally prohibited, and how this in turn has historically shaped Cancún's global and national image and life there for its Mexican inhabitants. In that same vein, it looks at how gender norms have been historically portrayed or manipulated through "vice" tourism. How has the image of the Mexican prostitute in Cancún's red light district or the inebriated, topless *gringa* on *MTV Spring Break* created a backdrop on which Mexican and American audiences project their

[15] Vanderwood, *Satan's Playground*.

imaginations of transnational gender norms, and their relationship to race, class, and culture? How has the manipulation of gender and gender performance, through marketing, TV, movies, events, and advertisements, influenced the path which tourism has taken in Cancún and Mexico in general? *Selling Mexico* examines these questions.

In *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1914-1947* (1993), art historian James Oles uses the border as the dividing line between two nations—both geographically and culturally, literally and symbolically. Oles presents a body of art produced by Americans living in Mexico in the early twentieth century, much of which was originally featured in an exhibit at the Yale University Art Gallery in 1966. While many of the early works feature stereotypical representations of the Mexican peasantry, later productions (undoubtedly influenced by Diego Rivera and his colleagues) contain critiques of capitalism and social inequality which American artists witnessed in Mexican society while traveling abroad. The collection of American art inspired by travel to Mexico expresses an acute desire among these traveling artists to understand a land and culture foreign to their own homeland. Their time abroad changed the subject of their artistic expression and in some cases, it inspired social critique. In this way, the collection demonstrates the scope of tourism's influence beyond mere vacationing and a desire to enjoy leisure time. Rather, it suggests that tourism influences not only individual lives, but societies as a whole, and in meaningful, life-altering ways. In this case, many artists viewed their time in Mexico through criticisms of capitalism and social unrest at the dawn of the Cold War. In comparison to Oles, who focuses on a geographic borderland which served as the definite line between two cultures—this study highlights a cultural borderland which mixes, rather than divides, cultures, and contributes to the

culturally ambiguous, transnational identity associated with Cancún. This is especially relevant in the era of air travel, as planes have accelerated travel between countries and facilitated the meeting of people and culture. In addition, a study during the era of globalization provides a framework to more closely examine how more intimately intertwined economic and cultural relationships have defined cultural borderlands and meeting grounds.

Historiography: Tourism and Mexico

While some Mexicanists have focused on tourism and the borderlands, others have taken a more national approach. Many of these scholars overwhelmingly emphasize the importance of President Miguel Alemán's efforts to develop Mexico's tourism industry primarily through the promotion of Acapulco in the 1950s. Some scholars, such as Héctor Manuel Romero, have even deemed him Mexico's "father of tourism."[16] However, historian Dina Berger refutes this idea in her book *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry: Pyramids by Day, Martinis by Night* (2006), arguing instead that it was President Lázaro Cárdenas' earlier efforts in the 1940s which fundamentally changed the face of tourism in Mexico and led to its subsequent growth in the 1950s. Berger highlights Cárdenas' tourism development programs as nationalist and points to the state's highway reconstruction projects and the expansion of night life in 1940s Mexico City as the key to his success in reinventing Mexico's image abroad from backward and poverty-stricken to modern, progressive, and accommodating. Berger's work is incredibly important—it sheds light on the foundation of Mexico's twentieth-century tourism boom. However, while it clarifies how Mexico changed its international

[16] Romero, "Miguel Alemán Valdés."

image and began to attract travelers from abroad, it does not go as far as to explain how Mexico rose to become one of the top international tourist destinations in the world. By the 1960s, while the status of its tourism sector had improved in comparison to the past, Mexico was still struggling to contend with local rivals in the Caribbean. By the mid-1990s, however Mexico had become a fierce global competitor that served as an example for other Latin American countries to follow.[17] How did this happen? Since Berger concludes her study in the 1940s, she neglects to answer this question, but this study explains how Mexico rose to be an innovative model for twentieth-century tourism development.

Other important works related to Mexico and tourism include the edited volume by Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood, *Holiday in Mexico* (2010), Nicholas Dagen Bloom's edited volume entitled *Adventures into Mexico: American Tourism beyond the Border* (2006), and Andrea Boardman's catalogue *Destination Mexico: A Foreign Land A Step Away, U.S. Tourism to Mexico, 1880s-1950s* (2001). Berger and Wood's volume includes articles written on the development of Acapulco, vice tourism in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, Carnaval in Veracruz, the U.S.-Mexican War and tourism, and tourism's influence on the gentrification of Mexican cuisine, among others. Similarly, Bloom's collection of articles proves to increase our knowledge of American travel to Mexico through essays on 1940s U.S.-Mexico diplomacy and tourism, American influence in Cancún, and the buying and selling of Oaxacan woodcarvings, and other topics. Meanwhile, Boardman's catalogue features items from a public exhibit at DeGloyer Library at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. It includes brief

---

[17] Jeffrey S. Smith, "Three Generations of International Tourist Resorts in Mexico," *Geographische Rundschau International Edition* 5(1): (2009), 4-10.

discussions of American travel to Mexico in the early twentieth-century. All of these books are significant; however, none of these works proposes an in-depth study Mexico's national tourism history between 1970 and 2000, the importance of Cancún for Mexico and Latin America, the growth of middle-class American tourism to Mexico, or the history of tourism in relationship to race and gender.

Historiography: Tourism, Diplomacy, and American Influence

Scholars such as Dina Berger and Dennis Merrill have demonstrated the importance of tourism in the context of international diplomacy. In her essay entitled "A Drink Between Friends: Mexican and American Pleasure Seekers in 1940s Mexico City," featured in Nicholas Dagen Bloom's edited volume *Adventures Into Mexico: American Tourism Beyond the Border* (2006), Dina Berger argues that the U.S. and Mexican governments and travelers alike viewed tourism as a form of international peacekeeping.[18] In light of World War II and the Good Neighbor Policy, Americans traveling to Mexico in the 1940s saw Mexicans as important allies, and vice versa. Meanwhile, in *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America*, Dennis Merrill interprets American tourism in Latin America as a display of cultural influence and economic prowess.[19] *Selling Mexico* also examines tourism in the context of international exchanges. However, it extends beyond their period of study (Merrill studies the 1920s and Berger studies Mexico through the 1940s). In addition, it offers a unique transnational take on the meaning of Cancún's success in which it examine American cultural influence from various perspectives—it examines its

[18] Dina Berger, "A Drink Between Friends: Mexican and American Pleasure Seekers in 1940s Mexico City," in *Adventures into Mexico: American Tourism Beyond the Border*, edited by Nicholas Dagen Bloom, 13-34, Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.
[19] Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise.*

historical significance for American tourists and Mexican nationals. Meanwhile, it also investigate the importance of Cancún beyond Mexico's national borders throughout the entire Latin American region, thereby extending beyond the scope of Berger's bi-national study, and proposing a counterpoint to Merrill's American-centric vantage point. While American influence is undeniable in Mexico's tourism sector, it is important to also uncover Mexican nationals' part in creating Cancún as a transnational, culturally ambiguous space, and the importance of its success regionally, thereby pointing to Mexicans' regional influence in addition to Americans'.

Merrill is not the only scholar who has pointedly downplayed Mexicans' participation in the creation of their own tourism destinations. In their article entitled "Gringolandia: Cancún and the American Tourist," Rebecca Torres and Janet Henshall Momsen characterize Cancún as a transnational space devoid of authentic Mexican culture.[20] They highlight the social divisions between the locals and the foreign tourists and portray local Mexicans as the subservient victims of Americans' overpowering influence on their city and the surrounding region. While Torres and Momsen forward valuable knowledge on the subject, their interpretation leaves room for further investigation. *Selling Mexico* interprets Cancún not as a space devoid of "authentic" Mexican culture (since "authenticity" is itself a slippery concept), but as a space in which Mexican culture has evolved with the influx of new people, languages, customs and cultures into the region in recent years. Over the years, Cancún has grown from a scarcely-populated Maya fishing village to a large city inhabited by mostly rural Maya peasants, Mexicans from various regions, and tourists from countries throughout the

[20] Bloom, ed. *Adventures into Mexico*.

world. As a young city with a burgeoning local culture it is constantly re-inventing itself, and exudes flavors from throughout Mexico, the U.S., and the world through its inhabitants and their wide variety of imported languages, customs, and cultures. While the resulting "hybrid" culture may not be exclusively "Mexican," it is by no means lacking in "authenticity." Rather, this study argues that the culture which has emerged from Cancún is a culture in its own right, unique from other variations of Mexican culture throughout the nation.

Sources

Writing this dissertation required the extensive use of both primary and secondary sources. The dissertation is grounded in scholarship already conducted by historians, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, and other academics related to tourism, U.S.-Latin American relations, Cancún, and other subjects related to this work. Meanwhile, most of the primary sources come from archives in Houston, Dallas, Miami, Cancún and Mexico City. Two visits to Mexico's National Archive (AGN) yielded periodicals, tourism brochures, letters and government documents. The Hemeroteca at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) in Mexico City also held a substantial and useful collection of periodicals related to the tourism industry. In Cancún, the municipal archive, the Universidad del Caribe's archive, and the Universidad La Salle's library held useful periodicals, government documents, and World Tourism Organization papers. In addition, the Hilton Hospitality Industry Archive (University of Houston) and the Pan American World Airways special collection (University of Miami) both yielded useful sources related to airlines' and hotels' participation in Mexican hospitality. Finally, the Benson Latin American Collection (University of Texas at

Austin) provided travel ads, books, and newspapers. Online newspaper archives including newspapers.com and thenewyorktimes.com also proved to be very helpful in collecting newspaper articles and travel ads. Also, oral history interviews provided a bottom-up perspective on the development of Cancún's tourism industry and its impact on the local culture and its people. Interviews with Cancún city employees, Internations members (a social organization for expatriates) and the Union for Workers in the Hotel, Gastronomic, and Related Industries in Cancún all provided valuable testimony related to the city's historical development.

Chapter Organization

This dissertation examines the rise of tourism--specifically middle-class American tourism--to Mexico between 1970 and 2000. It focuses on Cancun and its central role in supporting the expansion of Mexico in its appeal as an international tourism destination, particularly for Americans. Chapter 1 sets up historical context for the later creation of Cancun in the 1970s by explaining earlier tourism projects led by the state in Mexico. It studies the changes in international exchanges between Mexican and American citizens during the Porfiriato, the Mexican Revolution, and the post-revolutionary period leading up to the creation of Cancun in the early 1970s (1890s-1960s). Relations between Americans and Mexicans varied in warmth throughout this period in reflection of changes in cultural representations of one another in media, changing business relationships between Mexicans and Americans, as well as variations in U.S.-Mexican diplomatic relations. In the post-revolutionary period, relations between the U.S. and Mexico warmed largely due to more favorable media representations of Mexico and its citizens abroad, an increase in artistic exchanges between Mexican and

American performers and artists, as well as the forging of Pan American brotherhood through the Good Neighbor Policy in the 1930s. These changes proved to be fundamental in Mexico's ability to attract more American tourists throughout this period. Also, they influenced changes in American and Mexican national identity formation, as each nation sought to define itself in relationship to the foreign "other." As the relationship shifted between Mexicans and Americans, their national definitions of "self" transformed as well. The improvement in international relations and increase in American tourism in Mexico also served as a means for the United States to wield cultural imperialism. In the context of tourism, Mexico became increasingly dependent on tourist dollars, and as such, tailored its tourism market to the tastes and demands of principally American tourists. Thus, even as relations between the two nations improved, the nature of their relationship was not a true equal partnership, but rather a relationship dependent on Mexico (and Mexicans) as the product and the U.S. as the consumer. Chapter 2 examines the role of ideologies in Mexico's state-led tourism development. This encompasses Pan Americanism, internationalism and nationalism. It also looks at national identity formation in relationship to the state's definition of tourism as a source of national pride and unity and the state's attempts to increase tourism among Mexican nationals. In that same vein, it looks at the creation of the "social tourism" sector and the state's investment in tourism-related educational institutions. Finally, it looks at this as an accompaniment to state-led tourism development and Mexico's economic development in general. Chapter 3 analyzes nationalism and state-led tourism planning which involved a reliance on both foreign and domestic private investment. It also looks at the creation of Cancún as a tourist resort, as well as the rise of American tourism to Mexico in the context of the

Jet Age. Finally, it explores the Mexican tourism industry's impact on the Latin American region. During the 1960s and 1970s Mexico's tourism sector experienced such significant growth that other Latin American countries began to look to Mexico as a model for their own tourism industries. Chapter 4 studies the intersection between capitalism and socially constructed categories of identity in the construction of Cancún. This chapter asserts that agents of Mexico's tourism industry kept race, gender, and local Maya culture in mind in order to transform Cancún into a profitable space. These socially constructed categories of identity worked within the capitalist system to generate maximum profits for investors through hiring practices, advertisements, municipal construction, and federal regulations. Finally, Chapter 5 examines Cancún as a cultural borderland—a place where cultures, and people, but not geographical borders, meet. The meeting of foreign and domestic cultures, commerce, and capital was part of the historical construction of Cancún in its rise to prominence as an international tourism resort. In that same vein, it closely examines of the impact of American business investments and spring break culture on Cancún's development and the impact of Cancun's overall success on Mexico and its tourism industry. It also studies the state's control of Mexico's national image abroad, which played into the tailoring of the tourism industry to foreign tourists. Thus, it looks at how the state grappled at the state's grappling with drug trafficking, natural disasters, and episodes of violence and kidnapping to promote a clean, safe image to attract foreign tourists. The state's control of its national image abroad was especially important in an industry which is quite vulnerable to the public's perception of safety. In addition, it examines the way the state marketed tourism to Mexico by analyzing tourism advertisements. Finally, it studies the

increase in mass tourism in the age of globalization and neoliberalism and identifies its effects on Cancún's growing identity as an "Americanized" tourism destination.

Contribution to the Field

Scholars have developed an important body of work related to tourism in Mexico, but the studies do not extend beyond the 1960s. In contrast, *Selling Mexico* focuses on important developments which occurred in Mexico's tourism industry in the latter half of the twentieth century. This was a vitally important period of time in Mexico's twentieth-century history. The state experienced drastic changes in economic policies between President Lázaro Cárdenas' populist regime in the 1940s and President Carlos Salinas Gortari's neoliberal policies in the 1990s. A study of this period in Mexican history illuminates the rise of Mexico's tourism industry and the regional influence of its success.

This dissertation explores the historical significance of Cancún's vast growth and its vital role in the evolution of Mexico's sun-and-sand tourism from exclusive high-class resorts at mid-century to all-inclusive middle-class resorts by the end of the century. This has yet to be explored. It examines Mexico's 1970s efforts to bring economic growth to impoverished regions through tourism, its attempts to promote national unity by increasing tourism among Mexican nationals, and its appeal to the rise of middle-class American tourists due to air travel's increased affordability. Also, it explores the historical significance of Cancún's vast development in Mexico. It also looks at transnational identity formation (Mexicans' and Americans' understanding of themselves and each other), race, gender, capitalism, and American cultural power as Cancún developed into a sexualized American paradise. The prevalence of American tourists and American capital has been especially powerful influences on Mexico's tourism industry,

since by the end of the twentieth century, Americans made up approximately eighty-five percent of foreign tourists in Mexico.[21] In Cancún, American tourists represented sixty percent of all tourists.[22]

Selling Mexico reveals how Mexicans viewed the development of Cancún in relationship to their own identity and the identity they projected to tourists, and it looks at how the "Americanization" of Cancún was a part of that process. It re-examines the official motivations behind the creation of Cancún, in relationship to investors, government officials, and in particular President Luis Echeverría and Carlos Salinas de Gortari, both of whom allegedly invested in Cancún's tourism industry. In a similar context, it explores how race, gender, American capital, and American cultural imperialism played influential roles in shaping the construction of Cancún. It also decodes representations of gender, race, and class in travel advertisements, films, and television shows and relates them to transnational identity formation in the context of tourism.

It asks important new questions related to the role of gender, intercultural exchange, and transnational identity in the creation of a tourist destination. First, it theorizes the meaning of "authenticity" and examine the commodification of culture in the context of tourism in the modern era of global capitalism. It analyzes the exchanges between local hosts and tourists within international travel, and inspects the cultural, economic, and social implications of isolated tourist zones in those settings. In Cancún,

---

[21] Tamar Diana Wilson, "Economic and Social Impacts of Tourism in Mexico," *Latin American Perspectives* 35, 37 (2008): 37-52, accessed November 11, 2011, http://lap.sagepub.com/content/35/3/37, 38; Michael J. Clancy,"Mexican Tourism: Export Growth and Structural Change Since 1970," *Latin American Research Review* 36, No. 1 (2001): 128-150, accessed October 10, 2011, www.jstor.org/stable/2692077, 129.

[22] Rebecca Torres, "Cancun's Tourism Development from a Fordist Spectrum of Analysis," *Tourist Studies* 2, No. 87 (2002), accessed November 11, 2011, http://tou.sagepub.com/content/2/1/87, 100.

while American tourists search for "authenticity" during their travels abroad, they often end up acquiring authenticity in the form of goods, cuisine, and experiences which only feign representations of foreign cultures, and they are deliberately created to appeal to the tourists' search for authenticity. In that same vein, it looks at locals' conscious commodification of culture as a means of asserting their agency and capitalizing on tourists' search for "authenticity." In addition, it examines the far-reaching influence of American capital and its manipulation of race, gender, and culture in the context of twentieth-century tourism. It discovers the influence of Cancún's development on the expanding Mexican and Latin American tourist industries. Finally, it looks at the role of tourism and encounters with the "other" in defining gender, race, and transnational identities, thereby making valuable additions to the historical field.

Theory

This dissertation uses several different theoretical perspectives regarding gender, identity, and capitalism. In order to analyze Mexicans' and Americans' transnational identity formation, this study engages identity theory gathered from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities,* which argues that modern nations are merely "imagined communities" of people who may or may not share universal languages, cultures, and values. He interprets the idea of nationalism as a modern phenomenon which unites people by providing them with a shared sense of identity, whether real or imaginary. It also employs identity theory informed by the idea of the construction of "the other," in which a subject separates him or herself from another subject by virtue of difference.[23] In

[23] Numerous scholars, such as Benedict Anderson, Stuart Hall, and Pierre Van Der Berghe, among others, have used this idea in their writings. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* London: Verso, 1983; Stuart Hall, *Questions of Cultural Identity, Sage*

addition, it applies Stuart Hall's theoretical concepts related to cultural identity, in which, while cultural identities may maintain some universal elements, they change constantly and as such, "belong to the future as much as to the past."[24] Gender also plays a substantial role in my analysis of identity formation. This work dissects gendered and racialized representations of the "other" in travel advertisements, films, and television shows in order to deconstruct transnational identity formation. In relationship to travel abroad and interactions with the "exotic other," it explores how investors, planners, advertisers, and hospitality executives employed manipulations of gender, race, and culture in order to attract tourists to Cancún.[25] In order to facilitate the analysis of social constructions of gender, this study also employs theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw's principle of "intersectionality" and bell hooks' theory of an imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy.[26]

Conclusion

The objective of this dissertation is to develop an historical analysis of the role of American culture and imperialism, gender, race, class, and transnational identity on the initial construction and later development of Cancún. It examines Cancún's influence on the development of twentieth-century tourism in Mexico and Latin America. This work makes several important contributions to the history of tourism in Latin America. First, the history of tourism in Latin America is a newly emerging field which is still in need of

---

Publications, 1996; Pierre L. Van Der Berghe, *The Quest for the Other: Ethnic Tourism in San Cristóbal, Mexico,* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.

[24] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation," *Framework* 36 (1989): 70.

[25] Virginia Bouvier (*Women and the Conquest of California, 1542-1840)* and Laura Shelton *(For Tranquility and Order)* have both used gender as a means of analyzing cross-cultural social constructions and encounters with the "exotic other."

[26] Kimberlé Crenshaw's "intersectionality" principle examines the common overlap of race, gender, and class within society. bell hooks' theory also looks at these interlocking systems of oppression and social hierarchy.

further development. Also, there is general lack of studies related to gender and tourism in Latin America. In addition, the historical field is in need of more transnational studies. Overall, it highlights the importance of Cancún's development for Mexico and Latin America, Mexico's 1970s efforts to bring economic growth to impoverished regions through tourism, and its attempts to promote national unity by increasing tourism among Mexican nationals. It examines the rise of middle-class American tourism in Mexico and it serves as a testimony to the potent role of American capital, culture, gender, class, and race in the shaping and development of the Mexican tourism industry in the twentieth century. In addition, it underlines Mexicans' deliberate manipulation of culture into an export good in order to increase personal fortune and promote widespread economic growth. In this way, this study highlights how Mexico and its citizens commodified culture in Cancún, thereby transforming the international tourism industry in Cancún, Mexico, and Latin America as a whole.

Chapter 1: Good Neighbors? U.S. Tourism in Mexico and Culture as Imperialism

"In Mexico, there are good things yet to be obtained; in more developed countries, the good things have already been secured by people who propose to keep them."[27]

Cancún has been American travelers' top choice for international travel for several years in a row according to surveys conducted by online travel search engines such as Travelocity, Orbitz, and Kayak.[28] The vibrant growth in Mexico's tourism industry since the 1970s is due chiefly to Cancún's success. However, in spite of its clear contribution to the growth in Mexico's economy and tourism empire, Cancún remains marginalized among Mexican nationals due to its perceived lack of *mexicanidad.*[29] When asked about Cancún, Adolfo Santiago, an Acapulco hospitality executive, related scornfully, "It's just an arm of the U.S."[30] Tourists also hint at Cancún's apparent lack of *mexicanidad;* however, in contrast to Mexicans' disdain for its American cultural influence, some foreign tourists consider that to be one of Cancún's most attractive qualities. The *Miami Herald* quoted Cancún tourist Jessie P. James as saying, "What do I like about Cancún? It's so much like the U.S. that you might as well be in the U.S."[31]

---

[27] *Notes on Mexico and Her Great Railroad The Mexican Central,* The Mexican Central Railway Company, Mexico City, 1895, DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

[28] "Cancún Named #1 International Destination for Summer Travel," last updated May 25, 2013, accessed October 6, 2013, http://www.investmentpropertiesmexico.com/mexico-real-estate-news-blog/2013/05/cancun-named-1-international-destination-for-summer-travel/; "Cancún Ranks As #1 International Summer Family Vacation Spot on Travelocity 2011 List," last updated May 18, 2011, accessed October 6, 2013, http://cancun.travel/en/2011/05/18/cancun-ranks-as-1-international-summer-family-vacation-spot-on-travelocity-2011-list/; "Cancún Rated #1 International Travel Destination on 2012 Orbitz Summer Index Travel Report," last updated June 15, 2012, accessed October 6, 2013, http://cancun.travel/en/2012/06/15/cancun-rated-1-international-travel-destination-on-2012-orbitz-summer-index-travel-report/.

[29] *Mexicanidad,* or "Mexicanness," is a term which refers to the degree to which something or someone embodies Mexico's cultural identity.

[30] Barbara Kastelein, "The Beach and Beyond: Observations from a Travel Writer on Dreams, Decadence, and Defense," in Dina Berger and Andrew Grant, eds. *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourist Encounters* (Duke University Press, 2010), 322.

[31] Rebecca Torres and Janet Henshall Momsen, "Gringolandia: Cancún and the American Tourist," in Nicholas Dagen Bloom, ed. *Adventures Into Mexico: American Tourism Beyond the Border* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 64.

The transformation of Cancún into an American-friendly tourism space is couched in a larger historical context related to national identity formation of both foreign guests and domestic hosts, the state-led modern transformation of Mexico's tourism industry, and the standardization of hospitality accommodations.

In order to attract tourists, the Mexican state customized its tourism industry to standards for accommodations and modes of transportation which would be palatable to foreigners—and since Mexico is adjacent to the U.S.—this meant customizing those standards to American tastes. At the turn of the twentieth century, foreign tourists visiting Mexico City generally complained about the accommodations in even the most popular hotels. Among the most common grievances were a dislike of the hotels' shoddy furniture and the lack of hot water.[32] In the early twentieth century, the state set stringent licensing regulations for hotels and restaurants which were geared to meeting American tourists' expectations of standards for hospitality, made similar improvements in its transportation systems, and excavated national treasures at Teotihuacán, Chichén Itza, and many other locations. However, before the formal regulation of Mexico's tourism industry by the post-revolutionary state in the 1920s onward, under President Porfirio Díaz in the late nineteenth century the state made significant efforts to attract travelers to Mexico. Díaz was the first national leader to engage in a national excavation project of an archaeological site when he granted the permits to uncover the Pyramids at Teotihuacán, and he also led the expansion of the railroad system in Mexico, which proved to be essential to increasing travel to Mexico in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although most of these travelers came to Mexico for business

[32] Arturo César Castilllo, "Travelling in Mexico 1900," *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin*, Mexico City, December 1944, DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, 2.

purposes during the Porfiriato, there were occasional pleasure tourists who came to Mexico to observe its natural beauty, mingle with Mexican nationals, and immerse themselves in a foreign culture.

In the past two centuries, the frequency of international travel has increased dramatically. In the nineteenth century, due to the prohibitive cost of spare time and money of leisure travel, it was an activity reserved almost exclusively for the extremely wealthy. Scientists, soldiers, businessmen, and missionaries also traveled around the globe, but they traveled out of necessity rather than pleasure. Even by the turn of the twentieth century, less than one quarter of one percent of Americans engaged in ocean-bound foreign travel.[33] Social movements in the early twentieth century around the globe led to the vast expansion of the middle class. As a result, members of the middle class had more leisure time and more disposable income than ever, and they often spent it on travel. Rapid advances in transportation also contributed to the expansion of the leisure tourist class. Changes in technology led to a swift transformation of transportation networks and the tourism industry. Railroads, automobiles, propeller planes, and then jets all contributed to the immense and rapid expansion of tourism as a viable commercial industry. These developments proved to be especially gratuitous for countries in the Global South like Mexico which, due to slow, uncomfortable, and often unreliable modes of transportation, had previously been considered inaccessible by foreigners. Therefore, the population of global "tourists" transformed during this period. While tourism—especially international leisure travel—was once an activity enjoyed almost solely by the

[33] Thomas Weiss, "Americans Traveling Overseas and Foreign Visitors to the United States: 1820–2000," in *Historical Statistics of the United States, Earliest Times to the Present: Millennial Edition,* ed. Susan B. Carter et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 319-326.

rich, it now extends to the world's middle class population. Consequently, Americans in 2009 were nearly ten times more likely to travel to Europe than Americans in 1900.[34]

Throughout the process of Mexico's twentieth-century state-led tourism projects, the Mexican state simultaneously reflected the contemporary trends related to national identity formation as well as shaped them in new ways according to what the tourism market, and hence, tourists, demanded. In this way, primarily American consumers of Mexico's cultural products (the products in this case being tourism and the many ways in which tourism manifested itself through transportation, hospitality, entertainment, and other related industries) in the form of American tourists made a direct impact on the formation of Mexico's national identity in the twentieth century. Thus, tourism also served as a means for the U.S. to wield what Dennis Merrill calls "soft power," or cultural imperialism.[35] As Mexico became increasingly dependent on American tourist dollars and tailored its tourism market primarily to American tastes and standards, in the process, tourist spaces became "Americanized" to directly reflect American tourists' cultural and economic dominance. Therefore, even as relations between the two nations improved over time, the nature of their relationship was not a truly equal partnership, but rather a relationship dependent on Mexico (and Mexicans) as the product, shaped by American cultural and economic imperialism, and the U.S. as its primary consumer. In that same vein, this demonstrates Emily Rosenberg's assertion that in the first half of the twentieth century, the U.S. wielded cultural influence throughout Latin American in order

---

[34] Weiss, "Americans Traveling Overseas."
[35] Dennis Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America*, University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

to gain more political and economic dominance in the region.[36] This chapter reflects that concept through an examination of the rise in American tourism to Mexico in the context of improved and increased cultural exchanges between the U.S. and Mexico from the late nineteenth century through the 1950s.

Mexican business owners, hoteliers, and hospitality workers navigated the formation and expression of their own identities as they complied with the changes in the standardization of hospitality as determined by the state and according to American tastes and standards. The new criteria of quality and service which tourists demanded and the Mexican state subsequently set and regulated ultimately transformed the way in which Mexico's citizens understood themselves and their country in relationship to the tourism industry and their foreign neighbors. Within a matter of decades, hospitality service emerged as one of Mexico's biggest exports. This made a vast impact on the way in which Mexico conducted business. In addition, it also had a formidable influence on Mexico's foreign policy with the U.S., as Mexico increasingly came to define itself—especially in relationship to Americans—as "good neighbors," in spite of its seemingly unequal partnership with the U.S. This offered a contrast to earlier instances of strong anti-American sentiments reflected by the Mexican people throughout the Mexican Revolution, as well as some protectionist policies which were put in place by the Mexican government in some of its post-revolutionary state-building projects. As a result of this revolutionary change in Mexico's national identity formation, rhetoric and imagery which lends itself to the Good Neighbor Policy (1933) persisted in print advertisements through the remainder of the twentieth century. This occurred as Mexico

---

[36] Emily Rosenberg, S*preading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945*, Hill and Wang, 1982.

and its citizens endured in their understanding of themselves as good friends and neighbors, especially when it came to the welcoming of foreigners and all of their tourist dollars.

Since Cancún endures in its status as the "least Mexican" of Mexico's international tourist destinations, as well as its most successful one, it stands out as both a powerful symbol of American cultural imperialism as well as the shift in Mexico's national identity, as Mexico and its citizens continue to negotiate the degree to which they will surrender their *mexicanidad* to the ever-looming influence of American tourist dollars. Despite the influence of American cultural norms on standards of service, quality, and accommodations, though, Mexicans have overwhelmingly continued to celebrate their own pride in their national identity, often by highlighting their indigenous identity. However, the state has varied over time in its choice of which Indians to celebrate—whether those of the past, the present, or both. While during the Porfiriato, the Díaz regime often marginalized the contemporary indigenous populations but reveled in the glorious lineage of Mexico's Aztec heritage, the post-revolutionary state made efforts to emphasize Mexico's indigenous identity in both past and present terms, and often did so as a means of attracting tourists. This was part of broader attempts by the state to re-define Mexico's heritage from regrettably and only marginally indigenous under Díaz to *mestizo* under the post-revolutionary state, and proudly so. In that same vein, Mexican hoteliers, business owners, workers, and state representatives recognized that in order to appeal to foreign tourists and their incessant search for the "exotic other" in their travels, it was to their advantage to differentiate themselves from Americans and other westerners. This reality is clearly reflected through tourism advertisements and

brochures from the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century. Thus, from nearly half a century of state-led tourism projects emerged a Mexico which was newly dependent on American tourism and its own national identity as a "friendly neighbor" to Americans for economic growth, since tourism arose as a leading generator of Mexico's GDP in the latter half of the twentieth century. In addition, Mexico came to define itself as a *mestizo* nation, and part of the manifestation of that identity lies couched in Mexico's need to attract tourists to a nation of "exotic others." Thus, framed by competing interests and interactions between foreign tourists and domestic hosts, the international tourism industry and its market demands played a central role in the shaping of Mexico's national identity throughout the post-revolutionary period.

In the twentieth century, the U.S. and Mexico wavered in their degree of friendliness toward one another. While through most of the nineteenth century, diplomatic relations were shaky, they later warmed during the Porfiriato (1876-1910) as Mexico welcomed foreign investors with open arms. However, relations again chilled during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), especially as the U.S. intervened in the war. In the post-revolutionary years, the revolutionary elites envisioned a national economy dominated by them, along with a major role for U.S. capital. With a rising interest among Americans in Mexican art and culture in the ensuing decades, as well as Franklin D. Roosevelt's announcement of the Good Neighbor Policy in 1933, the relationship between the U.S. and Mexico continued to thaw. Transnational cultural exchanges through visual art production, film, radio, and literature increased, and media representations of Mexico and its inhabitants became more favorable. As a result, the American public's perception of Mexico and its citizens improved, as well. During this

same period of time, Mexico began to increasingly rely on American tourist dollars as a valuable source of economic growth, and its positive diplomatic relationship with the U.S. became progressively important as a result. Throughout this process, Americans' interactions with Mexicans, whether through their trips to Mexico or their consumption of culture, American tourists defined themselves differently than they had in the past in relationship to the Mexican "other." Over time, as the diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and Mexico changed, so did American citizens' identities in relationship to their Mexican neighbors. While in the nineteenth century, Americans overwhelmingly identified as intrinsically superior to Mexicans due to the palpable influence of social Darwinism, by the early twentieth century, those attitudes began to shift, and Americans viewed Mexicans in a more positive light. By the 1920s and 1930s, it became fashionable to study Spanish, travel to Mexico, and consume Mexican handicrafts, literature, music, art, and other cultural forms.[37] This shift in American identity in relation to American citizens' embrace of Mexico, its culture, and its people, proved to be essential in the rise of Mexico's international tourism industry in the twentieth century. As a result, more Americans were willing to cross the border to Mexico in large part due to these changes in their imaginations of Mexico and its people. Identity politics on both sides of the border, then, in line with cultural changes throughout the twentieth century, were incredibly important to the growth of the tourism sector in Mexico.

Nineteenth Century Travels

Prior to the rapid growth of Mexico's tourism industry in the twentieth century, foreign travel to Mexico was exceptionally rare, even among members of the upper class.

---

[37] Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935*, The University of Alabama Press, 1992.

Before Mexican independence, foreign travel to New Spain was expressly prohibited by the Spanish government, presumably to prevent any potential hostile takeovers of their colony (although they could never actually control this completely). Some foreign visitors were even arrested for being on Mexican soil.[38] The independence movements throughout Latin America in the nineteenth century loosened travel restrictions, and as a result, foreign travel to the region increased. Mexico and Brazil, which were the largest and most heavily populated countries in Latin America, received the most foreign visitors, followed by Argentina and Peru. Due to its proximity to the U.S., Cuba also drew a considerable number of American tourists. Even so, the nineteenth century saw only nominal gains in tourism around the world. Most tourists during this time were extremely wealthy and from industrialized countries such as the U.S. and countries in Europe, although scientists, missionaries, merchants, and military men were also part of the global "traveling class" during this time period.[39] While the number of American tourists who traveled across the ocean increased ten-fold from 11,300 in 1850 to 124,100 in 1900, those numbers still represented an extremely small percentage of the entire U.S. population.[40] The percentage of Americans traveling overseas doubled between 1860 and 1900, but the number of tourists traveling across the ocean in 1900 represented only 0.16 percent of the population.[41] Even by the late nineteenth century, despite the increasing

---

[38] Andrea Boardman, *Destination Mexico: A Foreign Land A Step Away, U.S. Tourism to Mexico, 1880s-1950s*, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, 2001, 18.
[39] June Edith Hahner, *Women Through Women's Eyes: Latin American Women in Nineteenth-Century Travel Accounts* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), xii.
[40] Weiss, "Americans Traveling Overseas."
[41] Ibid.

popularity of Latin America as a travel destination among Americans, most of these tourists still favored Europe over any other foreign destination.[42]

When Mexico declared independence from Spain in 1810, the newly founded country opened its borders to foreign travelers. Many foreigners—principally American businessmen—began infiltrating the northwest region of Mexico's territory in order to take advantage of its numerous underexploited natural resources and commercial trade opportunities. Many American merchants and fur traders settled in Santa Fe and Taos to trade along the Santa Fe and Chihuahua Trails. Later, lumber, fur, tallow, and hide exporters moved westward to San Diego and Monterey to set up shop in Mexico's California territory. Even more Americans bought homesteads in Coahuila and Tejas and invested in land, livestock and farming there. They also traveled to Matamoros, Tampico, Monterrey, and Saltillo to work as hacienda managers and journeymen. For in-depth legal matters, they traveled to Mexico City, where many U.S. investors and diplomats were already involved in Mexico's political and economic matters.[43] By the 1870s, as the railroad continued to expand in Mexico, railway companies openly encouraged Protestant missionaries to infiltrate Mexican territory since the Mexican government under President Benito Júarez had formally ended the exclusive reign of the Catholic Church in 1855.[44] Moreover, the Emperor Maximilian (1864-1867) welcomed foreign settlers with open arms and even provided substantial subsidies for travel expenses as an incentive to travel to Mexico, live there, and presumably invest capital in its industries.[45] By the mid-

---

[42] H.W. Brands, *American Colossus: The Triumph of Capitalism, 1865-1900,* (Anchor, 2011), 608.
[43] Boardman, *Destination Mexico,* 18.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Benjamin Duval, *A Narrative of Life and Travels in Mexico and British Honduras,* W. F. Brown & Company, Boston, 1879, DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, 9.

nineteenth century, then, many Americans had begun to venture into Mexican territory, primarily for commercial investment purposes.

In addition to American businessmen, Mexico also attracted soldier-tourists inside its borders. During the U.S.-Mexico War (1846-1848), U.S. troops temporarily occupied Matamoros, Monterrey, Saltillo, Veracruz, Jalapa, Puebla, and Mexico City. Many American soldiers wrote about their travels to Mexico, during which they climbed ruins, went to markets, visited shrines and churches, and interacted with Mexican citizens.[46] American soldier-tourists wrote about their experiences seeing Puebla's grand cathedral, viewing giant mountains near the Gulf of Mexico, climbing the Popocatéptl, and seeing the great volcano at the rim of the Valley of Mexico.[47] Records of American soldiers' Mexican travel experiences demonstrate a significant shift in U.S. travel to Mexico, since travel accounts demonstrate foreigners' interests in not only the opportunities for business, vocation, or evangelism in Mexico, but for pleasure, as well.

Despite the instances of soldiers, evangelists, and businessmen travelling to Mexico, travel solely for leisure among Americans and other foreigners was still extremely scarce throughout the nineteenth century. Mexico was generally characterized by political instability during this period, and state promotions of tourism to Mexico were non-existent.[48] Following its establishment of independence in 1821, Mexico underwent decades of turmoil and violence in the U.S.-Mexico border region as Mexico struggled to defend its territory against U.S. expansionism. To start, Texas declared independence

---

[46] Boardman, *Destination Mexico,* 18.
Andrea Boardman, "The U.S.-Mexican War and the Beginnings of American Tourism in Mexico," in Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood, eds., *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourist Encounters* (Duke University Press, 2010).
[47] Boardman, "The U.S.-Mexican War," 21.
[48] Most scholars agree that political instability reigned in Mexico from the time of Independence (1810-1821) until the beginning of the Porfiriato (1876-1910).

from Mexico through the Treaty of Velasco in 1836. Later, the U.S.-Mexico War (1846-1848) culminated in the U.S.'s acquisition of nearly half of Mexico's territory through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 and the Gadsden Purchase in 1853.[49] Throughout the 1850s raids and unlawful invasions of territory ensued on both sides of the border, with Mexicans usually enduring the majority of the attacks.[50] Then, between 1864 and 1867 the nation was in the throes of adjusting to a new government system under Emperor Maximilian's short-lived reign. Mexico enjoyed a period of political stability—relative to its particularly violent past throughout most of the nineteenth century—when Porfirio Díaz rose to power in 1876. His regime fervently encouraged foreign investment from the U.S. and other "civilized" western nations as a core element of his economic policies toward "progress." In order to achieve this, Díaz endorsed the promotion of a positive image abroad by establishing peace with the U.S. and mitigating civil unrest at home.

In addition to Mexico's general atmosphere of political uncertainty throughout most of the nineteenth century, travel was difficult, expensive, and slow throughout Mexico. The construction of Mexico's now extensive railroad system was still in its infancy even by the end of the nineteenth century.[51] Without an adequate supply of upper and middle-class travelers who would be able to afford extensive long-distance travel (whether foreigners or Mexican nationals), there was no impetus for establishing any

---

[49] Oscar J. Martínez, ed. *U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives.* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1996), 45.
[50] Martínez, *U.S.-Mexico Borderlands,* 45.
[51] For more reading on the history of Mexico's railroad systems, see: John H. Coatsworth, *Growth Against Development: The Economic Impact of Railroads in Porfirian Mexico,* Northern Illinois University Press, 1981; Michael Matthews, *The Civilizing Machine: A Cultural History of Mexican Railroads, 1876-1910,* University of Nebraska Press, 2014; Teresa Van Hoy, *A Social History of Mexico's Railroads: Peons, Prisoners, and Priests,* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008.

broad state-run tourism promotions, as such efforts would certainly fail to reach an expansive enough audience to yield healthy profits. Most travelers of this era who ventured to Mexico out of pure curiosity were of the wealthy upper class, as they were the few who had both the luxury of time and disposable income to do so. Due to a general lack of fast and affordable transportation, an international trip between the U.S. and Mexico could take several weeks or months. Unless there was a pressing need to travel for work, American members of the middle class and working class rarely traveled long distances, and certainly not for pleasure. In the case of the soldier-tourists, in addition to businessmen, politicians, and Protestant preachers, they traveled to Mexico out of their obligation or calling to be there. During Porfirio Díaz's presidency at the end of the nineteenth century, however, the Mexican state initiated efforts to attract tourists as a means of promoting economic development and building national pride in the beauty and vastness of Mexico's natural attractions.

Tourism and the Porfiriato: Open the Floodgates to Modernity

"In brief, it is my conviction that man, the animal, like other living things, attains the highest development in the tropics. The perfected race of the future will appear in those latitudes."[52]
-Frederick Boyle

Although the Díaz regime's state-run tourism efforts were not as large in scale as the grand tourism institutions established later by the Mexican government in the twentieth century, his administration nonetheless made concerted state-run efforts to attract foreign travelers to Mexico which were unprecedented at the time. Díaz's establishment of political order, his successful construction of an extensive railway system, as well as his provision of ample business opportunities for foreign investors

[52] *Notes on Mexico*, 32.

proved to be key elements in the attraction of American tourists to Mexico during the Porfiriato (1876-1880 and 1884-1910). As a result, by the end of the Porfiriato in 1910, a substantial community of twenty-one thousand American residents lived permanently in Mexico, when the total population of the country was around 15 million.[53] When Porfirio Díaz became president of Mexico in 1876, the political stability he brought to Mexico for the first time since Mexican independence was vital to his ability to attract foreign investment.[54] Throughout the Porfiriato, Díaz promoted economic policies which endorsed the attraction of foreign capital to Mexico, primarily from the U.S., as crucial to the modernization of Mexico.[55] He was so committed to his belief that foreign investment should be the primary stimulus toward Mexico's economic development that as a means to attract foreign capitalists, his regime granted automatic citizenship rights to any foreigner who acquired real estate in Mexico and any foreigner who had a child born in Mexico.[56] As a result, his positivist motto of "order and progress" led to an average annual growth rate of eight percent per year between 1884 and 1900.[57] However, despite Mexico's substantial economic growth during this period, most of those who benefitted from Mexico's economic development during the Porfiriato were Mexican elites and foreign investors—particularly Americans. In fact, by 1910, on the eve of the Mexican Revolution, "foreign agriculture businesses controlled fourteen of the sixteen largest

---

[53] Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican,* 1.
[54] David E. Lorey, *The U.S.-Mexican Border in the Twentieth Century: A History of Economic and Social Transformation,* Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999, 36.
[55] The Porfiriato is the period of time during which Porfirio Díaz remained president of Mexico, between 1876 and 1910.
[56] *Facts and Figures about Mexico.* Mexican Central Railway, Mexico City, 1903. DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, 67.
[57] "Positivism" embodied political and economic policies which promoted economic growth through foreign investment. It was commonly practiced in Latin America at the turn of the twentieth century. The positivist motto was "Order and Progress." Martínez, *U.S.-Mexico Borderlands,* xvi; Lorey, *The U.S.-Mexico Border,* 45.

farming, processing, and marketing companies and between ninety-five and ninety-six percent of the total capital."[58] Furthermore, during this period Americans acquired about 130 million acres of Mexican land, which represents more than twenty-seven percent of Mexico's entire land surface.[59] American investors were particularly interested in buying up land and investing capital in Mexico's northern states, undoubtedly due to its close proximity to U.S. territory. In effect, investment was so heavily concentrated in the north that in 1910, approximately one-fourth of the American capital invested in Mexico was concentrated in Coahuila, Nuevo León, Chihuahua, and Sonora.[60]

As a result of foreign investment, railroads, mining, ranching, and agriculture expanded in the area and border towns emerged as important trade, transportation, and migration centers.[61] Population growth accelerated along the railroads, and Díaz established a *zona libre*, or "free zone" of free trade in which consumers were allowed to purchase goods duty-free within twelve miles of the border, in the Sonora border region in 1885.[62] In the *zona libre*, many Sonorans crossed to the American side to purchase the bulk of their consumer goods. In addition, Americans crossed to the Mexican side of the border to buy Parisian fashions, vegetables, fruits, and other foods.[63] According to historian Oscar Martínez, "For many *norteños*, progress and modernization became synonymous with commercial ties to the U.S."[64] Thus, Mexican citizens, who became highly influenced by Díaz's belief in foreign investment in pursuit of modernity,

---

[58] John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution*, University of California Press, 1987, 159.
[59] Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico*, 158.
[60] Martínez, *U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*, xvi.
[61] Ibid., 85.
[62] Lawrence A. Herzog, "U.S.-Mexican Border: Border Urbanism," in Michael S. Werner, ed., *Concise Encyclopedia of Mexico*, Taylor & Francis, 2001, 778.
[63] Martínez, *U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*, 89.
[64] Ibid., 87.

enthusiastically participated in trade with Americans. Commercial trade, particularly in the northern border region, was crucial to the establishment of improved U.S.-Mexico relations under Díaz.

In order to encourage travel to Mexico and throughout the country (as well as the transportation of goods), Díaz pushed heavily for foreign investment in the Mexican Central Railway. As a result of his success in gaining international monetary support, in 1884, just eight years after Díaz's initial rise to power, Mexico completed its Central Railway. By 1903, Mexico had seven thousand miles of track, and the Central Railway consisted of nearly three thousand of those miles.[65] The railroad's inauguration marked another significant shift in economic and social relations between the U.S. and Mexico, as they distanced themselves further from the tense relationship they had endured since the U.S.-Mexico War, especially in the borderlands.[66] The ability for citizens to travel more quickly between the U.S. and Mexico through the railroad eased tensions between the two nations and caused an increase in American travel to Mexico for both pleasure and business. For the first time ever, Americans could travel long-distance to Mexico in a matter of days rather than weeks or months; trains connected far away northern cities such as Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C. to Mexico City.[67]

In explaining the history of tourism in the U.S., Cindy S. Aron attributes the increase in post-Civil War travel among Americans to railway expansion, but she also demonstrates that increased disposable income and the emergence of travel agents who advised potential vacationers of the most desirable travel destinations and also assisted

---

[65] *Facts and Figures about Mexico.* 9-11.
[66] Jason Ruiz, *Americans in the Treasure House: Travel to Porfirian Mexico and the Cultural Politics of Empire*, University of Texas Press, 2014, 5.
[67] Ruiz, *Americans in the Treasure House*, 5.

tourists in making reservations for transportation and housing led to these changes.[68] As a result, Americans traveled to natural attractions such as Niagara Falls and Yellowstone Park at increasing rates, as well as health spas in Europe, as health and educational trips were particularly fashionable at the time. In comparison, only a small percentage of tourists followed the railroad expansion into the Southwest and Mexico.[69] Nevertheless, despite the general impetus in travel among Americans, international travel in particular continued to remain an activity reserved mostly for members of the upper class. While many middle-class Americans did increase their travel within the U.S. upon nineteenth-century railway expansion, most did not venture beyond national borders, as the cost of traveling to foreign lands continued to be prohibitive for most average citizens. Even by the turn of the twentieth century, only a mere 100,000 Americans (out of 75 million) traveled abroad, most of whom were wealthy.[70]

Shortly after its opening, the Mexican Central Railway quickly gained a positive reputation among American travelers who did venture to Mexico. As is common even now, railway companies and other companies related to the tourism industry frequently arranged for journalists to travel to Mexico and then write about their adventures in order to entice more travelers to tour there. In 1884, one travel writer by the name of J. Margati published a short book, *A Trip to the City of Mexico,* in order to describe his travels to Mexico via the newly opened railroad. Margati noted the importance of the Mexican Central Railway to the increase of American travel to Mexico, stating,

---

[68] Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 138.
[69] Rosalie Schwartz, *Flying Down to Rio: Hollywood, Tourists, and the Yankee Clippers,* Texas A&M University Press, 2004, 25.
[70] Schwartz, *Flying Down to Rio,* 90.

> Mexico is now accessible as she has never been before…she invites every comer from the United States…asking for no passports and making no inquiries. The country has heretofore presented many obstacles to even the adventurous American traveler; it has been fenced in by rocky barriers, mountain chains and immense distances more impassible than any sea, by lack of information concerning it, and by all differences of race, language and custom. It was, moreover, the land of countless revolutions and political uncertainties, where the bandit or highway robber held triumphant sway. This has all been so far changed since the completion of the Mexican Central railroad.[71]

Margati also cited the inauguration of the Mexican Central Railway as evidence of Mexico's impending blossom into a developed and "civilized" democratic nation, stating, "Education and the railways will develop a middle class, the poverty of the masses will be ameliorated, popular elections will be something more than a form, a true system of local representation in Congress will be obtained, the army will cease to be the chief power in the State, and Mexico will become in reality a republic."[72] Furthermore, according to Margati, Díaz associated the opening of the railway with progress, knowing that "[the railways] mean[t] the intercourse of Mexicans with men of Northern civilizations…and a pressure of modern ideas on the higher classes too powerful to be resisted."[73] In this way, according to Margati, Díaz and his elite Mexican contemporaries equated the railroad with modernity and linked its launch to an inevitable increase in social interaction with Americans. In line with Díaz's positivist vantage point, the social intercourse with Americans and other wealthy foreigners translated to an influx of capital in Mexico's industries and infrastructure, which was the key to progress and development for Mexico as a nation. Thus, commercial relations with Americans served to define the

---

[71] J. Margati, *A Trip to the City of Mexico,* Salem, Massachusetts, 1884, DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, 85.
[72] Margati, *A Trip to the City of Mexico,* 79.
[73] Ibid.,78.

Porfirian rhetoric related to Mexico's national identity—at least, from the perspective of Díaz and his colleagues, financial ties to American capital and businessmen were not only important for the economic advancement of the nation, but for the way in which Mexicans defined and understood themselves. For Porfirians, a positive relationship with the U.S. was necessary for progress in Mexico, and it came to define their identity as modern Mexicans as they understood it.

Following the opening of the Mexican Central Railway, as American travel to Mexico became easier, quicker, and therefore, more frequent, the number of Americans traveling to Mexico for business trips increased and as a result, foreign capital investment in Mexico and its resources flourished. To increase sales, railway companies framed travel to Mexico as fashionable, as brochures equated travel to Mexico with being "progressive" and "original," stating, "the tourist…should not content himself with a sheeplike *(sic)* following of the common herd [and instead travel to Mexico]."[74] This brochure aimed to persuade travelers to reject the more usual choice of Europe, and in particular, France, as American social elites particularly favored traveling to Paris via luxury steam liners in the spring. They also enjoyed the northern French seaside resorts in the summer, and they most commonly toured the French Riviera in the winter.[75] The construction of the railroad in Mexico was essential to not only the increase of travel for pleasure, but business as well. Railway companies took full advantage of the links between their enterprise and international passengers' commercial interests. For example, The Mexican Central Railway featured various routes with opportunities to

---

[74] *Mexico: A Souvenir Album*, The Mexican Central Railway Company, Mexico City, 1890s, DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.
[75] Schwartz, *Flying Down to Rio*, 90.

view mining operations along the way to and from Mexico City.[76] During the Porfiriato, the subsoil land ownership rights shifted to the federal government rather than to individual states. Therefore, the Díaz regime was able to grant privileges to foreign mining companies, many of which were owned and operated by American citizens.[77] Incidentally, by 1902, U.S. companies also controlled eighty percent of Mexican railroad stock, so American capital investors benefitted greatly from the rapid upsurge in American travel to Mexico following the completion of the Central Mexican Railway.[78]

Railway companies marketed heavily to capital investors by providing ample information in their brochures not only about the features of their railway service, but also factual information related to capital investment in Mexico, including the country's primary natural resources, crops, labor costs, and climate conditions. The companies published brochures which often cited the low cost of labor and land, President Díaz's establishment of public safety and political stability, the fertility of Mexico's unused land, as well as the convenience and affordability of railway transportation to and from Mexico as primary motivations for moving one's capital investments to Mexico.[79] One Mexican Central Railway brochure from 1902 stated that the seamen of Lake Chapala earned the same wage of $1.50 per trip across the lake or $2.50 round-trip, whether the voyage took them one day or several weeks, since according to the pamphlet, "time is of

---

[76] *In Mexico with the Special Trains,* 1901, DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, 40. This pamphlet describes a visit to the Santa Gertrudis mine in the state of Hidalgo. There is no mention of who owned the mine at the time—only that it had produced $25,000,000 pesos of silver between 1878 and 1901. The railway provided its passengers with a tour of the mine and informational brochures.

[77] *The Mexican Central Railway and Connections,* The Mexican Central Railway Company, Mexico City, 1894, DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

[78] Lorey. *The U.S.-Mexican Border,* 40; John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico Since the Civil War,* University of California Press, 2002, 122.

[79] *Facts and Figures about Mexico; Notes on Mexico;* James L. King, *Mexico in Glimpses,* The Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway, 1903, DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas; *Nueva Galicia: A Subtropical Switzerland,* The Mexican Central Railway Company, Mexico City, 1902, DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

no value in these precincts."[80] In this brochure, the railway blatantly presented the Mexican peasants' alleged devaluation of time as a selling point to the American capitalist in search of cheap labor. Another booklet from 1903 stated more plainly, "You pay Mexican silver for Mexican land and labor, and you are paid in gold for whatever you export from Mexico."[81] The commercial ties were so strong between capital investment and railway transportation that the Mexican Central Railway created an Industrial Department which arranged to bring sellers and buyers together at no additional cost to either party.[82] The Central Railway explained the importance of the link between transportation and capital investment by stating, "The railway company…wants more stuff to transport, and hence its desire to have the country developed along its [railway] lines. Every new home established, every new enterprise undertaken, every additional acre put under civilization along its lines, means an *increase of business."*[83] Clearly, capital investment and railway development were intensely linked during the Porfiriato. The Central Railway's fervent efforts to draw more foreign investors through its brochures and its complimentary match-maker service for buyers and sellers demonstrate the magnitude of those relationships and the lengths at which the company was willing to go in order to extinguish competition from other railway companies and other forms of transportation.

Steamship companies also benefitted from the completion of the Mexican Central Railway system, and they made efforts to promote tourism of all kinds, with—in line with the railway companies—a particular emphasis on commercial tourism. The

---

[80] *Nueva Galicia,* 8.
[81] *Facts and Figures about Mexico,* 83.
[82] Ibid., 11-12.
[83] Ibid., 13.

Mexican American Steamship Company, which ran ships between New Orleans, Veracruz, and Tampico, promoted tourism packages which included connections to the Mexican Central Railway. Similarly to railway brochures at the time, the Mexican American Steamship Company's tourism pamphlets also highlighted commercial interests as primary motivations for travel to Mexico and underscored the industries related to coffee, cotton, corn, banana, wheat, sugarcane, fishing, opal mining, salt mining, silver mining, and smelting as principle points of interests for foreign travelers.[84]

In efforts to promote a modern image of Mexico abroad and therefore attract more passengers, travel companies marketed Mexico under the Díaz regime as a progressive nation. In their brochures, transportation companies hailed Díaz for his determined positivist vision and his pivotal role in Mexico's advancements toward progress and civilization. Travel writer J. Margati boldly deemed Díaz "the hope of Mexico" and "the most popular man in Mexico."[85] In addition, travel companies portrayed Mexico's intimate ties to its American neighbor and other "developed" western nations as pivotal to its growth. As evidence of Mexico's march toward progress, travel brochures featured detailed descriptions of the "modern" amenities available at hotels in Mexico, such as candles, iron beds, fresh linens, and towels. Meanwhile, hotel staff performed bell boy, chambermaid, shoeshine, porter, and messenger services. Thus, according to an 1896 brochure published by the American Tourist Association Publication Bureau, in Mexico, "the resemblance to the American hotel is complete."[86] In fact, comparisons to American

---

[84] *The New Route to Mexico via New Orleans: The Mexican American Steamship Company in Connection with The Mexican Central Railway via Tampico and The Mexican Railway Inter-Oceanic Railway via Veracruz*, Woodward & Tiernan Printing Company, St. Louis, 1900s, DLSC: Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.
[85] Margati, *A Trip to the City of Mexico*, 78.
[86] *Vamos a Mexico*, 56.

standards were a key element of persuasion which companies used in travel brochures at the time. One brochure by the Rock Island Railway Company of Chicago brazenly equated modernity with the "Americanization" of Mexico, stating,

> Changes are rapidly taking place, the ancient is giving way to the modern, and eventually Mexico will wear a new face…This transfiguration is already noticeable to some extent in the cities, which are fast becoming Americanized. In the City of Mexico, Guadalajara, Puebla, Monterey, Chihuahua and others of the larger municipalities the principal industries and branches of business are in the hands of Americans, Frenchmen, and Germans.[87]

These comparisons offer a window into the way in which Americans, American companies, and the U.S. as a nation understood themselves in relationship to Mexico. The Rock Island Railway Company wholly credits foreigners—not Mexicans—with the visible changes occurring in Mexico at the time. This demonstrates a clear self-distinction on the part of Americans between themselves, the modern, sophisticated westerners, and the archaic, backwards Mexican "other."

In that same vein, travel companies and travel writers also made comparisons between Mexico and Europe to highlight the perceived magnitude of Mexico's rise to modernity, although seeing Mexico's newfound progress as being owed to westerners and their newfound presence there. The ads also served as a reflection of Díaz's affinity for Europe and western culture and the influence of those ideas on agents of the tourism industry in their attempts to market Mexico as a desirable travel destination. When the Mexican Central Railway opened its new line to the Western Sierra in 1902, its brochure christened the region as "Nueva Galicia" in homage to the nation's Spanish ancestry. In addition, the company described it as a "sub-tropical Switzerland" due to the abundance

---

[87] King, *Mexico in Glimpses,* 9.

of lakes, mountains, and rivers in the region.[88] Similarly, the Mexican American Steamship Company described the mountainous trip from San Luis Potosi to Tampico as the "Swiss scenes of Mexico."[89] In this way, transportation companies made attempts to draw on American desires to experience the natural beauty of Mexico's Old World charm while still experiencing the modernity of the New World by comparing Mexico to Europe. At the turn of the twentieth century, Europe presented an attractive vacation destination for Americans who traveled abroad—it was clean, modern, cultured, and most of its inhabitants looked like themselves. Railway companies attempted to put Americans' minds at ease by highlighting Mexico's steps toward modernity, underlining Mexicans' European heritage, and comparing the beauty of Mexico's land with European tourism destinations like the Swiss Alps which were already familiar to American tourists.

While tourism promoters commonly likened Mexico to modern and innovative nations in order to attract foreign travelers, they also drew on the mysticism and romanticism of its ancient past for a similar purpose. In order to compete with the international elite's affinity for European heritage, Mexico highlighted its pre-Hispanic past, especially its Aztec lineage, by presenting it as unparalleled in hemispheric political power and cultural splendor. The Díaz regime often publicized Mexico as a great ancient civilization equal to Egypt, Greece, and Rome in order to entice foreign investors. One such display on the world stage occurred at the 1889 Paris World's Fair, where Mexico's exhibit featured the nation's most impressive and distinct artifacts, including the giant

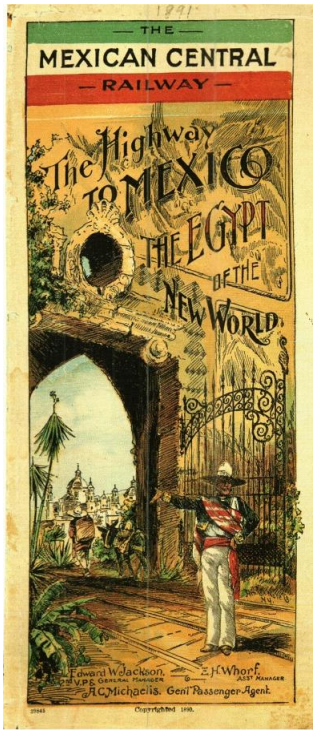
---

[88] *Nueva Galicia,* 16.
[89] *The New Route to Mexico via New Orleans,* 2.

Aztec Calendar Stone.[90] Likewise, one of Díaz' principal projects to highlight the longevity of Mexico's ancient traditions was the excavation of the great pyramids of Teotihuacán in the Valley of Mexico.[91] Teotihuacán was the nation's first official archaeological site and the Díaz regime initiated its excavation in preparation for the centennial celebration of Mexico's independence in September of 1910. This event, combined with the unveiling of the newly excavated pyramids at Teotihuacán, attracted visitors from all over the world. By undertaking this project, Díaz aimed to forge an image of national unity and prestige by promoting Mexico as the Egypt of the Americas.[92] Similarly, railway companies often capitalized on the comparison between Mexico and Egypt as a marketing tactic in their brochures. Promoters for the Mexican Central Railway exploited this imagery in a brochure from 1890, which describes the rail system as the highway to Mexico, "the Egypt of the New World."

---

[90] Christina Bueno, "Teotihuacán: Showcase for the Centennial," in Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood, eds., *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourist Encounters*, Duke University Press, 2010, 55.
[91] Bueno,"Teotihuacán," 55.
[92] Ibid., 54.



Mexican Central Railway Company brochure, 1890 [93]

In the brochure, the company emphasizes the convenience and thrill of being able to travel to see ancient ruins without the hassle and added expense of having to cross the ocean to see Egypt.[94] The imagery of Mexico as the Egypt of the New World is a metaphor which many promoters and government officials carried to use in years beyond the Porfiriato in attempts to gain international prominence as an "exotic" foreign wonder and join the ranks of Rome, Greece, and Egypt as not only ancient global treasures, but as internationally beloved tourism destinations. This image played a key role in Mexico's self-definition as the "exotic other" in order to garner tourists. Despite Díaz's reluctance to define Mexico as an indigenous nation in the present day, he nevertheless recognized the appeal of "exoticism" to foreigners, and used Mexico's indigenous past to his advantage in order to attract tourism and foreign capital to Mexico.

[93] *The Mexican Central Railway: The Highway to Mexico, the Egypt of the New World,* The Mexican Central Railway Company, Mexico City, 1890, DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.
[94] *The Mexican Central Railway; Mexico: A Souvenir Album.*

While many scholars associate the celebration of Mexico's indigenous past with the revolutionary government which took power after the defeat of Díaz in 1910, in reality the Díaz regime initiated such efforts to preserve and promote Mexico's *indigenismo* to both national and international audiences.[95] Not only was the Díaz regime the first to excavate an archaeological site, but it placed guards at ruins, strengthened federal law to protect artifacts, and provided fervent support to Mexico City's National Museum. In addition, it established the Inspection of Archaeological Monuments of the Republic, the first entity which served solely to preserve Mexico's national memory of its *indigenismo,* which is known today as the INAH (National Institute of Anthropology and History).[96] Thus, the Díaz regime did not undertake the excavation of Teotihuacan merely to celebrate the Centenario, but rather to include it as part of its larger national project to highlight Mexico's indigenous heritage in the process of constructing and re-shaping a national identity.

Even while the Díaz regime lauded its indigenous past and claimed it as proof of Mexico's international prominence, it nonetheless made little effort to disguise its disdain for its indigenous identity in the present. The Porfirian government was known for its anti-Indian policies through its persecution of the Yaqui and the Maya populations.[97] This important distinction between the Indians of the past and the present demonstrates the complexities of Mexico's construction of national identity in relationship to race. While Porfirians perceived its Indians of the past as powerful and worthy of praise, from their vantage point Mexico's contemporary Indian populations presented a palpable

[95] Bueno, "Teotihuacán," 54.
[96] Ibid., 55.
[97] Ibid.

"problem" for national elites, as the Indians represented the impoverished and regressive portion of the national population which stood in the way of national progress toward civilization, economic development, and intimate association with the elite developed nations in the West. This demonstrates the social construction of race and its intersections with class. From an elite perspective during the Porfirian era, "Indian" became synonymous with the peasantry, and therefore Porfirian elites felt that an overwhelmingly friendly engagement with contemporary Indians tarnished Mexico's image on the international stage. At the same time, however, Porfirian intellectual elites and the Díaz regime strove to tap into foreigners' attraction to the "exotic other" by romanticizing Mexico's indigenous past in order to peak foreign interest, garner tourism, and hence, raise foreign capital investment in the nation's land, railroads, and industries. Therefore, exoticized, picturesque images of the Indian "other" dominated many of Mexico's travel publicity campaigns abroad during the Porfiriato.

In the course of developing a national identity during the Porfiriato, the Díaz regime aimed to bolster Mexico's economic prestige by improving its image abroad. Thanks to international publications and popular culture, Mexico suffered a reputation for depravity and barbarism. Throughout much of the nineteenth century, novels, plays, and other forms of popular culture in the U.S. depicted Mexico as quite breathtaking in terms of its landscape, but interpreted the Mexican people and their culture as primitive and uncivilized in comparison to the U.S.'s self-perception as a progressive society made up of forward-thinking citizens.[98] Some popular publications of the day which profoundly influenced the American imagination of Mexico include John Lloyd Stephens' *Incidents*

[98] Ruiz, *Americans in the Treasure House*, 5.

of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatán (1843), Madame Calderón de la Barca's *Life in Mexico during a Residence of Two Years in That Country* (1843), newspaper columns by Mary Ashley Townsend, and Channing Frost Arnold and Frederick J. Tabor's *The American Egypt: A Record of Travel in Yucatan* (1909).[99] The works by Stephens and Arnold and Tabor played an important role in reawakening interest in the Yucatán Peninsula, and especially in Mayan culture. In these works, racialized views of the Mexican "other" predominated. Many Americans associated the Mexican peasantry with Mexico's indigenous population, and as such demonstrated the socially constructed connections between class and race. Many travelers also drew a deep contrast between Mexicans and those citizens of developed western nations. Furthermore, they associated urban development and the European and American domination of commerce in Mexican cities such as Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey with "Americanization," thereby further dovetailing the intersections of race, class, and nationality. According to one travel brochure published by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway, with regard to the common people of Mexico, "Ambition was not born in them, or has long since become extinct. They will stick to their wooden plows, their nubbins of corn, their sandals and sombreros, and want nothing better—unless it be in the case of the sombreros."[100] Thus, American travel companies were already distributing the common racialized image of the "lazy Mexican," in attempts to draw a stark contrast between progressive, productive westerners and backwards, ignorant, and unindustrious Mexicans. In practice, and in line with social Darwinism, the

---

[99] Madame Calderón de la Barca, *Life in Mexico during a Residence of Two Years in That Country,* 1843; Ralph Lee Woodward, ed. *Here and There in Mexico: The Travel Writings of Mary Ashley Townsend,* The University of Alabama Press, 2001; Channing Frost Arnold and Frederick J. Tabor, *The American Egypt: A Record of Travel in Yucatán,* 1909.
[100] King, *Mexico in Glimpses,* 9.

image of the lazy Mexican served to justify Americans' seizure and exploitation of Mexico's raw materials, natural resources, crops, land, and labor. After Díaz became president and Mexico obtained closer economic ties with the U.S., however, some American attitudes toward Mexico gradually became more favorable, but overall Americans tended to direct their admiration toward Díaz and his elite associates rather than the common people. Mexican and American railway companies and travel writers alike praised Díaz for his institution of civil obedience and his ability to control the lower masses. For example, James L. King, an American travel writer for the Chicago Rock Island and Pacific Railway claimed in a 1903 brochure entitled *Mexico in Glimpses* that Díaz "quells even a semblance of rebellion."[101] This correlated with sentiments reflected in a brochure by the Mexican Central Railway Company entitled *Notes on Mexico and Her Great Railroad The Mexican Central,* which also applauded Díaz's protection of foreigners and their commercial interests, stating, "There was a time when things were different, but under the reform administration of General Díaz abuses have been so far corrected, corruption so exposed and punished, that now throughout the country the personal rights of citizens and of foreigners are as well protected as they are in the U.S.."[102] Thus, railway companies from both sides of the border aligned in their portrayal of Díaz as a benevolent, progressive leader who sided with foreign capitalists over the rough-and-tumble Mexican peasantry. Undoubtedly, their interests in representing Díaz in this light related to an increase their profits. In order to encourage Americans to travel to Mexico via their railways, they assured travelers—who were

[101] *Notes on Mexico,* 30.
[102] *Facts and Figures,* 67.

mostly members of the upper class—that their social intercourse with the Mexican peasantry would be both limited and benign.

When Americans did not view Mexican commoners as inherently lazy or praise Díaz for his ability to control the masses, some made use of a "poor but happy peasant" trope in order to suppress travelers' apprehensions about encountering poverty and possibly theft while traveling to Mexico. American travel writer J. Margati commented on the Mexican peasantry and their interactions with American tourists, stating,

> It is commonly asserted that the lower classes of the Mexican people are not honest; that they will commit theft at every opportunity. But the Americans, long resident here, say that they find their servants faithful to their trust. That the peon of the streets is likely to walk off with any stray article which many come in his way…but we must bear in mind that…they are bitterly poor, and the smallest trifle looks very large to men and women who subsist on ten cents a day. The peon class must nevertheless be the bulwark of Mexico. Industrious, temperate, working uncomplainingly at the most menial and hardest task, cheerful, kindly to one another, the despised peon will yet become the foundation of the future great nation.[103]

In this way, Margati utilizes the image of the "happy peasant" to lessen American travelers' anxieties about traveling abroad to a less developed nation. This is an image which the Mexican government and marketing executives have carried on and used consistently in advertisements and promotions throughout the twentieth century in order to foster positive relationships between the Mexican hosts and foreign guests, and to mitigate travelers' qualms related to theft, danger, and poverty.

As Mexico increased in the American imagination as a popular tourist destination, an American fondness for Mexican handicrafts grew as well. Americans could even obtain a "Mexican" experience without ever actually leaving their homes by ordering

---

[103] Margati, *A Trip to the City of Mexico,* 76.

silver filigree, sarapes, sombreros, hand-carved leather, Mexican drawn work (handmade lace, doilies, and other forms of art needlework), silk shawls, pottery, cactus candy, soap weed, Mexican sheet music, and other goods from the Francis E. Lester Company, Inc.[104] An ad from 1909 features two indigenous women. One of the women carries a large jug on her shoulder while the other weaves textiles. The advertisement promotes the marketing of unique "Mexican and Indian" handicrafts. The pairing of "Mexican" with American "Indian" artisan goods suggests the business owner's interpretation of the two groups as similar yet slightly distinguishable from one another. In addition, this suggests that for both the business owner and the tourist, both American Indians and Mexicans represented the "exotic other" in comparison to mainstream Anglo Americans. In this way, while Anglo Americans existed as the "unmarked" norm in society, Mexicans and American Indians simultaneously served as the "marked" variation of the norm from whom Anglo Americans could gather an "exotic" experience. By purchasing these rare Mexican and Indian handicrafts, American consumers could encounter the Mexican and indigenous "marked" "other" from a safe distance, and display their purchase on a shelf in their living room as a reminder of their unique, "exotic" experience for their friends and family to enjoy. Consumption of the Mexican or indigenous "other" was central to the exceptionality of their purchases. This also reflects the desire of consumers in industrial nations to consume artifacts of "authenticity," rather than manufactured goods.

---

[104] Catalogue, *Francis E. Lester Company, Inc.*, Mesilla Park, New Mexico, 1909, DLSC: Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

Francis E. Lester Company, Inc., 1909.[105]

Thus, the Porfiriato proved to be an essential chapter in the early development of state-run tourism in Mexico. While relatively small in scale in comparison to Mexico's later expansive programs in the twentieth century, the Díaz regime, along with transportation companies, nonetheless made concerted efforts to attract an influx of foreign capital and travelers to Mexico, particularly from the U.S. First, Díaz was the first president since Mexico declared independence to establish meaningful political stability in the U.S.-Mexico border region, which was essential to the attraction of foreign travelers to Mexico. Second, Díaz's positivist motto of "order and progress" played a central role in his foreign policies which primarily served to draw foreign capital investment from the U.S. and other developed nations—this was vital to Mexico's success in drawing attention from travelers worldwide. Third, in relationship to Díaz's fervent drive toward modernity, the completion of the Mexican Central Railway in 1884 decreased the prohibitive cost of travel. In addition, it reduced the excessive amount of time which was traditionally required for international travel, and therefore made it more accessible to travelers. Fourth, the railroad companies were key contributors to the increase in American travel to Mexico not only due to its increased affordability and accessibility, but also due to the companies' calculated creation of intimate relationships

[105] Catalogue, *Francis E. Lester Company, Inc.*

with mines, plantations, and other businesses. Finally, the Díaz administration as well as transportation companies utilized an international display of modernity, in combination with Mexico's irresistible Old World allure—which was derived principally from its indigenous heritage—in order to appeal to a diverse population of tourists.

The Mexican Revolution, Prohibition, and the Great Depression

As Americans increasingly travelled to Mexico throughout the Porfiriato to invest their capital in Mexican land and industry at the expense of the Mexican peasantry, anti-American sentiments grew among the general Mexican populace. This growing distaste for American economic dominance of Mexico's people, land, and industries, in addition to a palpable disillusionment with Díaz's leadership, sparked the Mexican Revolution in 1910. During the violent phase of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), American travel to Mexico drastically decreased, but Americans' interest in Mexico nevertheless persevered. Countless magazine articles, letters, postcards, diaries, and books continued to influence American ideas about Mexico. For those who had already traveled to Mexico during the reign of the Díaz administration and had therefore been firsthand witnesses to the extent of rural poverty among the Mexican population, there was some understanding of the root causes of the Revolution.[106] Although Díaz had achieved some level of political stability, promoted cooperative relations with foreigners, improved infrastructure, and advanced Mexico's national economic development, he had done it largely at the cost of the Mexican people, as foreign investors had acquired a vast amount of land, natural resources, and leading industries.

[106] Boardman, *Destination Mexico,* 58.

During the revolution, although most ordinary American citizens avoided travel to Mexico, U.S. troops nevertheless invaded Mexico throughout the course of U.S. intervention in the war. The Mexican Revolution was primarily an internal conflict, but the U.S. sometimes intervened in order to defend American economic and political interests. Since much of the conflict revolved around the excessive foreign ownership of Mexico's land, resources, infrastructure, and commerce, many foreign capital investors feared the devastating loss of their property and capital interests. As a result, the U.S. government intervened on their behalf to sway the outcome of the war in favor of American capitalists. In April 1914, President Woodrow Wilson ordered the U.S. naval occupation of Veracruz, as he had learned of a German ship which was due to arrive with a large shipment of arms for General Huerta. The U.S. government had begun to favor General Venustiano Carranza, who claimed to be a defender of the Mexican Constitution. While the intervention aided Carranza's cause, it angered both Carranza and Huerta and also upset the national population, as Mexicans learned that hundreds of Mexican citizens had died fending off U.S. Marines while they occupied the port. Thus, an estimated 60,000 Americans who were living in Mexico at the time fled the country, fearing the possibility of Mexican retaliation.[107]

As a result of the great scale of American interests in Mexico, the U.S. government continued to intervene in the Mexican Revolution even after the U.S. invasion of Veracruz. U.S. troops later descended upon Fort Bliss near El Paso, Texas

---

[107] Boardman, *Destination Mexico,* 58. For more about the history of the Mexican Revolution, see: Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico;* Hart, *Empire and Revolution*; Friedrich Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution,* University of Chicago Press, 1981; Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution, Volume 1: Porfirians, Liberals, and Peasants,* University of Nebraska Press, 1990; Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution, Volume 2: Counter-Revolution and Reconstruction,* University of Nebraska Press, 1990; John Tutino, *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico: Social Bases of Agrarian Violence, 1750-1940,* Princeton University Press, 1989.

following Pancho Villa's attack on Columbus, New Mexico, on March 9, 1916. General John J. Pershing led his troops into Mexico in pursuit of Villa, and this mission lasted for almost a year. They returned to Fort Bliss without Villa in February 1917. However, Pershing's army had gained valuable military experience which they would use later on during their participation in World War I. During the Mexican Revolution, despite the absence of American pleasure tourists, El Paso and other border cities maintained some economic stability due to the presence of U.S. troops, as soldiers frequented local stores, restaurants, and entertainment venues in between bouts of warfare.[108] Troops sent postcards and letters to their friends and relatives back home, which serve as documentation of American perspectives on Mexico at the time.[109]

Ultimately, American investors suffered great losses in the outcome of the Mexican Revolution, as Article 27 of the 1917 Mexican Constitution prohibited any sole ownership of Mexican land by foreigners. The 1917 version of the Mexican Constitution aimed to empower Mexican laborers and redistribute Mexican land back to the *pueblo,* or Mexican people. In particular, Article 27 fundamentally flipped Porfirio Díaz's endorsement of foreign investment as the primary source of economic development on its head. Even so, the influence of foreign investment remained strong even shortly after the drafting of Mexico's 1917 Constitution, particularly in the oil industry. In 1923 the Mexican Supreme Court ruled in the Bucareli Agreements that, contrary to Article 27's stipulation that all land underground belonged to the Mexican State, foreign companies could maintain ownership of oil fields as long as they were already in operation before

---

[108] Boardman, *Destination Mexico,* 59.
[109] Postcard packet, From Private Bert Kendell at Fort Bliss to Miss Olga Mitchell, Sterling Center, Mass., 1916. DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

the Constitution was ratified in 1917. In exchange, the U.S. government recognized the sovereignty of the new Mexican government under president Álvaro Obregón.[110] Thus, despite the Mexican people's violent and vehement denunciation of foreign capital domination which sparked the Mexican Revolution in the first place, the Mexican government ultimately succumbed to the pressures of demands by foreign capitalists and their governments. Thus, foreign companies continued their sole ownership of Mexico's vast oil reserves until Lázaro Cárdenas later expropriated Mexico's oil from foreign hands and placed it under national sovereignty in 1938.

As Mexico gradually recovered from the revolution in the decades following the conclusion of its violent phase (1910-1920), Mexican nationals revitalized cities and transportation routes in order to draw tourists back inside Mexico's national borders. In particular, Mexican cities in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands boomed with tourism during Prohibition (1920-1933). Many of Mexico's northern border towns exploded as unprecedented numbers of American citizens crossed to Ciudad Júarez, Tijuana, and other Mexican border cities to seek refuge from temperance and partake in vice tourism activities including drinking, gambling, and engaging in the commercial sex trade.[111] As a result, during Prohibition, Ciudad Juárez and other cities transformed into "blatant centers of sin and degradation."[112] In general, Mexico and Cuba were seen as dens of iniquity where upstanding Americans could indulge themselves among the degenerate Latinos. Border towns also experienced huge economic expansion and a boom in population. As a result, Mexican border towns were able to build strong infrastructure

---

[110] Boardman, *Destination Mexico*, 59.
[111] Martínez, *Border Boom Town*, 149.
[112] Martínez, *U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*, 151.

that included roads, bridges, hotels, restaurants, wineries, beer factories, and casinos.[113] Similarly, Mexican citizens went across the border to shop in the commercial centers of border cities in the U.S. They also crossed the border in increasing numbers to work as laborers.[114] Thus, the cities' economies expanded on both sides, mostly due to the large amount of capital gained from American tourists who poured into Mexican border towns during Prohibition, which represented the heyday of American tourism to Mexican border towns.[115]

During this period, tensions heightened between local border authorities in Mexico who profited from vice tourism and the U.S. federal government who sought to regulate and diminish them. The U.S. government became deeply concerned with the danger that vice tourism in Mexican border towns presented to American tourists' moral and physical health.[116] Thus, it pressured the Mexican authorities to monitor and decrease vice activities by threatening to place restrictions on American travel to Mexico.[117] These measures also coincided with the U.S. Public Health Service and border customs agents' attempts to protect American citizens from "disease-ridden" Mexicans by regulating the flow of immigrants by conducting invasive medical examinations and degrading sanitizing procedures in the early twentieth century.[118] Thus, there was a great deal of anxiety on the part of the U.S. government with regard to the Mexican body and its potentially negative influence on the American public's

---

[113] Herzog, "U.S.-Mexican Border," 779.
[114] Marlene Medrano, "Sexuality, Migration, and Tourism in the 20th Century U.S.-Mexico Borderlands," *History Compass.* 11:3 (2013), 236.
[115] Herzog, "U.S.-Mexican Border," 779.
[116] Medrano, "Sexuality, Migration, and Tourism," 237.
[117] Paul Ganster and David Lorey, *The U.S.-Mexican Border into the Twenty-First Century* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008); Medrano, "Sexuality, Migration and Tourism," 237.
[118] Medrano, "Sexuality, Migration, and Tourism," 237.

morality and public health. Ironically, it was the U.S. government's own temperance laws which led to the rise of vice tourism in Mexican border towns.

When the Great Depression hit in 1929, business and industry crashed on the U.S. side, and as a result, Mexican border towns suffered greatly due to a sharp decrease in the tourism that had been booming in the 1920s during Prohibition. As a result of the economic crash, beginning in 1929 until 1937, hundreds of thousands of Mexicans who had been working in the U.S. were sent back to Mexico in a mass repatriation. The U.S. government pointed to the mass unemployment among American citizens as justification for deporting so many people at once. More than half a million Mexican migrant workers were deported to Mexico. Many American citizens who were children of Mexican immigrants were forced to leave as well, and upon arrival in Mexico, Mexican Americans were widely viewed as outsiders.[119] Many of the Mexicans who had been repatriated stayed in the cities located along the northern border, and therefore the populations of cities in the region swelled.[120] As a result, the large number of repatriated Mexican immigrants who flocked to the border, in addition to the drastic decrease in vice tourism, severely devastated the U.S.-Mexico border region during the Great Depression.

Despite the vast decrease in borderland tourism during this period, Mexico nevertheless experienced an increase in tourism among the American artistic community which was closely tied to both the economic devastation caused by the Great Depression, a peaked interest among American artists in Mexico's budding art scene, and a simultaneous shift in American perspectives on Mexico and its people. Before,

---

[119] Camille Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939 (*New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 98.
[120] Herzog, "U.S.-Mexican Border," 779.

throughout the revolution and immediately following it, the general American perception of Mexico and its inhabitants tended to be negative and racialized. In his 1908 travel narrative *Viva Mexico!,* Charles Flandrau stated, "anyone with the most rudimentary knowledge of Mexico knows that a popular election there is an impossibility and always has been."[121] When the singer José Mojica, who later enjoyed a prosperous career in the U.S., first visited New York in 1916, managers advised him not to sing Mexican songs or dress in national costume because of anti-Mexican sentiments.[122] Later, a *New York Times* editorial stated quite plainly in 1920, "To the average American the Mexican of today is an insurgent or a bandit or, at any rate, a conspirator against his own government."[123] Motion pictures of the time reinforced such imaginations by frequently representing Mexican characters as the scheming, gutless "greaser," who was a favorite villain of early American films.[124] Americans who lived in Mexico might have a more positive view of Mexico and its people, but overwhelmingly, American perspectives on Mexico and its inhabitants were quite negative leading up to the 1920s.[125]

However, by the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, as the American artist community became progressively interested in Mexico's post-revolutionary artistic renaissance, ideas about Mexico among the general American population became more favorable, as well. This transformation coincided with a rise in enrollment among high school Spanish language classes, in conjunction with a simultaneous plummeting enrollment in German classes during World War I. While about 5,000 students enrolled

---

[121] Charles M. Flandrau, *Viva Mexico!* (1908; New York, Appleton-Century, 1937), 253-254.
[122] José Mojica, *I, A Sinner: The Autobiography of Fray José Francisco de Guadalupe Mojica, O.F.M.* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1963), 181.
[123] *New York Times*, May 30, 1920, sec. 2, p. 2.
[124] Blaine P. Lamb, "The Convenient Villain: The Early Cinema Views of the Mexican-American," *Journal of the West.* 14 (October 1975): 75-81.
[125] Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican,* 5.

in Spanish in 1910, by 1915 that number had risen to 35,000 and by 1922, more than 260,000 secondary students were studying Spanish.[126] At the same time, the first publication of a major historical journal devoted to Latin America, the *Hispanic American Historical Review*, appeared in February 1918.[127] In addition, in 1921, the National University in Mexico City (UNAM) established its Summer School for Foreigners, which offered courses in Spanish language and literature as well as Mexican history, folklore, archaeology, economics, and other subjects. The cost of tuition and travel was very affordable, as $30 covered a full course load of twenty to twenty-five hours per week during a six-week term in 1926, and students received discounts on railway tickets, steamship fare, and hotel accommodations.[128] Students also had the opportunity of touring Teotihuacán and Cuernavaca, in order to supplement their studies with cultural experiences.[129] By 1927, approximately sixteen hundred American students had attended the Summer School for Foreigners at UNAM. Most of them taught Spanish at colleges and secondary schools in Texas, California, and other states in the southwestern U.S. Meanwhile, starting in 1922, Mexican teachers were able to take courses in educational psychology, school administration, and other subjects while the Summer School was in session in order to encourage the development of friendly relationships between Mexican and American educators.[130]

---

[126] Ibid., 8.
[127] Ibid.
[128] *Escuela de verano: Cursos para estudiantes mexicanos y extranjeros* (Mexico City: N.p., 1926), p. 33-36. See also "Informe sobre cursos de verano" in *El movimiento educativo en México* (Mexico City: Dirección de Talleres Gráficos, 1922), p. 501-505, and Fannie E. Ratchford, "Summer School South of the Rio Grande," *TS* 50 (July 15, 1923): 450-451.
[129] Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican*, 18-19.
[130] Ibid., 19.

The surge of interest in Mexico among American educators, artists, students, intellectuals, and common American citizens alike also coincided with a rise in publications related to Mexican art and culture emerging in the 1920s and 1930s. One publication, entitled *Mexican Folkways,* was a bilingual magazine geared toward American high school and university students who were studying Spanish. *Mexican Folkways* was developed by Mexican anthropologist Manuel Gamio, who had gained an international reputation for his studies of Teotihuacán, together with Frances Toor, an American student who had attended a summer school program at the National University in Mexico City in 1922 and had taken one of Gamio's classes.[131] Toor later became well-known throughout the U.S. for her *Frances Toor's* guidebooks, Spanish-English phrasebooks, and other publications related to travel and art in Mexico which became popular among American tourists in the 1930s and 1940s.[132] *Mexican Folkways* featured articles written by Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo, and other artists who were gaining popularity in the modern Mexican art scene. The pages of *Mexican Folkways* contained discussions of art, literature, folklore, photography, and even songs. The back cover also featured advertisements for study abroad programs in Mexico.[133] By reading this publication, American students obtained front-row seats to the post-revolutionary flowering of the Mexican art scene; *Mexican Folkways* served as a forum for students to learn about Mexico and its culture from a Mexican perspective rather than a foreign one—which was invaluable for the evolution of popular American perceptions of Mexico in the wake of the Mexican Revolution.

---

[131] Boardman, *Destination Mexico,* 64-65.
[132] Ibid., 65.
[133] *Mexican Folkways,* DLSC: Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

In the midst of the rise in cultural exchanges between Mexicans and Americans, then, between 1914 and 1947, hundreds of American artists, journalists, and intellectuals migrated to Mexico to work, attracted by the lower cost of living, warm climate, and artistic inspiration. This community of Americans, most of them of a leftist persuasion, moved to Mexico out of a desire to understand the revolution's impact on society and artistic production. They could be classified as "political pilgrims," a term used by sociologist Paul Hollander to describe intellectuals who visited the Soviet Union and other revolutionary societies during the twentieth century.[134] The artist community produced a body of work inspired by Mexican art, people, and culture which displays Mexicans as mostly "exotic," traditional and romanticized. Some works inspired by Diego Rivera and his contemporaries also demonstrated critiques of capitalism and social injustice.[135] In light of the Great Depression, many American intellectuals felt drawn to Mexico's peasant culture, as according to historian Helen Delpar, the Depression "confirmed the suspicion of American intellectuals that life in the U.S. was not only barren spiritually and aesthetically but rested on a shaky economic base as well."[136] Thus, many American intellectuals sought refuge in Mexico as political pilgrims in the wake of both a social, political, and cultural renaissance in Mexico and a socioeconomic crisis in the U.S.

As a result of the increased intellectual and artistic interest in Mexico among Americans, and undoubtedly due to the low cost of travel to Mexico comparative to Europe and other international destinations, overall American travel to Mexico swelled

---

[134] Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, 1928-1978,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.
[135] James Oles, *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination,* Yale University Art Gallery, 1993, 5; 212-213.
[136] Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican,* 68.

during the Great Depression relative to prior years. In 1930, expenditures by American tourists in Mexico totaled $38 million, which was more than three times the amount spent in 1923; this figure represented approximately eight percent of all American expenditures on foreign travel, or approximately twice the figure in 1923. Overall expenditures decreased by 1933 to $33 million due to the economic collapse despite an uptick in American travel there. Despite the decrease, this amount still represented nearly seventeen percent of the total amount spent on foreign travel.[137]

The increased travel to Mexico and bourgeoning cultural exchange between Mexicans and Americans emerged at a time when the diplomatic relations between the two nations' governments were also improving. There was a growing sentiment of solidarity among the inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere among intellectuals and politicians at the time. In line with Western Hemispheric fraternity, Latin Americanist historian Herbert E. Bolton of the University of California famously sanctioned the belief that the nations of the Western Hemisphere shared a common history and secured an enrollment of almost eight hundred students in his first course on "Greater America."[138] In 1921, as President Warren G. Harding unveiled a statue of Simón Bolívar in New York's Central Park in 1921, he compared George Washington to the South American revolutionary and spoke of a shared desire for freedom among the inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere. In that same vein, he declared: "The great war has brought to us of the Americas a new conception of our place in the world and a larger appreciation of the

---

[137] U.S. Department of Commerce, *International Travel,* 7.
[138] Lewis Hanke, ed., *Do the Americas Have a Common History: A Critique of the Bolton Theory*, New York: Knopf, 1964, 16; Arthur Whitaker, *The Western Hemisphere Idea: Its Rise and Decline,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954, 142-144; Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican,* 9.

opportunity which is ours."[139] In seeming mimicry of the Monroe Doctrine of 1823—an American foreign policy which proclaimed to protect the Western Hemisphere from European aggression at a time of social upheaval and revolution, particularly throughout Latin America—American politicians and intellectuals of the 1920s and 1930s seemed as equally determined as their predecessors from the past century to foster a unified identity among the inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere. Under Franklin D. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy (1933), the U.S. continued its promotion of positive hemispheric relations with Latin America. This presented a stark contrast to the historically aggressive policies of military intervention and economic domination toward Latin America wielded by many former American presidential administrations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Under the Good Neighbor Policy, American companies produced films, radio programs, and other media forms which promoted good relations between the U.S. and Latin America. One particularly influential film star who emerged during this time was the Brazilian Carmen Miranda. Film production companies used her as a means of spreading good will between the U.S. and Latin American nations; some of her films, including *The Gang's All Here*, explicitly promoted the Good Neighbor Policy. In addition, the policy's cultural impact included the launch of CBS Radio's *Viva América* and *Hello Americans* programs and the Walt Disney films *Saludos Amigos* (1942) and *The Three Caballeros* (1944). Walt Disney even received a medal of honor under the Order of the Aztec Eagle from President Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946) for his "great contribution to Mexican goodwill" through his work on *The Three*

---

[139] *New York Times,* April 20, 1921, p. 1.
Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican,* 9.

Caballeros.[140] The Good Neighbor Policy was so successful in its spread of "good will" throughout the western hemisphere that by the end of World War II, according to historian Greg Grandin, Latin America was the most supportive region of American foreign policy in the world.[141]

In line with the sentiments of the Good Neighbor Policy, prominent Mexican artists and entertainers enjoyed more exposure and appreciation of their talent among the American populace, beginning in the mid-1920s through the 1930s. Mexican entertainers such as Dolores del Río, Ramón Navarro, Will Rogers (who was introduced as Guillermo Rodríguez), José Mojica, and many others gained more popularity in Hollywood. In addition, the roles available to Mexican actors began to branch out from prior narrow, stereotypical roles as greasers and outlaws, in part due to complaints from the Mexican government about the derogatory portrayals.[142] As a result, in the 1920s, Hollywood refrained from portraying Mexicans in any light, and so Mexican actors did not play Mexican characters during this period. Mexican writers and film critics took note of this change, and praised their compatriots as admirable figures of national pride. In praise of Navarro's performance in *Scaramouche* (1923), Rafael de Zayas Enríquez stated, "Mexico is now being represented with dignity in the theatres of the U.S., showing that we produce something besides bandits, revolutionaries and ragamuffins."[143] In a similar light, three years later writer Rafael Fuentes praised del Río, calling her "our Dolores,"

---

[140] Severo La Mancha, "The Good Neighbor Police," *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin,* January-February 1946, DLSC: Southern Methodist University, Dallas Texas, 6.
[141] Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism*, Metropolitan Books, 2006.
[142] Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican,* 169.
[143] *Revista de Yucatán,* October 15, 1923, 3.

for proclaiming her nationality and for demonstrating the charm of a Mexican woman.[144] By the 1930s, Hollywood again began portraying Mexican characters, but they were notably different from those of the past—more picturesque, multi-dimensional, and at times, even heroic.[145] Famous Mexican artists such as Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo, and José Clemente Orozco traveled to the U.S. during the late 1920s and 1930s to exhibit their work and gained widespread recognition of their work among the American population.[146]

In spite of the influence of the Good Neighbor Policy, the influx of more positive portrayals of Mexicans in film, and an increased appreciation of Mexican artistic expression, some elements of earlier racialized interpretations of Mexicans continued throughout this period, as travel promoters continued to highlight the "exoticism" of Mexico and its people to attract tourism. Similarly to earlier periods in the nineteenth century, American imaginations of Mexico and its people reflected in travel brochures continued to combine the appeal of racialized picturesque "exoticism" with an emphasis on the familiarity and comfort of western amenities and cultural characteristics in the 1920s and 1930s. As railway companies recovered from the violent upheavals of the revolution, they again began marketing heavily to American tourists wishing to travel to Mexico, especially as the U.S. economy boomed during the Roaring Twenties leading up to the Great Depression. One 1924 brochure by Rock Island Lines stated, "Mexico offers the thrills of a 'foreign' country without the inconvenience and expense of ocean travel. Parts of it are as unlike the U.S. as are any parts of Europe, but they are reached in hours

---

[144] Rafael Fuentes, "El alma mexicana en Hollywood," *Revista de Revistas* (Mexico City) 16 (February 14, 1926), 43.
[145] Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican*, 173-174.
[146] Ibid., 83.

instead of days."[147] The railway company highlighted the proximity, affordability, and foreign appeal of travel to Mexico in comparison to Europe, which was still the more common choice for many Americans travelling abroad at the time.

Travel brochures in the 1920s and 30s featured imagery and language which evoked the appeal of "exoticism," or Orientalism, to the American traveler. Ads not only compared Mexico to comfortable and familiar western locations like Europe, but they also often equated Mexico with popular destinations which American travelers associated with mystery and enchantment, such as the Middle East. At the turn of the twentieth century, Americans grew increasingly fascinated by Arabian themes. According to historian Sarah Seekatz, "between 1900 and 1930, America [had] a love affair with the Middle East going on."[148] At the time, the English version of *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights* was a popular publication, especially among American youth, as it included tales of adventure and mystery about Sinbad the Sailor, Aladdin, and Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.[149] Film production during this period further stoked the fires of the public's fascination with Arabian imagery, as Hollywood produced *Cleopatra* in 1917 and again in 1934, *The Queen of Sheba* in 1921, and the blockbuster silent film *The Sheik* in 1921.[150] Railway companies capitalized on Americans' Arabian fetish by making unmistakable comparisons between Mexico and the Middle East. A Rock Island Line brochure from 1924 stated rather explicitly that Mexico could be "…reached on a magic

---

[147] *Mexico via Rock Island Lines,* 1924, DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas Texas, 1.
[148] "Forbidding Fruit: How America Got Turned On to the Date," narrated by The Kitchen Sisters and Lisa Morehouse, Morning Edition, *NPR*, June 10, 2014, accessed January 25, 2015, http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2014/06/10/320346869/forbidding-fruit-how-america-got-turned-on-to-the-date.
[149] "Forbidding Fruit."
[150] Ibid.

carpet!"[151] The same brochure also described Mexico as "A strange blend of Persia, India, Arabia, Spain, and the Holy Land!"[152] In this way, railway companies made note of contemporary cultural trends and Americans' own understanding of themselves in relationship to "exotic others," and incorporated them into their campaigns accordingly.

Travel brochures also offered detailed explanations of the racial demographics of Mexico as a selling point of "exoticism" for tourism in order to appeal to an audience primarily made up of Anglo American tourists. The 1924 Rock Islands Line brochure cited Mexico's population distribution of forty percent Indian, forty percent mixed race, and twenty percent "white or nearly white" people, out of which the population spoke a total of sixty-three languages, as part of "the charm of Mexico."[153] Furthermore, it offered a meticulous description of Tarahumara Indians of Chihuahua, "the greatest runners in the world," as a featured attraction for tourists. The brochure claimed that,

> It is an actual fact that a normal Tarahumare will run 150 miles without stopping, and…he captures wild horses and deer by running them until they are completely exhausted. He dislikes Mexicans because 'they smell like pigs' and Americans 'because they smell like coffee.' He lives in caves, kills rabbits with a boomerang and hunts antelopes by wrapping himself in an antelope skin. His squaw bears her children without even lying down, and the favorite sport of the family is racing at night with torches.[154]

This excerpt exemplifies the ways in which travel companies frequently featured Mexican people, and in particular the contemporary indigenous people, as objectified tourist attractions. This demonstrates a shift from the Porfiriato period, during which the government and travel companies had either marginalized or completely ignored the

---

[151] *Mexico via Rock Island Lines,* 1.
[152] Ibid., 3.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid., 5.

indigenous people of the present-day. Instead, they had emphasized the glamor and prestige of the Indians of the past by predominantly highlighting Mexicans' Aztec and Mayan heritage. However, such efforts ultimately downplayed the vast diversity of indigenous identities in Mexico and also demoted the importance and status, and even seemingly denied the existence of contemporary Indians. By the 1920s and 1930s, drawing on Mexico's own post-revolutionary turn toward claiming *mestizaje* as a core part of its national identity, travel companies began to highlight the diversity of the Mexican people and market its mixed population as part of the country's touristic appeal.[155] Consequently, contemporary Indians, who represented the most "exotic" sector of Mexico's population for western tourists, became the central focus of such campaigns.

This phenomenon coincided with a rising interest in both Mexico and the U.S. in the Native American, or the Indian, in the 1920s and 1930s.[156] At a seminar in 1930, economist Ramón Beteta named the Indian population as the most important social force in Mexico, and pointed to their influence on Mexican cuisine, clothing, housing, medicine, and national character as evidence of his claim.[157] In 1921, Indians still represented a considerable portion of the Mexican population, as according to the

---

[155]*Mestizaje* is the mixing of "racial" groups. As it applies to Mexico, *mestizaje* usually emphasizes the mixing of Spanish Europeans with the indigenous people of the Mexican region. After the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), the Mexican government and its people turned toward celebration, rather than denial, of Mexico's *mestizo* heritage. Mexican intellectual José Vasconcelos, who also became Mexico's secretary of education in 1921, wrote an influential essay entitled "La Raza Cósmica" ("The Cosmic Race") in 1925 which endorses the national embrace of *mestizaje* as an essential part of Mexico's post-revolutionary national identity formation. Important works that explore race in Mexico include Colin E. MacLachlan and Jaime E. Rodriguez O., *Forging of the Cosmit Race: A Reinterpretation of Colonial Mexico,* University of California Press, 1980 and R. Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico, 1660-1720,* University of Wisconsin, 1994.
[156] Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican,* 91.
[157] Ramón Beteta, *Pensamiento y dinámica de la revolución mexicana: Antología de documentos politicosociales,* 2nd ed. (Mexico City: México Nuevo, 1951), 72-74.

Mexican census of that year, there were 4,179,449 Indians in Mexico, or approximately thirty percent of the population. Meanwhile, 8,504,561 were of mixed racial ancestry and represented about sixty percent of the population. In addition, the census revealed that 1,802,844 Mexicans above the age of five spoke an indigenous dialect as their first language.[158] For Americans, an interest in their own Native American population corresponded with that of the Indians in Mexico. The Bursum Pueblo Land Bill of 1922, which threatened to upend Pueblo landholdings, inspired a movement among pro-Indian activists which was highly critical of all federal policies affecting the Indian population in the U.S. As a result, many American activists looked to Mexico and its post-revolutionary embrace of the Indian in music, literature, art, and national identity as a model for the U.S. to follow.[159]

In relationship to the rising fascination with Indians among the American population, there was also a steady popular interest in the fields of archaeology and anthropology. Since Mexican archaeologists had dominated the excavation of Teotihuacán in the Valley of Mexico, Mesoamerica had been a particular area of interest among American archaeologists since the nineteenth century.[160] In the early nineteenth century, John Lloyd Stephens (1805-1852) and his colleagues infamously gathered Mesoamerican antiquities and took them back to the U.S. As a result, the Mexican government later took steps to protect its national assets by first establishing the official government position of Inspector and Conservator of Archaeological Monuments in 1875 and passing legislation in 1897 which made deemed all archaeological monuments

---

[158] *Resumen del censo general de…1921,* pt. 2, 62.
[159] Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican,* 93.
[160] Ibid., 93-94.

property of the nation and made it illegal to transport the objects without official permission from the Mexican government.[161] Later, the Harvard University and the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology sponsored F.W. Putnam and Alfred M. Tozzer's studies of Maya culture in the early twentieth century. Most notably, the Peabody Museum supported independent scholar Edward H. Thompson's investigation of Maya ruins in the Yucatán Peninsula. In 1885, he came to Mérida to inspect the ruins at Labná and Chacmultún, but he is best known for his excavation of the cenote, or sacred well, at Chichén Itzá, from which he extracted human bones, as well as objects of gold and jade, which he removed without the Mexican government's permission between 1904 and 1911, for which the Mexican government took action against Thompson in 1926.[162]

The 1920s and 1930s saw an increased popular fascination with archaeology and anthropology, largely due to the massive publicity garnered by the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamon in Egypt in 1922.[163] In addition, by the 1920s, even though the Mexican government remained determined in its efforts to conserve Mexico's archaeological holdings from looting and destruction by foreigners, it became more open to cooperating with foreign scholars and institutions in the interest of discovery and national patrimony. Thus, in 1923, the Mexican government allowed the Carnegie Institution of Washington (CIW) to undertake the project of excavating, repairing, and restoring the ruins at Chichén Itzá.[164] The American archaeologist Sylvanus G. Morley—who had studied under Alfred Tozzer at Harvard—led he project, with the support of the well-known Mexican archaeologist Manuel Gamio, who had famously excavated Teotihuacán near

[161] Ibid., 94.
[162] Ibid., 95; 105.
[163] Ibid., 99.
[164] Ibid.

Mexico City years before.[165] As a result, a rising interest in Mexican archaeology occurred among the American populace. Travel writers, travel promoters, and journalists alike hailed Yucatán as the "Egypt of the Americas."

Despite the rising interest in Yucatán and its archaeological holdings, tourism to the region remained extremely limited because the peninsula was largely isolated from the rest of the country. In 1912, wealthy automobile dealer of Mérida, Mr. A. Escalante, stated that while he traveled to the U.S. several times per year, he had been to Mexico City only once. To go to the capital, Escalante had to "take a train to Progreso, endure a two days' trip on a poor steamer to Veracruz, and thence by rail again to Mexico City. The trip to Europe or to the United States is much easier to Mexico."[166] Even by in the 1920s and 1930s, the Yucatán Peninsula was so heavily forested that travel by land was extremely difficult.[167] No major highways cut through the peninsula, only one railway line connected Mérida to the rest of the Republic, and commercial airlines were in their infancy, relying mostly on air mail service to stay afloat. Pan American Airways opened its first air mail service to Mérida in 1929.[168] Even by 1939, there was still no major highway in the Yucatán. Eunice Blackburn, an American teacher living in Mérida at the time, reported that the city could only be reached by boat or plane. For this reason, she suggested that Mexicans of the Yucatán Peninsula were "more air-minded than

---

[165] Ibid.
[166] "Highway from Mérida to Progreso, Mexico," *Harrisburg Daily Independent*, (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania), December 21, 1912, 5, accessed September 25, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/89289216.
[167] Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican*, 110.
[168] "Creager Sees Air Mail Starting in a Few Days," *The Brownsville Herald*, (Brownsville, Texas), January 29, 1929, 1; 28, accessed September 25, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/23840603.

Americans."[169] She stated, "It will be a long time before there is any highway to Mérida."[170]

In 1929, Charles Lindergh conducted a well-publicized aerial exploration of the Maya zone, with sponsorship from the CIW.[171] Lindbergh's aerial reconnaissance received a mix of praise and skepticism with regard to its scientific merits. While A.V. Kidder of the CIW excitedly claimed that Lindbergh had accomplished in five hours what it would have taken a ground party five years to achieve, archaeologist Frans Blom of the CIW remarked in a personal letter to a friend, "Frankly, I cannot see the scientific value of the Lindbergh exploit...but it is great for publicity for the Mayas and will undoubtedly help us."[172] Ironically, despite Blom's apparent misgivings about the significance of Lindbergh's aerial quest in relationship to scientific discovery, it would be the development of commercial air travel which would later be essential to the vast expansion of mass tourism to Mexico, and would prove to be particularly instrumental in facilitating the development of tourism in the perpetually isolated Yucatán Peninsula. In particular, Cancún's later successful growth relied heavily on both the long-held interest among Americans in the archaeological treasures found in Mexico's Yucatán, as well as the eventual development of commercial air travel and its impact on the facilitation of Americans' easy, quick, and affordable travel to the remote region.

---

[169] Charlotte Fitzhenry, "Life in Tropical Yucatán Described by Miss Blackburn," *The Pentagraph,* (Bloomington, Illinois), March 14, 1939, accessed September 25, 2015, 5, http://www.newspapers.com/image/69374887.
[170] Fitzhenry, "Life in Tropical Yucatán," 5.
[171] Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican,* 110.
[172] Ibid.

The Father(s) of Modern Mexican Tourism: Portes Gil, Cárdenas, and Alemán

In spite of some gains in popularity and interest among Americans in the early twentieth century, the Mexican government acknowledged that Mexico still maintained an image of backwardness and abject poverty, which negatively affected its appeal to international travelers, especially throughout the revolution. Even as Mexico became more popular in the 1920s and 1930s among artistic and intellectual circles, it still lagged behind Europe and local competitors in attracting tourists, largely due to the image problem it maintained among the general American population, as it continued to struggle through its reputation for civil unrest through the Cristero Rebellion (1926-1929) and its general association with poverty in the American imagination.

By the late 1920s, Mexico's governmental leadership announced its intentions to rectify the country's image problems and attract tourism as a means of garnering economic growth. During a press conference in 1929, President Portes Gil proclaimed that Mexico intended to enter the race for the tourist dollar.[173] In order to attract more tourism, the president, according to the *New York Times,* ordered all officials at Mexico's ports and borders to help make travel easy and safe for travelers. He also encouraged private investment in the development of infrastructure by constructing tourism accommodations and services which was necessary for an increase in tourism.[174] Also, in order demonstrate visible proof to tourists that Mexico was in a state of peace, the president planned to decrease the number of military personnel who regularly policed

[173] Dina Berger, *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry: Pyramids by Day, Martinis by Night,* Palgrave MacMillan, 2006, 11.
[174] Anonymous, "Mexico Makes Bid for Tourist Trade," *New York Times* (July 8, 1929).

trains in an effort to ensure the safety of visitors.[175] During the Porfiriato, the Mexican government instated Mexican police to monitor railways in order to prevent banditry and protect passengers. At the time, some travel writers even lauded the practice as evidence of Díaz's successful suppression of civil unrest among Mexican citizens. However, others perceived it as evidence of Mexico's reputation for danger and its general atmosphere of lawlessness, and thus, President Portes Gil announced plans to reduce military staff on trains in an effort to change the international perception of Mexico, particularly among American travelers.

In line with the Good Neighbor Policy of the 1930s and 1940s and its associated efforts by American government officials, tourism executives, and media executives to improve Mexico's image among the American populace, the Mexican state made similar efforts to eradicate Americans' negative imaginations of Mexico. During this period, the Mexican state made further efforts to improve its "image problem" as president Lázaro Cárdenas promoted tourism through highway construction, the building of hotels with up-to-date amenities, and the modernization of urban spaces. In the late 1920s and 1930s, the Mexican government made concerted efforts to develop highways throughout Mexico. On July 1, 1936, after eight years of construction (1928-1936) and investing $62 million pesos, Mexico's National Road Commission inaugurated the Nuevo Laredo-Mexico City Highway.[176] Consequently, the number of American motor tourists entering Mexico through Nuevo Laredo doubled in a span of two years: between 1935 and 1937 the number of Americans entering Mexico via the highway through Nuevo Laredo grew

---

[175] Anonymous, "Mexico Wants Visitors," *Philadelphia Public Ledger* (1929).
Since the Porfiriato (1876-1910), military personnel had policed trains in order to prevent banditry which was especially common in the border region.
[176] Berger, *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry*, 45.

from 14,500 to 29,000.[177] In the 1940s, the Mexican government concentrated its tourism development efforts particularly in Mexico City. As a result, while in 1935, Mexico City had a total of twenty-two officially registered hotels with 1,596 rooms, by early 1942, the city claimed a total of fifty-five registered hotels with 3,582 rooms.[178]

Throughout World War II, the U.S. and Mexico continued to dispense political rhetoric in line with the Good Neighbor Policy and Pan American fraternity which ultimately helped to sustain rates of American travel to Mexico throughout the war. Despite rumors of growing anti-Americanism in Mexico which occurred during Lázaro Cárdenas' presidency (1934-1940) following his decision to nationalize Mexico's oil holdings, ordinary Americans came to embrace Mexico as a desirable place to travel. [179] Americans turned favorably toward Mexican travel in the 1940s especially as travel to Europe became increasingly dangerous and prohibitively expensive throughout the war. In addition, both governments fostered hemispheric goodwill toward one another by encouraging Americans to travel to Mexico. FDR encouraged U.S. travel throughout the Americas as a means of fostering mutual understanding and friendship among fellow citizens of the Western Hemisphere, especially in light of the war which was raging across the Atlantic Ocean. Meanwhile, Cárdenas declared a "Tourist Biennial" in the final year of his presidency (1940), claiming that tourism could foster goodwill between Americans and Mexicans, while also calling his administration and the Mexican people

---

[177] Figures from Asociación Mexicana Automóvilistica, Consejo Nacional, CEHM: LMDO, 347/32293 (October 14, 1938).
[178] Report prepared by Roberto López of the National Railways of Mexico, CEHM: LMDO, 281/26055 (October 1, 1935).
Figures based on the "Mexico Hotel Directory/Directorio de Hoteles de la República, 1941-1942," produced by the Department of Tourism and Mexican Tourist Association. AGN: MAC, 704/170-3.
[179] Berger, *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry,* 71.

"friends of peace and American brotherhood."[180] Some advertisements evoked nationalism and Pan Americanism more explicitly by claiming that U.S. travel to Mexico was "vacationing with a purpose" and even "patriotic."[181] Thus, in a time of war, government agents and tourism promoters alike interpreted American tourists traveling to Mexico and throughout the Americas as important agents of fraternal goodwill. The war nevertheless deterred Americans from travelling, as while tourists spent an estimated $55 million pesos in Mexico in 1941, in the first six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, that amount plummeted to $14 million pesos.[182] Even so, U.S. travel to Mexico remained surprisingly stable between 1942 and 1945, even though they never exceeded pre-wartime levels during this period.[183]

After World War II, Europe was devastated from the war and the American economy grew substantially. Thus, during this period, Mexico capitalized on the opportunity to attract American tourists who may have otherwise traveled to Europe. The government continued its efforts in developing its tourism industry accordingly. Realizing that the greatest challenge to increased international tourism was underdeveloped transportation infrastructure, the Alemán administration (1946-1952) focused on the construction of roads and airports to attract more tourists.[184] By 1940s and 1950s, then, as the federal government continuously made efforts to improve the country's inventory of transportation infrastructure, Mexico's highways had gained a reputation among American tourists as being more extensive, safe, and efficient than

---

[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid., 90.
[182] Report to the AMT Administrative Council. AGN: MAC, 704/170-3 (October 28, 1942).
[183] Berger, *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry,* 90.
[184] Jeffrey S. Smith, "Three Generations of International Tourist Resorts in Mexico," *Geographische Rundschau International Edition* 5(1): (2009), 4.

ever. As a result, until 1970, sixty percent of Mexico's foreign tourists arrived via ground transportation.[185] In addition, as commercial air travel was beginning to gain more popularity in the post-World War II era, the federal government recognized the importance of constructing airports for tourism.

Acapulco had begun in the 1930s as a small-scale resort after the Mexican government constructed the "Highway of the Sun" which connected Mexico City to the seaside resort.[186] During World War II, many Americans viewed it as a safe place for tourism and after the war, it became increasingly popular with Mexican elites. Subsidies from the Mexican government and capital from private investors allowed for the construction of new hotels, luxury residences, and a yacht club. This, along with publicity in the era of film and television, spread an image of luxury and prestige in association with Acapulco.[187] When Hollywood elites flocked to Acapulco in droves in the 1950s by plane upon the construction of a brand-new airport, the resort became known as the first international resort dependent upon airborne tourists.[188] In this context, Acapulco arose as a particularly popular destination for American tourists during this period.

With Acapulco as an example, the first generation of international tourist resorts in Mexico was made up of mostly former fishing towns which transformed into seaside resorts. Like Acapulco, other similar sea-and-sand resorts—all former fishing villages—

---

[185] Smith, "Three Generations," 4; David L. Gladstone, *From Pilgrimage to Package Tour: Travel and Tourism in the Third World*, New York: Routledge, 2005.
[186] Smith, "Three Generations," 4.
Mary Nolan and Sidney Nolan, "The Evolution of Tourism in Twentieth-Century Mexico," *Journal of the West* 27 (4), 1988, 14-26.
[187] Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancun Bliss," in *The Tourist City*, edited by Dennis Judd and Susan Fainstein, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999, 126.
[188] Smith, "Three Generations," 5; Louis Ash and John Turner, *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery*, Constable, 1976.

like Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlán, and Cozumel gained recognition and popularity among international tourists in the post-World War II period. However, with the exception of Acapulco, this occurred without much direct intervention on the part of the federal government. In Cozumel, thanks to an influx of investment capital from domestic business investors, the resort quickly became known as one of the world's top five scuba diving destinations. Cozumel did not receive much coordinated developmental support from either the local or the federal governments.[189] As a result, by the 1960s, despite the federal government's direct investment support of transportation infrastructure, as a whole, the government neglected to directly invest capital in other important aspects of tourism development, such as hotel construction. As a result, according to Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolás, "in the 1960s Acapulco was the only Mexican resort that more or less met international standards of acceptability."[190]

President Alemán is best known for his contributions to the development of Acapulco, which became the most popular Mexican resort in the 1950s and 1960s.[191] Thus, he is often recognized as the "architect" or "father of tourism" in Mexico.[192] Alemán continued his involvement in the Mexican government's tourism leadership after he left the presidential office in 1952, as he was instrumental in the creation of the National Council of Tourism in 1961 and in 1962 the first National Tourism Development Plan was proposed.[193] Despite the widespread and acclaim of Alemán, in her important book *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry: Pyramids by Day,*

---

[189] Smith, "Three Generations."
[190] Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancún Bliss," 128.
[191] Berger, *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry.*
[192] Héctor Manuel Romero, "Miguel Alemán Valdés (1905-1983): Arquitecto del turismo en México," México, D.F.: Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística, 1993, Berger, *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry*, 8.
[193] Hiernaux-Nicolás, "Cancún Bliss," 127-128; 288.

Martinis by Night, Dina Berger underlines the erroneousness of Alemán's title as Mexico's "father of tourism" by outlining the decades of work by Mexico's government to formalize its tourism industry which predate Alemán's rise to the presidency. In particular, Berger emphasizes the period under Lázaro Cárdenas, in which the government focused on the standardization of hotel accommodations, the development of night life in Mexico City, national urban beautification projects, and the construction of the Pan-American Highway in Mexico as the primary means of attracting more international tourism.[194] As a result of efforts by both Cárdenas and Alemán, Mexico's tourism sector experienced considerable growth, as the number of tourists traveling to Mexico (most of whom were American) grew steadily from 13,892 in 1929 to 394,297 in 1950.[195]

In spite of its newfound advantages over Europe's tourism market after World War II, Mexico still faced formidable competition from the nearby island of Cuba, which was widely known as "America's playground" during the 1950s. Although it had gained popularity among Americans initially in the 1920s, the economic devastation caused by Great Depression, in combination with Cuba's revolution of 1933, greatly reduced the frequency of American travel during the 1930s.[196] However, in part due to the closing of Florida's illegal gambling establishments which moved offshore in the early 1950s, Cuba again gained popularity among American tourists. Tourism in Cuba centered on gambling in the capital city, and Havana became the appealing tropical alternative to Las

---

[194] Berger, *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry.*
[195] Ibid., 121.
[196] Rosalie Schwartz, *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba,* University of Nebraska Press, 1997, xiv.

Vegas.[197] However, in light of the Cuban Revolution, the socialist rebels' overthrow of the Batista regime in Havana on January 1, 1959, and the rise in tensions between Cuba and the U.S., American tourism plummeted.[198] As a result, the Mexican government once again seized the opportunity to cater to American tourists who may have otherwise travelled to a different location—in this case, Cuba.

Despite the promise of Cuba's demise for Mexico's tourism industry, during the 1960s, Mexico seemed to be at full capacity, and it was increasingly showing signs that it was unprepared and ill-equipped to welcome more tourists. Acapulco, along with other seaside resorts throughout Mexico, was suffering from the effects of mostly unplanned and uncontrolled urban development. As a result, the Mexican government grew increasingly concerned over the previously unforeseen consequences of unrestrained urban development: extreme overcrowding, inadequate housing, poor infrastructure, extensive air and water pollution, and widespread environmental deterioration.[199] Such conditions were unattractive to tourists.

Thus, during the 1960s, younger Mexican government officials called for new approaches to tourism. They argued that traditional approaches to tourism had been inadequate, and that the future of Mexico's international tourism development required more intensive government involvement. In particular, they urged continuous improvement in the quality of infrastructure and development of new resorts.[200] Thus, the government laid plans to consolidate and intensify its efforts to draw more international tourists to Mexico. In 1961, Alemán continued his support for tourism with

---

[197] Schwartz, *Pleasure Island*, xiv.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Smith, "Three Generations," 5.
[200] Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancún Bliss," 128.

the creation of the National Council for Tourism. Within a year, the council drafted its first National Tourism Development Plan.[201] Also in 1961, the federal government established PRONAF (Programa Nacional Fronterizo- National Border Program), which was a plan to beautify Mexico's border towns and therefore attract more tourism capital to traditional entryway cities such as Tijuana and Ciudad Júarez.[202] PRONAF proved to be successful, so in 1969 the Banco de México (Bank of Mexico) created INFRATUR (Fondo de Promoción de Infraestructura Turística-National Fund for Promoting Tourism Infrastructure), which aimed to plan and implement the development of new tourism resorts.[203]

In search of new potential tourism spots, young Mexican technocrats began inspecting Mexico's coastal lands. Antonio Enriquez Savignac was one of the most instrumental of these young Mexican technocrats who painstakingly surveyed Mexico's inventory of beaches from the view of a helicopter. Savignac worked for the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Banco de Mexico, and later, as the director of FONATUR and the Minister of Tourism. Thus, he was directly involved in the formation of Cancún and other state-led tourism projects from the very beginning. The Caribbean coast offered one of the most promising prospects for tourism, and of the thirty-five sites considered, Cancún was one of the best.[204] Mexico submitted Cancún as a proposed project, and the IDB accepted the plan in 1964.[205] At the time, Mexico justified the project by arguing that it would increase the flow of international currency to Mexico,

---

[201] Ibid.
[202] Smith, "Three Generations," 6.
[203] Ibid.; Tamar Diana Wilson, *Economic Life of Mexican Beach Vendors: Acapulco, Puerto Vallarta, and Cabo San Lucas*, Lexington Books, 2012, 6.
[204] Hiernaux-Nicolás, "Cancún Bliss," 128.
[205] Ibid.

generate new jobs outside of already overcrowded urban centers, such as Mexico City, and reverse patterns of regional economic inequality.[206]

The Yucatán Peninsula was a primary area of concern for the federal government in terms of economic underdevelopment and the potential for political strife. To start, in the Yucatán Peninsula, aside from Mérida, there were no substantial urban centers and no significant economic growth. Quintana Roo was also the most impoverished state in the region. In addition, the federal government feared the prospect of leftist indigenous uprisings in the Yucatán Peninsula. The region neighbored Central America, which at the time was rife with political turmoil rooted primarily in social unrest and economic inequality among the indigenous populations of people inhabiting those lands. It was also already fighting off leftist resistance in impoverished Guerrero at the time. Thus, the Mexican government feared that if it did not act quickly to provide more opportunities for economic growth for its own impoverished indigenous populations—most of whom resided in its southeast region in the Yucatán Peninsula—then it would have to quell an even more widespread socially charged rebellion. The peninsula also happened contained a surplus of environmental conditions and architectural structures which were ideal for attracting tourism, as the region was blessed with pristine Caribbean waters, white sandy beaches, warm weather, Mayan ruins, lush jungles and rich cultural history. Thus, the Mexican government had substantial reasons to create sources of economic development in the southeast region of the country, and it also had considerable environmental attractions which provided the appropriate conditions to realistically bring about a successful tourism project. As neighbors to a developed country with a

[206] Ibid.

burgeoning middle class in search of new "exotic" vacation destinations, Mexico saw its geographical proximity to the U.S. as well as its own abundant inventory of tropical havens as opportune conditions for becoming the next major international tourism destination. In addition, with nearby Cuba's touristic appeal weakened by political chaos in the wake of the Cuban Revolution, and the rise of commercial air travel on the cusp of the jet era, international tourism development seemed like a most promising investment for the Mexican state.

It would seem that Mexico's substantial investment in Cancún would pay off, as its success played a key role in Mexico's eventual rise to prominence in international tourism, since even with the prior success of Acapulco in the 1950s, by the 1960s, Mexico still did not rank among the world's leading international tourist destinations. However, following the fruitful expansion of Cancún, by the end of the twentieth century, Mexico ranked among the top ten international tourist destinations in the world. It maintains a top global standing in the present day and continues to out-rank all other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.[207] A large part of Mexico's success is owed to the government-backed institutionalization of its tourism industry, which began in the late 1920s but had not fully galvanized until the 1960s.

Even so, by the mid-twentieth century, Mexico had made significant progress in the development of its international tourism industry. The Good Neighbor Policy as well as Pan American solidarity had an undeniable influence on the increase of American tourism to Mexico which continues to the present day. A palpable shift occurred among Americans in their understandings of themselves in relationship to Mexicans and, this

[207] Smith, "Three Generations," 4.

had lasting effects on the greater frequency of American travel to Mexico. As Americans began to view Mexico and its inhabitants more favorably, American travel to Mexico increased accordingly.

At the same time, while American attitudes toward Mexico became more positive, Mexico also fostered a more welcoming attitude toward Americans, and Pan American identity, in line with hemispheric peace and collaboration, became more fashionable. This cultural shift proved to be indispensable to the rapid growth of tourism in Mexico. Meanwhile, as Mexico became increasingly dependent on American tourism for economic growth, the industry also became progressively vulnerable to the influence of American tastes and standards in hospitality. Mexicans overwhelmingly viewed these changes as necessary for growth, and most complied accordingly. Even so, Mexicans remained steadfast in their desire to differentiate themselves from Americans and other westerners, and in the post-revolutionary state, state actors as well as hospitality executives harnessed Mexico's national identity as a *mestizo* nation for its marketing appeal to foreign tourists. The process of identity formation in relation to tourism was a multilateral process in which the Mexican state, Mexican citizenry, American business agents of tourism, and American tourists themselves equally participated. All actors contributed to Mexico's national identity formation in the twentieth century as a nation of the "exotic," *mestizo* "others" to be encountered by white American tourists in search of new experiences, and this national identity formation was pivotal to the growth of Mexico's tourism industry. As a result of cultural changes and their undeniable influence on shifting attitudes relating to nation, self, and other in the minds of foreign tourists and

domestic hosts, Mexico emerged by mid-century as a rising competitor in the global tourism market.

Chapter 2: Tourism Nation

Tourism promotions of the mid-twentieth century commonly portrayed tourism as a benign practice of cultural exchange between native hosts and foreign guests. In Mexico, public relations campaigns depicting friendly relationships between fellow Pan Americans (inhabitants of "Pan America," which included those residing in the western hemisphere) in the 1940s and beyond aimed to evoke benevolent feelings of friendship and international harmony among Americans and Latin Americans. However, government support of tourism extended beyond a mere interest in international camaraderie. Pan Americanism and internationalism were ideologies that both U.S. and Mexican agents supported, but with competing motivations in mind. From the American perspective, Pan Americanism and international solidarity provided an ideological framework in the 1940s and beyond which served to unite the hemisphere during a time in which U.S. foreign interests were under attack. Through the spread of Pan American propaganda, the U.S. could garner support from the Latin American region during World War II and the Cold War. This was critical to the U.S. government's ability to increase its influence throughout the region and contain the spread of communism. Tourism served as a non-threatening setting for promoting U.S. interests abroad; some tourism publications even described American tourists and students as foreign diplomats.[208] Meanwhile, Mexican elites supported tourism in part because it could attract foreign investment in a sector that they felt would not offend revolutionary sensibilities. For example, one attractive feature of tourism was that it did not involve the direct foreign control of natural resources or infrastructure. In this way, Mexico could welcome

---

[208] "An American Embassy in Mexico," *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin*, June 1951, DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, 10.

investment into the sector without surrendering the most critical sources of national income, such as oil, mining, railroads, and land, to foreigners. Pan Americanism and international brotherhood were powerful ideologies which could unite domestic hosts and foreign guests in their support of Mexican hospitality. Mexican state and private actors alike used these ideologies to build up the industry in advertising campaigns, political speeches, and international events. At the same time, the Mexican state and private tourism actors cast tourism as an expression of patriotism. In their promotions and through the creation of "social tourism" programs, agents of tourism encouraged Mexicans to "see their country" and spend their tourism pesos preferably at home first, then abroad.

Some scholars have looked at the connection between culture and imperialism. Edward Said first examined the racialized western imperialist view of the east in his seminal work *Orientalism.*[209] Later, he studied the spread of western imperialism through cultural means in *Culture and Imperialism.*[210] Other scholars have closely examined the relationship between tourism and the dissemination of U.S. foreign interests abroad.[211] In his work *Negotiating Paradise*, Dennis Merrill argues that the U.S. commanded influence throughout Latin America by employing "soft power" through tourism. In his own words, he states,

---

[209] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage Books: 1979).
[210] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Vintage Books: 1994).
[211] Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France*, University of North Carolina Press, 2004; Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, University of California Press, 1989; Kristin Hoganson, "Girdling the Globe: The Fictive Travel Movement and the Rise of the Tourist Mentality," in *Consumer's Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* (University of North Carolina Press: 2007), 153-208; Dennis Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America*, University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

> Soft power might be considered…an intrusive influence wielded wherever global and local cultures meet by agents that often operate outside the purview of the state. Within the travel industry, agents of soft power include travel writers, artists, intellectuals, hoteliers, labor organizers, entertainers, media moguls, advertisers, and host of others, all of whom advance their particular interests whether or not they converge perfectly with the interests of host societies.[212]

Furthermore, the concept of tourism and "soft power" relates to Emily Rosenberg's contention in her book *Spreading the American Dream* that in the twentieth century, the U.S. wielded cultural influence throughout Latin American in order to gain more political and economic dominance in the region.[213] Merrill's interpretation of soft power focuses on non-state actors, since his study of Mexican hospitality focuses on the 1920s, which predates the most intense period of state-led tourism development. This chapter contends that along with non-state agents of tourism, state actors also actively participated in the spread of U.S. influence abroad. Also, it involved the participation of both Mexicans and Americans, as Mexican agents of tourism also contributed to the spread of U.S. power in their tourism industry. For instance, along with their U.S. counterparts, they utilized Pan Americanism and international brotherhood as effective ideological tools for tourism publicity. In addition, they embraced an industry which fundamentally relied on an influx of foreign capital, and therefore, foreign influence. Since Americans represented a steady flow of nearly ninety percent of foreign visitors to Mexico for the latter half of the twentieth century, their preference for familiar (and usually American) brands would be incredibly important to the tourism industry. Therefore, the involvement of U.S. airlines,

---

[212] Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise,* 243-244.
[213] Emily Rosenberg, S*preading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945,* Hill and Wang, 1982.

hotel chains, and U.S. tourists was crucial in the creation and successful rise of Mexico's tourism industry.

Tourism Ideologies

This chapter focuses on the use of various ideologies including Pan Americanism, internationalism, and nationalism in the lure of foreign and domestic tourists to Mexico. It is apparent that from its inception, ideologies played an incredibly important role in Mexico's state-led tourism development. They functioned as the philosophical ideas behind the importance of tourism and its role in the development of an increasingly globalized society which Mexico's agents of tourism, as state actors or private companies and investors within the tourism industry, espoused in order to market tourism to both national and international tourism consumers. In this way, ideologies provided a framework for state actors to convey to their audiences (both native and foreign) their justification for state investment in the development of the nation's tourism sector. In order to garner public support of the projects, the government claimed that state investment in tourism traversed mere economic motivations and aspired to higher ideas which were simultaneously related to both national unification and international camaraderie. The seemingly conflicting ideas of national unity and international friendship intermingled in order to draw tourists from both national and international sources, thereby enabling the growth of profits for the tourism industry. Thus, while on the surface nationalism and internationalism may seem contradictory, in this context they cooperated within the capitalist system to appeal to the various factions of tourism consumers whose capital the Mexican state and its investment partners strived to capture. The Mexican state used a two-pronged approach by appealing to both nationalist and

internationalist sentiments. In 1970, President Luis Echeverría Álvarez emulated this dual state-led approach to tourism when he stated, "Tourism is a source of human exchange and international understanding. We are equally interested in it becoming a vehicle for the Mexican citizen to travel around and show his children the roads of the motherland."[214] Thus, in order to accommodate these two competing sources of tourism revenue, Mexico's agents of tourism—private and public entities alike—espoused a combination of a nationalist and internationalist ideology of tourism in order to maximize their appeal to both native and foreign tourists alike between the 1940s and the 1970s.

The idea of Pan Americanism dates back to the nineteenth century with the formation of the International Union of American Republics (later known as the Pan American Union, and later reconstituted as the Organization of American States in 1948, as it remains in the present day) in 1890 at the first Pan American conference, which U.S. Secretary of State James Blaine called in order to reach agreements on various commercial and policy disputes among the countries of the Americas.[215] The newly-formed organization aimed to promote cooperation among the countries of Latin America and the U.S. While the International Union of American Republics may have formally institutionalized the idea of hemispheric solidarity, president James Monroe had expressed similar ideas through the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 (although it was basically the work of his secretary of state John Quincy Adams).[216] The Monroe Doctrine was a U.S. foreign policy which threatened acts of aggression against any European nation

---

[214] "Discursos sobre el turismo por el Presidente Luis Echeverría," December 1, 1970, AGN: LEA, 486.
[215] "Pan American Union," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed July 30, 2015, http://www.britannica.com/topic/Pan-American-Union.
[216] Thomas F. O'Brien, *Making the Americas: The United States and Latin America from the Age of Revolutions to the Era of Globalization,* University of New Mexico Press, 2007, 28.

which tried to colonize or interfere with countries in the western hemisphere.[217] Three years after the proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine, Simón Bolívar, one of the primary leaders of Latin America's revolutionary separation from Spain, organized the first inter-American conference in Panamá in 1826. As president, John Quincy Adams sent representatives from the U.S. to the conference, but they arrived too late to contribute much to the conversation.[218] This demonstrates some evidence that Latin Americans were interested in the idea of Pan Americanism and what they could gain from the unifying ideology from the beginning. However, many were suspicious of the Monroe Doctrine and recognized it as a document in which the U.S. claimed dominion over Latin America.[219] Theodore Roosevelt later revived the Monroe Doctrine through his Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, or "Big Stick," policy in 1904, as he threatened aggression against Europe if it dared to intervene in Venezuela's debt crisis. Over time, Roosevelt's "Big Stick" policy proved to have less to do with preventing a European invasion of the Americas than with promoting U.S. military intervention in Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic. Historians have drawn similar conclusions about the earlier Monroe Doctrine, and have determined that it also had more to do with the U.S. government's desire to expand its territory westward, which it justified through its endorsement of Manifest Destiny and Caucasian racial superiority, than its protection of its Southern neighbors from European aggression.[220] Nevertheless,

---

[217] Arthur Preston Whitaker, *The United States and the Independence of Latin America, 1800-1830*, Johns Hopkins Press, 1941, vii.
[218] Joseph C. Rovensky and A. Willing Patterson, "Problems and Opportunities in Hemispheric Development," *Law and Contemporary Problems* (Fall 1941): 657, accessed January 13, 2016, http://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2104&context=lcp.
[219] O'Brien, *Making the Americas*, 28.
[220] Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* Harvard University Press, 1981.

the idea of hemispheric brotherhood, which dates back to the nineteenth century, continued to color U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America throughout the twentieth century. By the 1930s and 1940s, Pan Americanism came to fruition. Americans and Latin Americans alike supported the ideology through their participation in the Good Neighbor Policy, hemispheric cooperation during World War II, cultural exchange, commercial relationships, international diplomacy, and international tourism.

In the post-revolutionary period, nationalist rhetoric was pervasive within Mexican politics, and an emphasis on the development of cultural nationalism was particularly important. The federal government cultivated the development of a national identity through the production and support of Mexican art, music, theatre, film, and radio, and state-led tourism projects in the decades following the revolution. The state also directed the development of a state-led tourism sector to promote national pride in Mexican culture and a collective national identity. Thus, the state focused on the preservation of national landmarks, archaeological sites, and other national treasures as a means of state-building. The state's promotion of tourism often overlapped with its attempts to define Mexico's national cultural identity by also including displays of Mexican music, theatre, and art as tourism attractions in themselves. Also, the state released public relations campaigns which encouraged Mexicans to travel within their own national borders first before venturing abroad. In this way, the state employed a definitively nationalist approach to tourism promotions among the Mexican citizenry. As a result, state-led tourism ventures were central to the federal government's shaping of Mexico's collective national identity in the post-revolutionary period through the end of the twentieth century.

The "Mexican Miracle," a period between 1940 and 1968, during which Mexico's economy expanded enormously, also provided an ideal laboratory for developing a tourist class within Mexico's own national population. The Mexican middle class greatly expanded during this period, which allowed more Mexican citizens the leisure time and money required to partake in tourism.[221] Improvements in new highways and the expansion of transportation facilities also led to the uptick in national travel. In 1961, more than a million residents left Mexico City during Holy Week alone, traveling to Acapulco, Veracruz, and Oaxaca.[222] The growth of Mexico's middle class provided the Mexican state a larger incentive to push tourism not only toward an international audience, but a national one, as well. In the early 1960s, the administration under President Adolfo Lopez Mateos (1958-1964) pushed campaigns encouraging Mexicans to travel in their own country before going abroad.[223] Later, in 1968, a report released by the Bank of Mexico, the Mexican Tourism Research Institute, and the Bureau of Tourism Research revealed a troubling trend among Mexican tourists: despite the state's earlier attempts to promote national tourism, nationals were increasingly travelling abroad and Mexico was missing out on their tourism revenue as a result.[224] Thus, in order to draw more Mexican tourists back to their home country, the national state-led tourism projects and nationalist rhetoric in relation to tourism intensified in the period following the release of the report in 1968.

---

[221] Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancun Bliss," in *The Tourist City,* edited by Dennis Judd and Susan Fainstein, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999, 125-126.
[222] Henry Goethals, "Mexico Seeks to Attract More Tourists," *The San Bernadino County Sun* (San Bernadino, California): April 24, 1961, accessed February 1, 2016, https://www.newspapers.com/image/51564726.
[223] Goethals, "Mexico Seeks to Attract More Tourists."
[224] "Mexican Expenditures Abroad on the Increase," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* August 1, 1968, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 6.

Mexican politicians expressed profound anxiety over the results of the report released by the Bank of Mexico and its possible implications for not only the future of Mexico's tourism industry, but the economy in general. In 1970, President Echeverría expressed concerns about the troubling trends in tourism explicitly, saying, "We are alarmed…that our fellow countrymen's expenditures abroad are expanding more rapidly than foreign tourists' expenditures in Mexico."[225] On the heels of the report's release, in 1968 President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz's administration announced its new tourism program which intended to modernize impoverished regions by constructing "tourism poles" in five locations throughout Mexico—in Cancún, Ixtapa, Huatulco, Los Cabos, and Loreto—the most important of which was Cancún.[226] A year later, the government created a new government agency known as INFRATUR (*Fondo de Promoción de Infraestructura Turística*, National Fund for Promoting Tourism Infrastructure) in 1969, which supported the already-existing government agency FOGATUR (*Fondo de Garantía de Fomento de Turismo,* Fund for Tourism Guarantees and Promotion), which aimed to promote hospitality in Mexico.[227] The two agencies later merged to become FONATUR (*Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo,* the National Fund for Tourism Development) in 1973 under the leadership of President Luis Echeverría Álvarez. The expansion of state-led tourism during this period demonstrates the new importance the Mexican state placed upon tourism as a strategy for bolstering economic development in the 1970s through the remainder of the twentieth century. In that same vein, the Bank of Mexico's 1968 report on national tourist expenditures abroad and the ensuing political anxiety over

---

[225] "Discursos sobre el turismo."
[226] Jeffrey S. Smith, "Three Generations of International Tourist Resorts in Mexico," *Geographische Rundschau International Edition* 5(1): (2009), 4-10.
[227] Tamar Diana Wilson, *Economic Life of Mexican Beach Vendors: Acapulco, Puerto Vallarta, and Cabo San Lucas,* Lexington Books, 2012, 6.

its implications for the tourism industry and the country in general offers an explanation for the expansion of state-led tourism agencies, the concentrated efforts by the state to create new resort locations, and the state's concentrated zeal for the framing of national tourism as an act of patriotism in the 1970s and beyond.

Thereafter, the federal government's newly minted division to oversee tourism development espoused a fervent nationalist ideology. The state's effort to promote tourism throughout Mexico among its own citizens was central to the initial formation and subsequent growth of its new state-led tourism projects. As a result, nationalism in connection to tourism development permeated advertising campaigns by both privately and publicly-owned tourism initiatives, speeches delivered by active and prominent politicians, curriculum in public education, and the creation of "social tourism" programs for students and workers alike. All of these efforts by public and private enterprises to forge a strong connection between tourism and nationalism contributed to the formation of Mexico's national identity through the pride in its national landmarks, archaeological sites, and other tourist attractions, all of which symbolized a shared national history for Mexican citizens. In addition, the state's emphasis on nationalism in relation to tourism informed Mexico's shaping of itself as a "tourism nation," as it framed state-led tourism projects, the confinement of Mexican nationals' travel within national borders, as well as the seeking of employment in the tourism industry as acts of patriotism.

In addition to nationalism, Mexico's agents of tourism championed an ideology which promoted tourism as a vehicle for the fostering of international, hemispheric, and global solidarity, peace, and brotherhood. Language and ideology which interpreted tourism as a means of promoting international friendship was present early on in

Mexico's post-revolutionary state-led tourism projects. For example, in a promotional brochure for Missouri Pacific Lines (a railroad company) dated June 26, 1936, R. Gonzalez Montero, the Head of the Tourist Department of the Mexican Government, drafted a letter addressed to North American and Canadian tourism agents which reflected sentiments which tied tourism to international camaraderie. Gonzalez Montero stated, "[Tourism] creates a spiritual attachment which makes for a closer friendship between our respective peoples. And it is understanding and friendship, precisely, which constitutes the supreme goal in this game of international mass movement of visitors, known as tourism."[228] In his statement, Gonzalez Montero, acting as an agent of tourism on behalf of the Mexican state, claimed that rather than an influx of capital, the primary goal of tourism was friendship between two nations and their people. Likewise, during World War II, a note from the editor in the February 1942 issue of the *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin* stated explicitly, "Travel is a great builder of Panamericanism *[sic]*, and we must keep Panamericanism *[sic]* growing each day."[229] The degree to which the importance of friendship outweighed the influx of capital for the Mexican state is both questionable and unknowable, but rhetoric interpreting tourism as an act which fosters international friendship and spreads peace nevertheless continued to permeate Mexico's tourism sector through the end of the twentieth century.

Internationalist language and ideology in the context of tourism promotions flourished in the 1930s and 1940s, as a new version of internationalism emerged which fostered solidarity among the inhabitants of the Americas. During this period, the Good

---

[228] *Mexico: A Foreign Land a Step Away*, Missouri Pacific Lines, June 26, 1936, DLSC: Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.
[229] "A Few Words from the Editor," *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin*, February 1942, DLSC: Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

Neighbor Policy and World War II forged a special relationship between U.S., Mexico, and the rest of Latin America. This led to the spread of Pan Americanism—an ideology which touted the belief in a collective hemispheric identity and promoted pride, goodwill, and solidarity among fellow inhabitants of the Western hemisphere, or Pan Americans. Pan Americanism and internationalist ideology pervaded the rhetoric related to the promotion of tourism by Mexico's agents of tourism, primarily through political speeches, industry meetings and events, and tourism advertisements.

In line with the promotion of tourism as a means of spreading international goodwill, Mexico often tailored its hospitality inventory to the tastes of international tourists. In order to expand its tourism industry and attract international tourists, Mexico's federal government invested heavily in infrastructure, expanded its national hotel room inventory, improved the quality of hotel amenities, increased its concentrated public relations campaigns, and directed the establishment of new resort locations. Keeping in mind the growing importance of tourism—especially for the Global South—in the context of rising mass tourism worldwide, in 1968, President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, approved a new program to promote substantial investment in the basic structure of the tourism industry. The new proposed program received backing from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.[230] This came in the context of the government's recognition of the rising potential of tourism, as at the time of the proposal the Díaz

[230] "Ortiz Mena Announces Vast Tourism Development Plan," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, April 15, 1968, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 3.

Ordaz administration estimated that Mexico's income from tourism would reach a record high of one billion dollars in 1968.[231]

The foundation of Mexico's five newest resorts in the 1970s occurred along with concentrated efforts by the Mexican state and the tourism industry to release a controlled ideology of tourism which appealed favorably to tourists. The philosophies that tourism spread goodwill between separate nations, amid Pan American comrades, and among fellow Mexican nationals all aimed to simultaneously cultivate collective identities and to maximize profits within the tourism industry. This embodies Benedict Anderson's theory of "imagined communities," which asserts that identities take shape through an imaginary sense of belonging to a shared community. More specifically, Anderson discusses the formation of identities in the process of nation-building.[232] In the case of Mexican tourism, agents of tourism encouraged the formation of shared identities through the ideologies of not only nationalism, but Pan Americanism, and internationalism as well. The motivations for the formation and dissemination of these ideologies were to shore up participation in the sector and increase profits, but also to protect U.S. interests abroad. The phenomena of mass tourism in conjunction with the Mexican state's post-revolutionary nation-building projects as well as the forging of Pan American identity in the wake of the Good Neighbor Project and World War II provided the appropriate conditions for Mexico's agents of tourism to develop this multidimensional approach to the marketing of tourism based on an ideological appeal to identity formation. In addition, Mexico's nationalist leanings in the post-revolutionary period aided the formal

---

[231] "Ortiz Mena," 3.
[232] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* London: Verso, 1983.

institutionalization of a state-led tourism industry. Throughout the course of its state-led tourism projects, the Mexican tourism industry tailored the country's hospitality inventory to tourists' demands for standardized amenities, improved infrastructure, regulated rates, and enhanced modes of transportation. The dawn of state-led tourism in the early twentieth century and its intensification and expansion in the 1970s, in conjunction with its inventive and widespread use of identity-based ideology to market the product of tourism as a tool of goodwill and solidarity, contributed to the Mexican state's successful development of hospitality and its emergence as a regional Latin American pioneer in state-led tourism development. Mexico's rise to international prominence resulted from its proximity to the U.S., the decline of American tourism to Europe following World War II, the contraction of American tourism to Cuba during the Cold War, the Mexican state's increased involvement in the build-up of national hospitality offerings, as well as the increased presence of U.S. hotel chains and airlines in Mexico.

U.S.-Mexico Relations, Tourism, and Pan American Brotherhood

In the first half of the twentieth century, diplomatic relations warmed between the U.S. and Mexico after the conclusion of the violent period of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). The two countries experienced a growth of creative exchanges between Mexican and American artists during the 1920s and 1930s. Shortly thereafter, Franklin D. Roosevelt's proclamation and implementation of the Good Neighbor Policy also aided in the easing of tensions between the two nations. In direct line with the Good Neighbor Policy, The Rockefeller Foundation and other government institutions aided in the production of more favorable cultural representations of Latin America and its

inhabitants through film and other forms of media. USAID (the United States Agency for International Development) also created a series of programs to promote Latin American folk art, which served in part as a way to garner support for U.S. influence in Latin America. For example, in the 1940s the Inter-American Development Commission, a predecessor to USAID, claimed to "re-discover" pre-Columbian handicraft techniques in Peru and produce standardized versions of the crafts for the international market. Native California Truman Bailey traveled to Peru and sought out craft methods which *Time* magazine described as "lost weaving techniques."[233] Bailey teamed up with Peruvian artist Grace Escardo to set up a workshop in Lima, in which artisans produced uniform versions of "authentic" and "cleanly designed" textiles, lacquer-work, silver, wooden utensils, and furniture. Large U.S. corporations including Westinghouse made bids for exclusive foreign sales rights and the Peruvian government allegedly gave the project its seal of approval.[234] USAID reproduced similar projects under President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress in the 1960s. The handicrafts initiatives aligned with the Alliance for Progress' mission to include cultural production and tourism promotions as part of its objective to bring about more economic development in Latin America. In 1962, the eighth Inter-American Travel Congress met in Guadalajara, Mexico and recommended that the Alliance for Progress include tourism in its mission.[235] In line with these objectives, USAID standardized the production of handicrafts from Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia and introduced them to the North

---

[233] "Old Crafts in New Hands," *Time* 48, 1 (July 1946): 38.
[234] "Old Crafts in New Hands," 38.
[235] Louis J. Garcia, "Big Boost for Latin American Tourism," *The New York Times*, October 7, 1962, accessed February 1, 2016, http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1962/10/07/121478660.html?pageNumber=343.

American and European markets.[236] There was a marketing and product development center in New York, and USAID sent technical teams to the participating countries in order to advise local artisans and help them organize production cooperatives.[237] One newspaper described the project in 1965 as a means of "boot-strapping" Latin America and its people into a "better way of life."[238] The project clearly served as a way of converting Latin Americans to American values, such as individualism, as well as capitalism, in which the standardization of production and the streamlining of marketing is essential. In this way, the USAID handicraft project and the Alliance for Progress' tourism mission exemplify Emily Rosenberg's thesis that throughout the twentieth century, U.S. entities wielded American influence through cultural means. Finally, USAID and the Alliance for Progress conducted these projects in the name of hemispheric solidarity, and thus supported a vision of Pan Americanism.

During World War II, with the palpable threat of the Axis powers looming, the U.S. and Mexico enjoyed a closer relationship than ever before. Mexico sent its farmworkers through the Bracero Program to harvest American crops as the farms were almost entirely abandoned by American men who went overseas to fight in the war. Mexico also contributed to the war effort more directly by officially declaring war on the Axis powers in May of 1942 after German submarines attacked Mexican merchant ships and oil tankers.[239] Mexican troops actively engaged German war ships and the

---

[236] "Alliance Comes to Life," *The Kingston Daily Freeman* (Kingston, New York), March 9, 1965, accessed January 13, 2016, https://www.newspapers.com/image/87092526; Jane Henrici, "Trading Culture: Tourism and Tourist Art in Pisac, Peru," in *Tourism and Cultural Conflicts*, Ed. Mike Robinson and Priscilla Boniface, (CABI Publishing: 1999), 166.
[237] "Alliance Comes to Life."
[238] Ibid.
[239] Christopher Minster, "The Unsung Ally: Mexican Involvement in World War II," About.com, accessed July 15, 2015, http://latinamericanhistory.about.com/od/thehistoryofmexico/a/09mexicoww2_2.htm.

government rounded up Axis allies throughout the country. In 1945, a Mexican Air Force Squadron of 300 men, known as the "Aztec Eagles," fought in the Philippines alongside the U.S. Air Force.[240] On the home front, Mexican women also served their country and the Allied Forces as nurses, ambulance drivers, and other volunteer positions for the government.[241]

At a ceremony on the roof of the Hotel Reforma in Mexico City in September 1942: the hanging of the Flag of the New World, a symbol of unity among nations in the Pan American Union. [242]

As a material symbol of rising Pan American unity in time of war, the nations of the Western Hemisphere created the Flag of the New World to represent the nations of the Pan American Union in 1942.[243] In a time of war, the flag served as an important symbol of hemispheric solidarity in the face of the spread of fascism. The wartime alliance between the U.S. and Mexico furthered the proliferation of Pan Americanism.[244] According to the *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin,* a monthly periodical published by the

---

[240] Minster, "The Unsung Ally."
[241] *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin,* September 1942, DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.
[242] *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin,* September 1942.
[243] Ibid. The Pan American Union is a term which refers to the U.S. and all nations in the Latin American region.
[244] Dina Berger, "Goodwill Ambassadors on Holiday: Tourism, Diplomacy, and Mexico-U.S. Relations," in *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourist Encounters,* ed. Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood (Duke University Press, 2010), 107-129.

state-owned oil company, Pemex, in Mexico City, "…the United States and Mexico in a post-war world can be summed up in twelve words: comrades in war, good neighbors and good friends in times of peace."[245] While confirming that war had solidified a friendship between the two nations, the *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin* also pointed to tourism as an important tool for the spread of Pan American friendship, stating,

> Not a little of the new concept of Pan Americanism that has arisen in Mexico has been engendered by the enormous numbers of Americans who have visited our country as tourists during the last several years. As a result of this tourist movement, the Mexican people, for the first time in history, have really come to know the American people. The countless thousands of personal friendships which have grown up through these contacts are permanent ties…Collectively they are the only substance which makes for permanent international friendship, goodwill and mutual esteem.[246]

In this light, acting as a state-directed agent of Mexican tourism, *The Pemex Travel Club* appealed to ideological and emotional connections between Mexicans and Americans in a time of war. It promoted a connection between Pan Americanism, tourism, and international camaraderie in order to inspire American patronage of Mexico's tourism industry (and therefore, increase profits).

The Good Neighbor Policy, the resulting spread of American cultural productions, the U.S.-Mexican wartime alliance, the Flag of the New World, and the spread of Pan Americanism collectively signified the U.S.' measurable and increasing influence throughout the Latin American region. This aligns with Emily Rosenberg's contention that cultural productions were key elements in the U.S.' efforts to wield influence and spread American cultural values throughout Latin America as a means of forging

---

[245] "Mexico Sets the Example for Latin America," *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin,* September 1942, DLSC: Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, 1.
[246] "Mexico Sets the Example," 1.

American economic, political, and cultural power throughout the region.[247] The magnitude of those cultural influences extend beyond that period in history, however, as Latin Americans—and Mexicans in particular—continued their close economic, political, and cultural relationships throughout the remainder of the twentieth century. These efforts by the U.S. government to forge fraternity with Latin American nations and their citizens in the era of the Good Neighbor Policy and World War II led to the spread of Pan Americanism and its lasting effects on international relationships among American nations. In tourism, this meant an increased U.S. presence of U.S. hotel chains, U.S. airlines, U.S. restaurant franchises, American rental car companies, and of course, American tourists.

The intense spread of Pan American brotherhood in the 1930s and 1940s proved to be incredibly influential in Mexico's successful development of its tourism industry. Much of this "brotherhood," however, consisted of U.S. efforts to keep Latin America supportive of the U.S. in the face of fascism during this period. The lasting influence of the Good Neighbor policy is evident in the language and images presented in advertisements, public relations campaigns, conferences, political speeches, and hospitality negotiations between Mexican and American businesses and governments in the post-revolutionary period. The preservation of those friendly relations was important to all agents of tourism, including the governments, businesses, local workers and even tourists, and the warmth of such relationships often served as an important barometer for the health and growth of Mexico's tourism industry. Without a steady and friendly relationship, Latin American countries feared that tourists would no longer want to come.

---

[247] Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream.*

From the American perspective, Pan Americanism held increasing important as more U.S. hospitality brands became interested in expanding their franchises into the Latin American market.

The rise of Pan Americanism in the early post-revolutionary period gave birth to various cultural institutions, music and dance festivals, organizations, study abroad programs, art commissions, and even the creation of the Pan American highway (which was proposed to span from Argentina to Canada). In 1926, for example, the Committee on Cultural Relations with Latin America, a non-profit educational organization headquartered in New York, sprouted under the direction of Latin American historian Hubert Herring with the mission to "arouse interest in and increase knowledge of the lands and peoples of Latin America among the citizens of North America."[248] It based the content and promotion of its educational seminars and institutes on the premise that:

> The certain path to international peace is through international understanding, appreciation, and respect…it is the Committee's hope that it can help to create through its activities an appreciation of the significance of [cultural] differences, and a respect for the people who are…different from the North American's accepted norm. The Committee's programs are contrived in this spirit.[249]

In its first decade or so of operations, the Committee conducted annual seminars in Mexico, which were attended by more than 1,000 Americans. It also conducted two seminars in the Caribbean and one in Guatemala. The Committee received attention from

[248] Mexico-Guatemala, The Committee on Cultural Relations with Latin America, 1936. DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, 3; The Committee on Cultural Relations with Latin America collected records, 1927-1940. PCSC, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.
[249] Mexico-Guatemala, 6.

the academic community, as it corresponded with renowned scholar W.E.B DuBois and gathered enthusiastic support from philosopher John Dewey.[250]

The Pan American mural painted by Mexican artist Roberto Cueva del Río in 1933 in the Mexican embassy in Washington, D.C. [251]

In 1933, the Mexican government commissioned artist Roberto Cueva del Río to paint a series of frescoes in its embassy in Washington, D.C. One of the frescoes centers on a theme of Pan Americanism and friendship among citizens of North, South, and Central America. The mural depicts two hands reaching from North and South America and meeting in Central America in a handshake. In addition, it features the faces some of the most prominent historical figures of the Western Hemisphere, including George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Simón Bolívar, Miguel Hidalgo, Benito Júarez, and José Martí. Cueva del Río finished the frescoes in the embassy in 1935.[252] The Pan American mural is a lasting expression of the desire held by prominent Mexicans and Americans in the 1930s and 40s to create and celebrate a common history and collective identity among inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere.

---

[250] The Committee on Cultural Relations; W.E.B. DuBois Papers. UMA, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts.
[251] "The Mansion," The Mexican Cultural Institute, Washington D.C., accessed July 16, 2015, http://www.instituteofmexicodc.org/mansion.php.
[252] "The Mansion"; "Friendship between the Americas," *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin*, February 1948, DLSC, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

In 1936, the Committee held an educational seminar, two institutes, and the Festival of Pan-American Chamber Music in Mexico, as well as a seminar in Guatemala.[253] The Committee aimed to spread knowledge and arouse interest in Latin America, and many of its programs took place in Mexico. Leaders and speakers at the seminars included American scholars of Latin America as well as many prominent artists, educators, and scholars from Mexico, including artist Diego Rivera, composer Carlos Chavez, and economist Ramón Beteta, among others.[254] The Festival of Pan-American Chamber Music included six consecutive evenings of music. Musicians representing the U.S., Mexico, and other Latin American countries were in attendance.[255] The festival also contained ten lectures by prominent artists and scholars from both sides of the border, evening receptions, and a fiesta of "typical Mexican folk dances and music."[256] The Committee held seminars in Mexico through 1940, and has no recorded activities after that year, most likely due to the start of World War II.

American publications also reflected the growing interest in Mexico and Pan Americanism. *Theatre Arts Monthly,* citing the increasing excitement among Americans with regard to Mexico, its culture, and its people, focused its entire August 1938 issue on "Theatre in Mexico."[257] The issue featured celebrated Mexican artist Miguel Covarrubias as the Special Editor for the Month and included articles by Covarrubias himself, musician Luis Sandi, film director and screenwriter Adolfo Best-Maugard, writer and promoter of the arts Francisco Monterde, artist Carlos Mérida, as well as playwrights Xavier Villarrutia, Salvador Novo, and Rodolfo Usigli. The issue included a picture of

---

[253] Mexico-Guatemala, 3.
[254] Ibid., 4-5.
[255] Ibid.,14.
[256] Ibid.,15.
[257] *Theatre Arts Monthly,* August 1938, DLSC: Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

Miguel Covarrubias with Diego Rivera, who was one of the most widely celebrated and highly recognizable Mexican artists among Americans at the time, and focused on not only Mexican theatre, but the development of Mexico's film industry, discussions of the Mexican art scene, as well as caricatures by Covarrubias. The issue capitalized on Americans' fascination with Mexico's post-revolutionary artistic renaissance. In addition, it drew attention to the rising interest among Americans to travel there in light of Mexico's newfound popularity and cultural renewal.[258]

At the height of the two nations' diplomatic push for Pan American friendship, the Office of the Coordinator of Latin American Affairs (OCLAA) opened the Benjamin Franklin Library on the Paseo de la Reforma in Mexico City on April 13, 1942.[259] In doing so, the OCLAA aimed to promote friendship between the U.S. and Mexico through exposure to literature and cultural interaction.[260] In the first two years of its operations, its contents expanded from 5,000 volumes to 18,000. The library offered every important magazine published in the U.S. and Mexico and approximately ten percent of its books were in Spanish. The Library presented classes in English for Mexican citizens, it had an auditorium where library staff showed American movies, it frequently offered lectures in both Spanish and English, and the auditorium featured art exhibits.[261] The Benjamin Franklin Library was an important institution designed to promote positive U.S.-Mexican cultural exchanges, formed at the height of the spread of Pan American ideology.

---

[258] *Theatre Arts Monthly,* August 1938.
[259] "Biblioteca Benjamin Franklin," Embajada de los Estados Unidos, accessed September 25, 2015, http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov/bbf/bfacerca.htm; Severo La Mancha, "The Good Neighbor Police," *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin,* January-February 1946, DLSC: Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, 10.
[260] "Biblioteca Benjamin Franklin."
[261] La Mancha, "The Good Neighbor Police," 10.

American air carriers also utilized the appeal of Pan Americanism to promote their airlines and facilitate students' ability to study abroad in countries throughout the Pan American Union. In 1937 Pan American Airways—a U.S.-based airline—established the Pan American Airway Travel Fellowship, which offered students from Latin America who were recommended for special study in the U.S. by the Institute of International education, free round-trip air transportation. In addition, fellowships were made available for U.S. students selected to study in Latin America.[262] Pan American Airways' motivations for doing so were clear. While they may have used the Pan American rhetoric to buttress their program, stating that they wished to "further…better understanding and good will between the Americas," they also aimed to garner support for their airline and increase their revenue.[263]

During the era in which Pan Americanism was most prominent in the minds of Americans and Mexicans alike, study abroad programs—particularly for Americans traveling to Mexico—became more commonly accessible. Having begun in 1920, the National University of Mexico (UNAM) Summer School became one of the best known study abroad programs offered to Americans in Mexico—and Latin America, for that matter—in the early twentieth century. At the Summer School, according to the *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin,* "students…learn[ed] what Pan Americanism really means" due to their frequent and intimate social intercourse with Mexican natives.[264] In 1945, 3,000

---

[262] "Brownsville Airport Link for Leaders in New World," *The Brownsville Herald* (Brownsville, Texas): April 14, 1944, accessed January 13, 2016, https://www.newspapers.com/image/22530173.
[263] "Brownsville Airport Link."
[264] "American Students in Mexico," *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin*, September 1942, DLSC: Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

young American women attended the UNAM summer school despite it being a time of war.[265]

Similarly, in 1938, the Mexican federal government established the "Escuela Universitaria de Bellas Artes" (*Fine Arts University*) in the ex-convent of Las Monjas in the beautiful colonial town of San Miguel de Allende, which is located in the central state of Guanajuato. The school featured intensive courses in English and Spanish, focused on the study of the arts of the Americas, and attracted students from all over the Pan American Union, which allowed students to have firsthand encounters and form interpersonal relationships with fellow Pan Americans.[266] According to an article in the November 1942 issue of the *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin,* the school was a force for the spread of Pan American brotherhood, stating that it "is proving itself to be a very worthwhile force for better understanding and friendship between the peoples of this hemisphere."[267] The Fine Arts School at San Miguel Allende received constant funding from the Mexican federal government, and serves as an example of the Mexican state's deeply vested interest in promoting tourism, not only through the mainstream pleasure travel market, but through the educational travel market as well. In addition, the descriptions of both the Fine Arts School at San Miguel Allende and the UNAM Summer School in the state-owned publication *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin* demonstrate the Mexican government's use of Pan Americanism as a powerful ideological marketing tactic to boost the tourism industry.[268]

---

[265] La Mancha, "The Good Neighbor Police," 9.
[266] "The Fine Arts School at San Miguel Allende," *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin*, November 1942, DLSC: Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. The "Pan American Union" is a term which refers to the U.S. and all nations in the Latin American region.
[267] "The Fine Arts School."
[268] Ibid.

Likewise, Americans also exploited the rising popularity of Pan Americanism to sell trips abroad to Mexico. In 1940, two Americans set up their own study abroad program in Mexico City. Henry L. Cain had served as superintendent of the American School Foundation in Mexico, while Paul V. Murray had worked as a principal of the high school department at the same institution for several years. Cain and Murray, having observed Americans coming to study in Mexico at the UNAM Summer School for years, had come to the conclusion that many students had difficulty acquiring credit at their home institutions for their time spent studying in Mexico due to the difference in educational systems between the two nations. For many students, the American credit requirements at their home universities were incompatible with the UNAM Summer School requirements. In addition, many American students came to Mexico ill-prepared to take the courses in Spanish at an advanced level, but the Mexican universities did not offer beginning Spanish classes at the time.[269] As a result, according to Cain and Murray, "most Americans who came down to study [in Mexico] went home disappointed."[270]

Thus, in order to alleviate the problems they had identified with the Summer School, Cain and Murray formed their own college in the center of Mexico City called Mexico City College. During its first year, it was a junior college and only enrolled a total of six students. It continued to offer classes throughout World War II, but with limited growth. It graduated its first class in 1944 and 1945, where twenty graduates received diplomas of Associates in Arts and Associates in Science. Within a few years after the war ended, Mexico City College expanded rapidly. In 1946 it was officially approved by the Veterans Administration to accept students under Public Law 346, or the

[269] "An American Embassy," 10.
[270] Ibid.

G.I. Bill, which covered the cost of tuition for Americans who had served in the military during World War II. As a result, by 1951, it employed 100 faculty members and its enrollment had grown to a total of 1,000 students—most of whom were Americans who came to study for one or two semesters. Consequently, *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin* proclaimed it to be "the friendliest American embassy that the U.S. has ever had in Mexico."[271] While studying in Mexico City, they also visited famous anthropological sites such as Teotihuacán, Tulum, Palenque, Chichén Itzá, and Uxmal. They also took trips to sub-tropical Cuernavaca, Taxco, the still active Paricutín volcano, the increasingly popular seaside resort Acapulco, as well as the many colonial towns, churches, and convents which dotted the Mexican countryside.[272] The students were able to gain firsthand knowledge of Mexico, its culture, and its people, but in an American-style educational institution.

The rise of Pan Americanism, coupled with the increased affordability of higher education in the aftermath of World War II, allowed for more American students to study abroad in Mexico than ever before. For the agents of Mexican tourism, these "American ambassadors" were also incredibly important for the continuous increase in American tourism to Mexico. The university students' prolonged visits and intense study of Mexican history, culture, language, allowed for a deeper understanding of Mexico and its people; in addition, upon their return home to the U.S., they would undoubtedly spread their enthusiasm for study and tourism in Mexico. In this light, they indeed promised to be incredibly valuable cultural "ambassadors" for Mexico and its burgeoning tourism industry in the post-war period. At the same time, they inserted the traditions of their

[271] Ibid.
[272] Ibid.

home country into Mexico's cultural landscape through the establishment of American-style educational institutions in Mexico and the American students' daily interactions with Mexican nationals.

The governments of American nations also promoted Pan American solidarity and tourism during this period through the foundation of the Pan American Games (Pan Am Games). At the Olympic Congress coinciding with the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris, France, the International Olympic Committee Members from Cuba, Guatemala, and Mexico proposed the establishment of regional games for Central American countries. This led to the first Central American Games, which took place in Mexico City two years later. At the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, representatives of Latin American countries proposed a regional game for countries of all the Americas.[273] The first event called the Pan American Games took place in Dallas, Texas, in 1937, but it attracted very little attention, and thus has not traditionally been included in the official recounting of the competition and its historical origins. The first meeting of the Pan American Sports Congress took place in Buenos Aires in 1940, and few years later, the first official games were to be held there in 1942, but they were cancelled due to World War II.[274] Thereafter, Argentina hosted the first official Pan American games in 1951, at which 2,500 athletes from twenty-two countries participated.[275]

Mexico played an important role in the Pan American Games in its initial foundation and its continued development, possibly due to the event's undoubtable

---

[273] "Pan American Games," Equinecanada, accessed July 30, 2015, http://equinecanada.ca/dressage/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=209&catid=97&Itemid=554&lang=en.
[274] "Pan American Games."
[275] Phil Hersh, "Pan Am Games: From Peron to the Present," *Chicago Tribune*, (Chicago, Illinois), August 2, 1987, accessed July 30, 2015, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1987-08-02/sports/8702260449_1pan-ams-argentina-central-america/2; "Pan American Games."

potential for attracting and encouraging more tourism to Mexico and throughout the Latin American region. Mexico hosted the second Pan Am Games in Mexico City in 1955, with approximately 2,000 athletes from twenty-two countries participating.[276] That same year, the organization overseeing the Games was renamed as the Pan American Sports Organization (PASO) and its headquarters were established in Mexico City.[277]

While the Pan Am Games certainly began as an event to promote friendly international relations and Pan American solidarity, the games have also been viewed by much of Latin America as another example of U.S. imperialism.[278] This became especially true as the rivalry between the U.S. and Cuba intensified in the 1960s, which even led Cuba to boycott the Games between 1984 and 1986.[279] American domination of the Pan Am Games became quite apparent at the 1967 Games in Winnipeg, when the U.S. won a total of 128 events—the most of any country at the international sporting event. In comparison, the host country Canada won the second highest number of events—only seventeen.[280] Later, in the 1983 Pan Am Games in Caracas, Venezuela, Latin Americans touted even more explicit anti-Americanism by shouting "Cuba sí! Yanqui no!" during a baseball game won by the Cubans.[281] Despite the blatant anti-Americanism which has been displayed at the sporting event over the years, the Pan Am Games has served as a lasting symbol of Pan Americanism. In addition, the Games themselves have provided opportunities for fellow Pan Americans to interact with one another and travel to other countries within their common hemisphere. They have also

---

[276] "Athletes Pouring into Mexico City," *Abilene Reporter-News*, (Abilene, Texas), February 27, 1955, 52, accessed August 5, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/45484275/?terms=Mexico%2BCity.
[277] "Pan American Games."
[278] Hersh, "Pan Am Games."
[279] Ibid.
[280] Ibid.
[281] Ibid.

promoted tourism throughout the region, and are currently the world's third largest international multi-sport games, following the Olympic Summer Games and the Asian Games.[282]

In light of another international multi-sport event held in Mexico City—the 1968 Olympic Games—remarks by President Díaz Ordaz at the opening of the Camino Real hotel reflected ideas of international solidarity which are similar to Pan Americanism. Travel agents, aviation executives, and many other key agents of the tourism industry attended the inauguration banquet of the Camino Real in July of 1968. President Díaz Ordaz commented on the growing importance of tourism as a means of spreading international peace and understanding. In this way, he proposed a toast to the opening of the Camino Real, stating:

> …in drinking to the success of this institution, let us fervently hope that it may…[make] it possible for men to know each other. They will come here from the most remote regions of the world to know us, the Mexicans, and fall in love with Mexico as so many other visitors have done, and they will make it possible for us to know men from all latitudes, to contribute our grain of sand to understanding among all men who constitute humanity, at present subject to such strong tensions…Let us drink to the success of the Camino Real.[283]

Here, Díaz Ordaz underlines tourism's connection to a broader fraternity among the entire global community of native hosts and foreign guests which reached beyond mere Pan American solidarity.

Díaz Ordaz' sentiments coincide with world-renowned hotelier Conrad Hilton's ideas with regard to the hospitality industry's new role in the context of an ever-shrinking

---

[282] "Toronto 2015 Pan American Games," See Toronto Now, accessed July 30, 2015, http://www.seetorontonow.com/toronto-2015-pan-am-games/.
[283] "President Diaz Ordaz Inaugurates Camino Real Hotel," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* August 1, 1968, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 9; 16.

world in the age of air travel. By the 1940s, Hilton became a major player in the U.S. market and by the 1960s, Hilton was quickly becoming a leading and influential entrepreneur in the global tourism industry. Although Hilton himself admitted that the Hilton Group could make just as much money building up the chain in the U.S., he nevertheless pushed the chain overseas, touting the belief in the importance of shoring up positive relations with the international community. As a firm supporter of capitalism, Hilton also cited the threat of communism as one of his primary concerns. At the height of the Cold War, communism loomed as he was most intensely expanding his international hotel empire in the 1950s and 1960s. He believed that he could quell the global spread of communism by opening hotels abroad, therefore demonstrating the thriving promise of capitalism while simultaneously building friendly relationships with foreigners. Hilton opened the first European Hilton hotel in Madrid in 1953 and a hotel in Istanbul shortly afterward.[284] Similarly to President Diaz Ordaz, Hilton espoused the idea of the spread of world peace through the hospitality industry. At the 1963 opening of the Park Lane Hilton, his first hotel in London, he stated rather explicitly, "My new hotels will play a leading role in world peace."[285] A Roman Catholic and resolutely anti-communist, he interpreted himself not only as a businessman but as a missionary, as well. As *The Observer* reported in 1963, "He sees his glamorous hotels—and especially those in foreign lands—as symbols of progress, human and divine. He offers them to us as a means of drawing people into closer Brotherhood, as a small contribution to the peace of the world. In countries most exposed to communism he believes a Hilton hotel must

[284] "Conrad's Hilton Chain Fulfills His Global Dream," *Telegraph*, January 1, 2006, accessed July 6, 2015, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/2929259/Conrads-Hilton-chain-fulfils-his-global-dream.html.
[285] "Conrad's Hilton Chain."

usefully exhibit the fruits of freedom."[286] Hilton had his critics, as at the opening of the Park Lane Hilton in 1963, Britain's *The Daily Telegraph* commended his aspirations but cast doubts on his ability to suppress the spread of communism and foster international brotherhood through the means of comfortable beds and luxurious amenities.[287] Nevertheless, Hilton remained steadfast in his self-proclaimed mission to "spread world peace" and thwart communism through the growth of the international hospitality industry.[288]

The political turmoil of the Cold War often left travelers feeling uncertain. This made it difficult for the hospitality sector to conduct business in areas which were particularly vulnerable to the spread of communism like Latin America. For this reason alone, an adherence to ideologies which promoted friendly relations like Pan Americanism and international brotherhood were especially important to hospitality executives. Political events could poison international relationships, and thereafter tourism, and business, would decline. For example, in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution, Pan American World Airways struggled to maintain a relationship with Cuba, as passenger traffic to the island and the Latin American region dropped.[289] Even after the revolution, Fidel Castro viewed American tourists positively and continued to welcome them to the island.[290] Within weeks of the ousting of Fulgencio Batista on January 1, 1959, *The New York Times* reported on January 18, 1959 that casinos were being re-opened (to foreigners only), the Oriental Park horse-racing oval had re-opened,

---

[286] Ibid.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Ibid.
[289] Thomas F. O'Brien, "Unpublished Manuscript," 2016. By permission of the author.
[290] R. Hart Philips, "New Cuba Invites Tourists," *The New York Times*, January 18, 1959, accessed February 1, 2016, http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1959/01/18/89107936.html?pageNumber=402.

international airplane service had resumed, baseball games recommenced at the Havana Stadium (and many American players participated), and repairs of highways and railways had begun.[291] Prime Minister Fidel Castro stated in an open letter to the American people, "I wish to invite the American tourists and the American businessmen to come back to Cuba…our hotels, shops, and offices are open and we want our friends from the United States to come and see Cuba, which can now be counted among the countries where freedom and democracy are a reality."[292] Later, between October 17 and 19 of 1959, Havana hosted the 29th annual World Travel Congress, sponsored by the American Society of Travel Agents, only months after revolutionaries had assumed power. 2,000 travel professionals attended the event. Castro greeted them with common sentiments of international solidarity, saying, "Through tourism there will develop new bonds of understanding between the people of Cuba and those of the U.S…All the people of Cuba say 'Bienvenidos.'"[293] Despite Castro's warm welcome to foreign tourists, according to Thomas O'Brien, "Pan Am…[became]… increasingly aware of the threat which mounting anti-Americanism represented to its interests in the region."[294] Pan Am's 1958 annual report revealed that the stream of travel in Latin America had decreased by 5.1 percent due to political unrest in the region. Even worse for Cuba in particular, hotels in Havana were running at occupancy rates of fifty percent or lower. In its report for 1959, Pan Am noted that its Intercontinental Hotels had undergone a net loss of $154,000 due to plummeting revenues at its Nacional Hotel in Havana.[295] Shortly thereafter, the

---

[291] Philips, "New Cuba Invites Tourists."
[292] Ibid.
[293] Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise,* 168; PAR, S1, Box 20, Folder 7.
[294] O'Brien, "Unpublished Manuscript."
[295] Ibid.; PAR, S1, Box 446, *Pan American Airways, Annual Reports, 1958, 1959*; Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise,* 148.

situation only worsened as the Cuban government nationalized U.S. investments and Washington imposed an economic embargo on Cuba in 1960. The Cuban Revolution proved to be incredibly bad for business, even if Castro appeared to be supportive of American tourism.[296] Pan Am also became active in President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, which aimed to suppress political conflict in Latin America through economic aid.[297]

Thus, corporate and state actors' interpretation of tourism as a powerful means of spreading international goodwill—and suppressing communism—commonly framed the explosion of international tourism in the mid-twentieth century. Political leaders and industry giants like Conrad Hilton and Mexican President Díaz Ordaz professed a belief in the importance of tourism for the advancement of friendliness among nations and their inhabitants. They used that ideology as a means of garnering support for the development of tourism. Clearly, during the Cold War, international camaraderie was viewed as important in the face of the threat of communism from Cuba and other Latin American countries. In the context of tourism, this solidified a union between hemispheric solidarity and capitalism. Furthermore, for some agents of tourism, the expansion of hospitality into a global market in the 1960s, in light of the increased availability of fast and convenient global transportation through air travel, represented progress and economic growth, as well as the spread of peace and friendly relations among members the international community. The rise of global tourism for these various agents of tourism served as a new form of international diplomacy—not among government representatives through formal meetings and agreements on a macro-level,

[296] O'Brien, "Unpublished Manuscript."
[297] Ibid.

but on a micro-level, between foreign guests and native hosts. In Mexico and around the world, agents of tourism in the public and private spheres of hospitality alike espoused these ideas. On the surface, these ideologies promised to unite foreign hosts and native guests, but they also promised to increase profits for corporate entities and private investors. In addition, U.S. interests in tourism did not stir anti-American sentiments in the same way that foreign investments in mining, oil, and land did. For this reason, the post-revolutionary Mexican elites turned to tourism as an emerging field of economic interest for their foreign investors.

In the post-revolutionary state, Mexican government officials were careful in the establishment of laws and policies to not place too large of a burden on the tourists themselves when it came to taxes. This was in line with Mexico's national identity as a "friendly neighbor" and "the amigo country" to the U.S. On June 13, 1975, in an official announcement made during the First National Tourism Meeting held in Zacatecas, Carlos Tello Macías, Under-Secretary of the Treasury said, "As the result of an in-depth study of the matter, I wish to announce that the fifteen percent tax on food and beverages will be canceled as of July first. This cancellation means that foreign tourists visiting us will be exempt from payment of the tax. On behalf of the government, José López Portillo, Minister of the Treasury, has taken this step for the purpose of helping to augment the inflow of tourists into Mexico."[298] Tello continued, with regard to how Mexican nationals would be affected by the proposed change, saying, "This exemption does not affect the charges made by restaurants and bars so far as Mexican nationals are

[298] "Effective Today 15% Tax on Hotel-Restaurant Abolished: Sec. López Portillo," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, July 1, 1975, 1. HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.

concerned. The position of the government is that nationals must pay the luxury tax, which means that the moneyed classes patronizing these deluxe places will continue to pay the tax. With that revenue the Mexican government aids in providing and maintaining the services required by our population."[299] Thus, the Mexican government made a policy which favored foreign tourists over Mexican nationals. In order to take advantage of the break in sales tax, any foreign tourist patronizing a first-class restaurant, bar, or nightclub had to present his or her tourist card or passport when it came time to pay the bill.[300]

Tello's announcement brought an end to a legal battle waged by hotels, restaurants, and travel agents against the fifteen percent tax, which was known in the U.S. and Canada at the time as a "tourist tax." The 150 attendees of the Tourism Meeting were overwhelmingly surprised by the announcement, especially since the fifteen percent tax would still be applicable to Mexican nationals but not to foreign tourists.[301] Prior to the change in the law regarding the tourism tax, the Tourism Minister Julio Hirschfeld Almada had reported that Mexico's annual tourism increase in number of foreign tourists had decreased from twelve percent in 1973 to five-point-six percent in 1974. Hirschfeld Almada pointed to the global economic crisis as well as fifteen percent "tourism tax" imposed on consumption in restaurants, bars, and nightclubs as the cause for the decline in foreign tourism to Mexico. Hirschfeld Almada also stated that the tax was especially harmful to Mexico's appeal to foreign tourists since one of Mexico's chief attractions

[299] "Effective Today 15% Tax," 1.
[300] Ibid.
[301] Ibid.

was the fact that tourists' money stretched farther in Mexico than in other countries.[302] At the time, Mexico garnered ninety-five percent of their foreign tourism from the U.S. and Canada, so being able to accommodate those markets was especially important to Mexico's federal government. Following the repeal of the fifteen percent tax for foreigners, the Mexican government planned a full-scale promotional campaign throughout the U.S. and Canada.[303]

While Mexico championed Pan Americanist rhetoric in its promotions of tourism, the U.S. also used similar language, policies, and ideology in relationship to tourism. Perhaps the most prominent example of Pan Americanism in U.S.' tourism policy was proposed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in January of 1968. In this instance, President Johnson announced a policy which endorsed the propagation of Pan American solidarity, in which he proposed a tax on Americans who traveled outside of the Western Hemisphere for a period of two years in order to remedy a "dollar drain" of tourism revenue lost to American tourists traveling abroad.[304] The Johnson administration cited a $2 billion spending gap in which Americans spent more abroad than travelers spent within the U.S. Johnson proposed a tax of $7 per day for Americans who traveled outside the Western Hemisphere for the next two years.[305] While the policy may have initially aimed to contain most travel expenditures within the U.S.' national borders, the U.S. also preferred Latin American tourism because of the region's dependence on U.S.

---

[302] "Tourism Down 5% in 74, Says Hirschfeld Almada," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, July 1, 1975, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 9.
[303] "Tourism Down 5%," 9.
[304] "Travel Tax Exemption Defended," *Jefferson City Post-Tribune*, (Jefferson City, Missouri), January 4, 1968, 1, accessed July 7, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/34224447/?terms=Jefferson%2BCity%2BPost-Tribune.
[305] "LBJ Proposes $7 Per Day Travel Tax Outside Hemisphere," *The Oneonta Star*, (Oneonta, New York), February 6, 1968, 1, accessed July 7, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/47277236/?terms=The%2BOneonta%2BStar.

imports. The more Latin American economies grew, the more they would spend on U.S. imports, thus repatriating tourist dollars to a much greater degree than tourism dollars spent in Europe. This took place in the midst of a balance of payments crisis which was caused in part by U.S. participation in the Vietnam War.[306] The policy also promised to be beneficial to the Latin American region, particularly in countries whose tourism industries were only beginning to take shape. Boasting receipts of 1.5 million foreign tourists—eight-five percent of them American—in 1967, Mexico had already established itself as a leader of tourism development, particularly for the American tourist market, in the region.[307] By that time, tourism had become so important to Mexico at the time that U.S. tourists had become its top source of foreign exchange. Upon Johnson's announcement of the proposed travel tax, Mexico's Tourist Department Director Agustin Salvat described the measure as "very important" for Mexico and the Latin American region.[308]

In anticipation of the proposed changes, Latin American nations expected a "bonanza" of American travel to their countries which they estimated would amount to a hike of approximately fifteen to twenty percent above the figures for American travel to South America in 1965, which had been 130,000 travelers who had spent $65 million.[309] Government officials from all over South America expressed their excitement about the policy. Carlos Sanz de Santamaria, president of the Inter-American Committee of the Alliance for Progress, told the annual membership meeting of the South American Travel

---

[306] "Memorandum United States Department of the Interior," June 20, 1966, Lyndon B. Johnson Library, Austin, Tx. National Security Files, Country Files, Latin America, Box 5.
[307] "Travel Curb to Europe Boom for Our Hemisphere," *El Paso Herald Post*, (El Paso, Texas), January 8, 1968, 8, accessed July 3, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/68491822.
[308] "Travel Curb to Europe," 8.
[309] Ibid.

Organization (SATO) in Lima, Peru, in December 1968 that "tourism is the quickest and most efficient means to accomplish the equitable redistribution of national income."[310] At the same meeting, Santamaria stated that tourism was "a much more feasible solution to the development of our countries than any other trade efforts…from tourism they can get the foreign exchange needed to build roads, schools, hospitals."[311] In Colombia, the Colombian Tourist Institute received immediate government approval after Johnson's announcement to use dollars freely in their purchases and expenditures.[312] Meanwhile, in Venezuela, the tourism sector appealed to its government for more official aid for tourism, as even the capital, Caracas, lacked adequate hotel space to keep up with the impending surge in demand.[313] In Brazil, officials said they were "ready" for a "great influx" of American tourists, and that an increase in tourist revenue would allow for more investments in tourist facilities. Only Argentina seemed to express a restrained enthusiasm for the proposed travel tax, as a representative of the American Express Travel Agency stated, "We just don't have the (hotel) space [to accommodate more tourists]."[314]

Despite the vast enthusiasm expressed by Latin American countries for the travel tax and its positive implications for the region, some news sources cast doubt on Latin America's ability to accommodate the influx of tourists to the region. In February of 1969, the English-language newspaper *The News,* which was published in Mexico City, questioned Latin America's capacity to provide the number and quality of amenities which would be required to accommodate the impending increase in American tourists to

[310] Ibid.
[311] Ibid.
[312] Ibid.
[313] Ibid.
[314] Ibid.

the region. With regard to this issue, *Mexico Travel and Hotel News* also weighed in, saying,

> …when the few places with decent accommodations fill up, tourists accustomed to the sophisticated amenities of Europe are not likely to be enchanted by the prospect of fighting for bed and board in the third-rate hotel and restaurants that remain. By the time U.S. citizens can travel freely again, many thoughtful people fear, disgruntled tourists will have given Latin America such a bad image that few will want to visit it in the future.[315]

As of 1966, the entire South American region had only captured four percent of U.S. tourists' worldwide spending.[316] Also, South American countries did not have an expansive inventory of hotels, restaurants, and modern transportation outside of capital cities. Santiago, the capital city of Chile, had only one distinguished hotel at the time.[317] Even Río de Janeiro's Copacabana Beach, which was well-known by international tourists at the time, did not have one single hotel or restaurant with an established international reputation.[318] Thus, such expressions of doubt as to the region's ability to adapt to such a drastic spike in American tourists—who were accustomed to European standards of hospitality and would not likely adapt well to less luxurious accommodations—were not entirely unfounded. Despite various publications' misgivings about Latin America's ability to accommodate the anticipated hike in American tourists to the region, they nevertheless made a clear distinction between Mexico, the Caribbean, and the rest of Latin America, stating that both Mexico and

---

[315] "Is Latin America Ready for U.S. Tourist Overflow?" *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, February 15, 1968, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 6.
[316] "Is Latin America Ready?" 6.
[317] Ibid.
[318] Ibid.

countries in the Caribbean had already taken full advantage of their close proximity to the U.S. to develop their tourism industries.

By the 1960s, Mexico had distinguished itself as a regional leader in tourism development. At the time, Mexico itself outperformed the entire Central American region combined in its ability to attract tourists.[319] In the early and mid-1960s, Latin American countries increasingly turned to tourism as an attractive source of capturing foreign capital. As a result of Mexican tourism's remarkable rise to international prominence, they often modeled their industries after Mexico. For example, in 1962, Venezuela's government formed a corporation for the development of tourism and established a budget for advertising and public relations, most of which would target the U.S. market. The president of the new corporation, Dr. Carlos Alberto Punceles, cited Mexico as "the only country in Latin America that had succeeded in attracting a significant amount of tourism."[320] In 1965, Central America created a "Common Market" in order to increase tourism to the region. The Common Market proposed a regional tourist card, which would be good for travel in all Central American countries. In addition, Central American countries pooled resources to increase and modernize the region's hospitality holdings. Citing Mexico's tourism industry as their model for inspiration, Central American countries hoped to add 9,400 new hotel rooms and create 19,000 new jobs in Central America by 1975 through the Common Market.[321] The South

---

[319] Paul P. Kennedy, "Central America to Spur Tourism," *The New York Times*, July 25, 1965, accessed February 1, 2016, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1965/07/25/96710643.html?pageNumber=345.
[320] "Government of Venezuela Will Seek to Build Tourism," *The New York Times*, August 15, 1962, accessed February 1, 2015, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1962/08/16/83224253.html?pageNumber=3.
[321] Kennedy, "Central America to Spur Tourism."

America Travel Organization (SATO) also emerged in the 1960s, and it also recognized Mexico as a regional tourism leader.[322]

Mexico's success certainly occurred in part due to its vicinity to the U.S. However, the decline of U.S. travel to Europe after World War II and then to Cuba after the revolution in 1959 also contributed to Mexico's increasing popularity among American tourists seeking to travel abroad. It surely helped that travel to Mexico was affordable and the weather was warm, but perhaps most significantly, more American airlines and hotel brands were increasingly committed to expanding their services in Mexico and the Mexican government itself invested considerably more in the build-up of its tourism industry than any other Latin American country. For example, even by 1967, Mexico spent more than $1 million per year on its tourism promotions in the U.S., which represented five or six times more than the budget for the entire South American Travel Organization (SATO) at that time.[323] The government had made early concerted efforts to increase its hotel room inventory, improve the quality of services, increase promotions, and develop a network of reliable and well-maintained airports and highways. Finally, overall, in part due to Pan American propaganda proliferated by the tourism industry, politicians, and cultural institutions, Americans had come to view Mexico as a politically stable nation. It was also seen as friendly towards Americans, especially in comparison to other Latin American countries where communism had taken a stronger hold. This became especially important during the Cold War, as political tensions rose and anti-Americanism spread throughout the region.

---

[322] "The 'Sleeping Giant' of Tourism Stirs," *The New York Times,* December 31, 1967, accessed February 1, 2016, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1967/12/31/96982247.html?pageNumber=182.
[323] "The 'Sleeping Giant' of Tourism Stirs."

Within the U.S., well-known, prestigious national publications such as the *Christian Science Monitor* also espoused Pan Americanism by urging its readers to visit Mexico. In December 1969, the publication stated that Mexico had become easily accessible to Americans not only because of its close geographical proximity, but also because of improvements in transportation. Aside from excellent highways and steamship lines, Americans could now more easily and quickly reach the foreign nation by plane via twenty-three international airlines from the U.S. to Mexico City, Acapulco, Guadalajara, and Mérida (Yucatán), among other cities.[324] Prominent publications such as the *Christian Science Monitor* may have expressed a vested interest in the increased travel of Americans to Mexico due to its reliance on the tourism sector's growth, as an increase in profits for airlines and hotels would predictably mean an increase in the purchase of advertising space in its own pages. In light of the Jet Age and its anticipated impact on the affordability, pace, and frequency of travel particularly among Americans, the impending upsurge in the value of such advertisements must have seemed both inevitable and irresistible to such publications. Also, in the context of the Cold War, major publications expressed a desire to maintain good relations with Mexico and other Latin American countries in the face of the communist threat from Cuba and guerilla activities in South America.

While Pan American rhetoric infiltrated political rhetoric and business practices by both Mexican and American hospitality executives, Mexican politicians, hoteliers, airline administrators, and the like posed a staunch defense against what they perceived

---

[324] "Christian Science Monitor Urges More Travel to Mexico," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, December 15, 1969, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 2.

as a palpable threat of foreign control over Mexico's burgeoning international tourism industry. For example, on July 10, 1969, in Mexico City, Antonio Armendáriz, director of the National Foreign Trade Bank, called upon Mexican capitalists to combine national resources and funnel them into the tourist industry, in part to take advantage of the heavy investment being poured into tourism by the government, but also to combat any possible challenge from foreign capitalists whose seemingly unlimited financial resources threatened to dominate the rising tide of international tourism in Mexico.[325] Armendáriz encouraged investors to pour money not only into the construction and improvement of hotels, but also into the development of transportation, service industries, food production, entertainment, and other related industries.[326] In addition, he urged Mexican capitalists to invest in tourism, assuring them of a good return on their capital and "more security than they can achieve by means of an anonymous bank account or safe deposit box in a foreign bank."[327] He warned that if Mexican investors failed to take advantage of the opportunity to invest in the tourism sector being offered through the government through programs proposing the construction of highways and bridges, and the installation of drinking water and drainage systems, particularly in the west coast and the southeastern region of the country, then foreign investors would jump on the opportunity to do so instead.[328]

Meanwhile, in the spirit of Pan American brotherhood, manager of the Federal District Hotel Association Jorge Granillo commented on Armendáriz's remarks, stating

---

[325] "Armendáriz-Foreign Trade Bank-Warns Against Foreign Control of Tourism," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, July 15, 1975, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 7.
[326] "Armendáriz-Foreign Trade Bank," 7.
[327] Ibid.
[328] Ibid.

that any claims about the impending threat of foreign capital dominance in the hotel industry was ridiculous, that competition was helpful for the industry, and that Mexican hoteliers had a lot to learn from foreigners in relation to the management and operation of hotels. In fact, he concerted that the assistance of foreign experts in hospitality management was imperative to the success of Mexico's plans to further develop its international tourism industry.[329] The Mexico City English language publication *The News* added in that same vein,

> American hotel management especially knows how to cater best to American tourists—who make up more than ninety percent of the visitors—and the great bulk of the money spent by them will remain here…U.S. hotel management won't try to milk the business with poor service and exorbitant prices. It long ago learned that the way to keep clients coming back again and again is to seek little short-range profit, and rely on the long-range goal—a constantly greater guest influx…More jobs will be created for Mexicans…foreign dollars through the sale of hotels can be invested in many allied industries by Mexicans. To build an ultra-nationalistic fence around this industry just doesn't make sense.[330]

In this way, the agents of the Mexican tourism industry navigated the seemingly contentious marriage of nationalism and Pan Americanism as agents of tourism simultaneously used both as marketing tools in light of the tourism industry's rising development. Many Mexican capitalists acknowledged the need for foreign—particularly American—insight into what business practices appealed to American consumers and therefore embraced a Pan American approach to the development of tourism. Meanwhile, others, in the spirit of the Revolution and in fearful memory of American capital domination throughout the Porfiriato, clung to nationalist economic policies in their approach to further developing the burgeoning industry.

---

[329] Ibid.
[330] Ibid.

The Mexican government and other institutions which remained steadfastly committed to the development of Mexico's tourism industry formally framed the spread of Pan Americanism and international goodwill as crucial elements of successful tourism development through the remainder of the twentieth century. The International Good Neighbor Council embodied this idea through its rewarding of honorary diplomas to outstanding figures in tourism "for their meritorious work in the field of tourism, and for creating friendship between the people of Mexico and the United States" at a cocktail luncheon in Mexico City in 1976.[331] Recipients of the diplomas included Miguel Alemán, who was President of Mexico's Tourism Council (and often deemed "The Father of Tourism" in Mexico for his work in Acapulco's development) and other prominent figures in the tourism industry at the time.[332]

The idea of Pan Americanism and the spread of international fraternity in connection to tourism continued well into the 1970s, 1980s, and into twenty-first century in the form of advertisements, political speeches, and cooperation among the various agents of tourism. In 1977-1978, Mexico's Ministry of Tourism launched a campaign entitled "Mexico: The Amigo Country" in print publications throughout the U.S., such as magazines, newspapers, brochures, and other print media. The ads featured a typical Mexican sombrero next to the campaign title in the bottom corner of each advertisement. The "Mexico: The Amigo Country" campaign harkened back to the age of Pan Americanism, during which the Good Neighbor Policy influenced U.S.-Latin American international relations. Through this campaign, the Mexican state came to define itself in

---

[331] "Ruiz Alcántara, International Good Neighbor, Awards Diplomas to Personalities," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, April 1, 1976, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 8.
[332] "Ruiz Alcántara," 8.

relationship to foreign tourists as their "amigo," or friend. This highlights not only the important role that tourism came to play in relationship to national identity, but also its interaction with international diplomacy.

"Mexico: The Amigo Country" 1977-1978 Campaign [333]

While it may not have enjoyed the same degree of influence as in its heyday of the 1930s and 1940s, Pan Americanism continued to play an important role in the ideological appeal of tourism to tourism consumers throughout the remainder of the twentieth century and beyond. Pan Americanism remained a key powerful component of the ideologies used by advertisers and other agents of tourism to promote the industry in Mexico, especially when appealing to the primary consumers of international travel to Mexico—American tourists.

Tourism and Nationalism: A Project of Patriotism

Throughout Mexico's post-revolutionary period, but especially as American middle-class tourism skyrocketed with the dawn of the Jet Age in the 1960s, the reach of the Mexican government's involvement in the development of Mexico's hospitality industry stretched much further than mere capital investment. It also demonstrated an

[333] "Mexico: The Amigo Country," *Independent Press-Telegram*, (Long Beach, California), October 30, 1977, 30, accessed July 28, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/30680166.
"Tourney of Roses Float Winners," *Ukiah Daily Journal*, (Ukia, California), January 2, 1978, 2, accessed July 28, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/579480.

intense interest in the development of human capital and the re-shaping of attitudes among Mexican nationals with regard to the increased importance of tourism for the country. Political speeches by Mexican presidents and governmental tourism administrators reflected this shift in national priorities, as they frequently cited tourism as the key to the future development of Mexico's national economy. They also commonly called for an increase in tourism promotions and travel among Mexican nationals, and tied such measures to the proliferation of national pride in Mexican patrimony. For the federal government, Mexico's "national patrimony" included not only the nation's expanding inventory of recently-excavated indigenous architectural ruins, colonial cities, and newly-constructed planned resorts, but also its abundant and diverse supply of natural landscapes, including lakes, rivers, oceans, beaches, mountains, forests, jungles, and deserts. In addition, the government cited Mexican cuisine, artisanry, handicrafts, and the Mexican people themselves in its descriptions of national patrimony. However, despite the richness of Mexico's cultural attractions, Mexican people were traveling to other countries more frequently than they traveled within their own nation. The government sought to rectify this trend in order to bolster its economy, but also to foster national pride in tourism and re-define Mexico's national identity in the process. Consequently, the government launched campaigns and programs which aimed to promote more travel within Mexico's national borders among Mexican citizens.

In the 1960s, the Mexican government first recognized the need for Mexican nationals to travel more commonly within Mexico's national borders. According to figures released by the Banco de México (Bank of Mexico) in 1968, foreign visitors in 1967 spent $879.4 million dollars in Mexico. Meanwhile, Mexican nationals who

traveled to foreign countries or bought goods on the U.S. side of the U.S.-Mexico border spent $535.9 million dollars, for a net gain of a mere $343 million dollars. On the other hand, in 1966, even with a smaller income from foreign tourists traveling to Mexico--$849.3 million dollars—Mexico's net income was greater at $381.8 million dollars, since Mexican nationals spent much less at $467.5 million dollars while traveling abroad and shopping in the border region. Meanwhile, in 1965, Mexico's income from tourism amounted to $774.3 million dollars, but since Mexicans only spent $414.2 million dollars abroad, Mexico's net income from tourism was $360.1 million dollars. If these figures were compared to those from 1967, even with $105 million fewer dollars earned from foreign tourists travelling to Mexico, the overall net income for 1965 was still $17 million dollars more than in 1967.[334] These figures indicated to Mexico's federal government that national expenditures abroad were increasing at a much faster rate than foreign tourists' expenditures inside of Mexico's borders. Given the growing importance of the tourism industry for Mexico's economy, these figures caused great alarm to the Mexican state.

In reaction to the Bank of Mexico's 1968 report, the Mexican state forged its revitalized state-led tourism projects with a firm measure of nationalism. In his addresses to the nation regarding tourism, President Luis Echeverría expressed grave concerns over Mexicans traveling abroad rather than traveling throughout their own nation. Along those lines, in one such address at Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, on November 23, 1969, President Echeverría stated,

> There are those who spend fortunes in order to explore faraway lands. They visit Hawaii, which has the beauty of Cozumel and Isla Mujeres;

[334] "Mexican Expenditures Abroad on the Increase," 6.

> they go to the Blue Coast (France) and Punta del Este (Uruguay), when we have coasts not only in Acapulco, but in the Yucatán Peninsula and the Caribbean Sea; they travel to Egypt and accidentally encounter Teotihuacán or Chichén Itzá; and at the Swiss lakes, they encounter with foreign references of admiration Lake Chapala or Lake Pátzcuaro.[335]

In Pátzcuaro that day, Echeverría tied tourism to national pride and identity by comparing the natural beauty of Mexico's patrimonial holdings with those of well-known, better established international tourism resorts from around the world. Also, he unequivocally casts Mexican tourism within Mexico's national borders as an act of patriotism. At the same time, Echeverría's descriptions also suggest an element of *malinchismo,* or a betrayal of one's nation in favor of foreign lands or people, among those who travel abroad rather than traveling within one's homeland. This rather bold suggestion intended to draw tourists back home and to entice Mexicans to invest in their own tourism industry as tourist-patriots.

Nationalism and Social Tourism

Despite considerable gains by the Mexican middle class during the "Mexican miracle," the Mexican government recognized that there was still a substantial number of people who were unable or unwilling, primarily due to financial constraints, to spend money on tourism. Since the Mexican state had begun to cast tourism not only as a source of revenue and economic growth, but as an important project of patriotism, it created programs which aimed to expand Mexican citizens' access to tourism, especially among those of lower socioeconomic means. In 1971, through his article "Fifteen Lessons on Tourism," Miguel Aleman argued that tourism was "the best method for

[335] "Discursos sobre el turismo."

breaking away from [traditionally] 'closed societies' and educating the masses."[336] Meanwhile, Julio Hirschfeld Almada, who became Mexico's first Minister of Tourism in 1976, expressed the Mexican state's intentions to create a "tourism revolution," by providing more access among the lower classes to tourism, stating, "The revolutionary concepts of tourism supported by this administration make a definitive break with the trend that tourism has become an activity exclusively reserved for the privileged sectors of the population."[337] Thus, with a widening consensus among Mexico's major tourism leaders that tourism was an optimal method of spreading economic and social wellbeing among the general populace, the new sector of "social tourism" emerged as a tourism market of rising importance for the Mexican state. However, in spite of the sweet-sounding rhetoric, Mexican political elites' motivations for turning to social tourism may not have been as noble as they claimed. Rather, they may have been attempting to placate the masses through populism. This would have become especially important in the late 1960s and early 1970s as the Mexican miracle declined, economic inequality increased, and leftist guerilla groups arose in the Mexican countryside, demanding social justice from the wealthy and powerful elites. In addition, many of the political elites, including Miguel Alemán and Luis Echeverría, had private investments in the tourism industry, and this would have created an even greater incentive for them to promote tourism.[338]

This "tourism revolution" specified by the Mexican state and facilitated through social tourism emerged through a series of proposed projects. In order to facilitate more

---

[336] Miguel Alemán, "Quince lecciones sobre el turismo," AGN: LEA, 489, (1971), 1.
[337] 1976: Reporte en las actividades de la Secretaría del Turismo, 1970-1976. AGN: LEA, 486, (November 30, 1976), 69.
[338] Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancún Bliss."

travel inside Mexico by Mexican nationals, government institutions and other employers began to offer their employees discounted rates at specified government-run hotels at various locations throughout the country. FAMITEL was one establishment proposed by the government in the 1976 Secretary of Tourism's annual report which would offer Mexican families low-cost lodging in order to facilitate travel among low-income families.[339] Meanwhile, other programs aimed to offer low-cost travel opportunities to *ejidatarios*, students, workers, and other factions of low-income Mexican citizens.[340] The government created CREA (*Centros de Recreación, Educación y Actividades*, Centers for Recreation, Education, and Activities), which were recreational centers with 500 rooms, a common room, a dining hall, kitchens, bathrooms, showers, an infirmary, a CONASUPO (a government-subsidized grocery store stocked with basic commodities), a laundry room, and recreational facilities.[341] CREA centers were established in various parts of the country depending on the socioeconomic makeup of the region as well as the cultural resources nearby. According to Minister of Tourism Hirschfeld Almada, CREA and similar social tourism projects were considered a "social imperative" for the new Ministry of Tourism.[342]

---

[339] 1976: Reporte en las actividades, 35.
[340] 1976: Reporte en las actividades, 35. The term *ejidatarios* refers to people who live on *ejidos*, or communal plots of land used for agriculture which Lázaro Cárdenas' administration granted to primarily indigenous populations in 1934 in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution throughout the revolutionary state's land redistribution program.
[341] CONASUPO (Compañía Nacional de Subsistencias Populares, or National Company for Basic Commodities) consisted of a series of government-subsidized grocery stores which sold basic commodities including powdered milk, tortillas, rice, beans, etcetera. CONASUPO existed between 1962 and 1999. 1976: Reporte en las actividades, 35; "50 Años de la CONASUPO," Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, accessed August 4, 2015, http://www.mmh.org.mx/nav/node/710; "Análisis Programático Institucional Compañía Nacional de Subsistencias Populares," Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, accessed August 4, 2015, http://www.apartados.hacienda.gob.mx/contabilidad/documentos/informe_cuenta/1999/documentos/chp99p05r05v1.pdf.
[342] 1976: Reporte en las actividades, 37.

Finally, the government offered its state employees significant discounts for travel. Through ISSTE (*Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado*, or Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers), the Mexican state began to offer government employees discounts through Sistema de Agencias Turísticas TURISSSTE (TURISSSTE Tourism Agencies System). ISSTE is an organization started in 1959 under the President Adolfo López Mateos administration which oversees the health care and social security systems for employees of the federal government. It also provides benefits in cases of disability, old age, labor risks, and death. As a part of its new social tourism programs, the Mexican state began offering special tourism packages at a discounted price to its federal employees through TURISSSTE in the 1970s in the context of the newly-formed "social tourism" programs.

In addition to state-run establishments which offered discounted rates to Mexican nationals, private enterprises aimed to provide affordable lodging alternatives to middle and lower-income consumers by the 1970s. For example, in 1976, a new hotel chain known as Econhotels began establishing hotels which aimed to attract tourists with more modest incomes. It constructed its first hotel in Baja California Sur, and made plans to construct other locations in Mazatlán, Acapulco, Puerto Vallarta, and Cancún. Compared to the usual rates charged by the more familiar, elegant hotel chains frequented by movie stars and other elite clientele, like Camino Real and Nacional Hotelera, Econhotel charged just $8 to $16 dollars per day and still provided all the services demanded by tourists. President of Econhotels Pedro Brunner, commented to *Mexico Travel and Hotel News* in 1976, "What we need in Mexico is a chain of new, modern hotels with all the services required to satisfy the most demanding clientele, at moderate rates. This is the

name of Econhotels, as the name itself implies."[343] Econhotels and other budget-friendly hotel chains aimed to fill a gap in the tourism market as tourism became more commonplace among members of the middle and lower classes.

The Mexican state's social tourism "revolution" also created discount programs for young people in Mexico. Students of all ages could also receive discounts on travel-related expenses in numerous sites all over Mexico, either independently or on school-sponsored trips. During one such campaign in the customary summer vacation months of July and August of 1971, students could receive a fifty percent discount in some of the hotels in thirty-two of the seventy-nine tourism locations that existed throughout Mexico at the time.[344] According to the Head of the Department of Tourism Agustín Alachea Borbón, the Mexican state hoped that the student discount campaign would "have a profound transcendence…on the educational foundation of our young people. Also, it is the best way to teach…young people to completely enjoy the beauty that our country contains."[345] Although it has never represented a significantly large portion of Mexico's tourism industry, government efforts to support social tourism and foster national pride in Mexican culture and heritage accordingly, especially among the Mexican youth, remains intact to the present day.

Nationalism and Hospitality Education

In that same vein, the state strengthened the links between nationalism and tourism by investing more in hospitality-oriented education by the 1970s and 1980s.

---

[343] "Econhotels to Provide Good Lodging, Economical Cost," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* August 1, 1976, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 18.
[344] Declaraciones del jefe del departamento del turismo, Agustín Alachea Borbón, después de una cita con el Presidente Luis Echeverría, AGN: LEA, 486, (June 21, 1971).
[345] Declaraciones del jefe del departamento del turismo.

Hospitality education also served as the state's indoctrination of Mexican youth into a national identity which was very closely tied to state-led tourism projects. In the late 1960s, Mexican government officials expressed desires to invest more capital into the construction of tourism schools throughout the nation. Miguel Alemán, who was the president of the National Tourism Council at the time, led national efforts to invest in training Mexico's tourism personnel. At a luncheon meeting of the Federal District Hotel Association on June 8, 1968, Alemán expressed a profound belief that more tourism schools to train tourism personnel at the international level should be a national priority. He stated, "Our world belongs to those who are trained, to the technicians."[346] He praised the single tourism school which was in existence at the time, but called for improvements in its curriculum and an expansion of its reach to other parts of the Republic. During a recent trip to South America, many tourist businesses expressed a desire to send their staff members to Mexico for hospitality training. Alemán stated regrettably, "It was really very difficult for me to tell them that we were not in a position to do so."[347] Thus, while Mexico was a leader in international tourism for the Latin American region, in terms of formal training, it was still in deep need of further development. Alemán was instrumental in initiating the steps towards the formal institutionalization of hospitality training in Mexico.

The Mexican state's interest in investing in the education of its young people as a means of building up its industries and attracting foreign capital harkened back to Díaz's

---

[346] "Tourism Schools Mexico's Basic Need: Alemán," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, June 15, 1968, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 1.
[347] "Tourism Schools," 1.

19th-century efforts to promote the teaching of English in public schools.[348] The Díaz administration most likely introduced English in public schools in order to attract and accommodate U.S. capital investment, with no real intention to use it as a means of increasing tourism to Mexico. Nevertheless, such measures to introduce English to Mexican school children proved to be an important step in the professionalization of the tourism industry. According to a 1944 issue of the *Pemex Travel Club Bulletin*, "Today English is by far the dominating foreign language…in Mexico. This rise in the popularity of the English language is indication enough of the tremendous number of American tourists coming to Mexico."[349] The U.S. was Mexico's closest neighboring country. In addition, Americans represented ninety-one percent of foreign tourists traveling to Mexico in 1973.[350] Thus, English remained a foreign language of top priority in Mexican public schools.

In subsequent years, the number of higher-education institutions offering the study of tourism exploded as a result of the state's vested interest in expanding the professionalization of the nation's tourism industry. By 1985, the republic contained at least sixty-six institutions which included programs related to the study of the tourism industry.[351] As of 2015, Mexico City alone contained forty-two institutions of higher education which offered studies related to tourism.[352] Despite these significant gains in

---

[348] *Facts and Figures about Mexico,* 10.
[349] Castillo, "Travelling in Mexico 1900," 3.
[350] Actividades del turismo para el mes de Agosto 1974 hasta el presente, AGN: LEA, 486, (August 13, 1975).
[351] Unidad de la Crónica Presidencial, AGN: MDLM, Sectur, 21.01.00.00, 4, 4, (November 28, 1985), 4.
[352] "Schools in Mexico with the Best Tourism and Hospitality Professionals," Global Recruiters, accessed August 6, 2015, http://www.global-recruiters.com/schools-in-mexico-with-the-best-tourism-and-hospitality-professionals/.
"Guía de Escuelas, Distrito Federal," Sectur, accessed August 6, 2015, http://www.sectur.gob.mx/ictur/cultura/educacion/guia-de-escuelas/nivel-superior/distrito-federal/.

terms of opportunities for students to gain a formal education in the study of tourism, some experts doubted the long-term advantages that formalized tourism education provided for students in terms of gaining employment. Professionals at the first International Congress and Latin American Seminar of AMFORT/WAPTT (World Association for Professional Tourism Training) in 1989, for example, cast doubt on the merit of formal tourism education for Latin American university students when they reported that only twenty percent of tourism graduates from Latin American universities had found a satisfactory place in the labor market.[353] Although the report did not specify the plight of graduates from tourism programs in Mexico, the numbers appeared glum nevertheless. Therefore, the state's efforts to build up higher education for tourism studies did not necessarily yield better employment opportunities for students. However, they would have been important material symbols of the state's increased commitment to the tourism sector and Mexico's new identity as a "tourism nation."

In addition to founding formal education programs in tourism through the higher-education university system, Mexico also created informal training programs. One of its most prominent programs was Inter-American Tourism Training Center, or CICATUR (Centro Inter-Americano de Capacitación Turística). Created in 1973 through an agreement between Mexico's federal government and the Organization of American States (OAS), CICATUR's primary objective was to "cooperate with member states in developing and increasing tourism activities through basic and advanced training of personnel of official tourism organizations, of instructors in tourism training, and of

---

[353] Leonardo Pogorelsky and Regina G. Schlüter, "Latin American AMFORT Congress," *Annals of Tourism Research* 16 no. 4 (1989): 582, accessed August 6, 2015, http://ac.els-cdn.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/0160738389900145/1-s2.0-0160738389900145-main.pdf?_tid=63ef32c6-62f1-11e5-a0f0-00000aab0f26&acdnat=1443122641_38c3f0fe5843b5ad354fe551f9c6027a.

planning experts in the national, state, provincial, or municipal offices."[354] It opened its official headquarters on May 16, 1974 in Mexico City with Minister of Secretary Hirschfeld Almada, President Echeverría, Secretary General of the OAS Mr. Galo Plaza, ambassadors from member states of the OAS, among others, in attendance. Held in Mexico, the first Inter-American Seminar on Tourism Planning was attended by forty-three experts from different countries in the hemisphere.[355] The center focused on four plans of action to meet its objectives: training, research, technical assistance, and the dissemination of its outcomes. Each year, CICATUR held biennial training programs which included two inter-American courses, three regional courses, and seven national courses. The OAS financed twenty-five fellowships for each course.[356] While the OAS established CICATUR's headquarters in Mexico, it created sub-centers in Argentina in 1976 and later in Barbados.[357] CICATUR continued to operate and offer its training programs to select fellows in member states of the OAS for only two five-year terms, first led by Roberto Boullón (1973-1979) and later by Miguel Ángel Acerenza (1979-1984).[358]

Despite its relatively short run in operation, CICATUR is considered by some scholars of Latin American tourism to have made a profound impact on the development of the tourism industry throughout the entire Latin American region.[359] The CICATUR centers in Barbados, Argentina, and Mexico collaborated to create the "inter-American

---

[354] Organization of American States, "The Network of Inter-American Tourism Centers and CICATUR in Mexico." *Annals of Tourism Research* 2 no. 3 (Jan.-Feb. 1975): 147-148, accessed July 28, 2015, http://www.sciencedirect.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/science/article/pii/0160738375900432.
[355] Organization of American States, "The Network of Inter-American,"147.
[356] Ibid., 148-149.
[357] Varisco, Cristina, et al., "El relevamiento turístico: de Cicatur a la Planificación Participativa," paper presented at the VI Congreso Latinoamericano de Investigación Turística, VI LatinAmerican Conference on Tourism Research, Neuquén, Argentina, September 25-27, 2014, a ccessed August 17, 2015, http://nulan.mdp.edu.ar/2052/1/varisco.etal.2014.pdf, 5.
[358] Varisco, et al., "El relevamiento turístico," 5.
[359] Ibid., 1.

training and guidance system," which functioned as the central informal training system for tourism development in the Latin American region.[360] As a result of CICATUR's widespread influence, tourism throughout Latin America during the second half of the twentieth century was characterized by principles of foreign investment as well as centralized and carefully laid-out planning, which differed markedly from prior tourism development efforts in the region. Systematic planning and economic principles encouraging foreign investment became understood by government officials and private actors alike as an efficient and practical approach toward economic development in the ensuing decades. During this period, a widening intellectual and specialized interest in tourism development flourished throughout Latin America as a result of CICATUR's training programs and a simultaneous growth in university studies in tourism alike. CICATUR and the blossoming of tourism studies throughout the region greatly influenced a generation of technocrats who led the further expansion of systematically planned tourism development in Latin America in the remainder of the twentieth century.[361]

Nationalism and Industry-Wide Cooperation

At this time of burgeoning nationalism within the tourism industry, coupled with a growing trend toward more standardization in the industry, collaboration among the various agents of Mexican tourism, including hotel administrators, airline executives, travel agents, restauranteurs, and the like became a national priority for the federal

---

[360] Ibid., 5.
[361] Ibid., 6-7; César Capanegra, et al., "Historia del turismo: La construcción del turismo como factor de desarrollo, Argentina (1958-1976)," (paper presented at the V Congreso Latinoamericano de Investigación Turística, V Latin American Conference on Tourism Research, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 2013), accessed August 18, 2015, http://www.academia.edu/3034918/Historia_del_Turismo._La_construcci%C3%B3n_social_del_turismo_como_factor_de_desarrollo_Argentina_1958-1976.

government. As a result, government regularly sponsored national conferences and luncheons which celebrated the unprecedented blossoming of Mexico's tourism industry. During the Echeverría administration, U.S. trade shows became a "landmark" strategy in Mexico's efforts to increase national exports to the U.S.[362] In turn, the tourism industry reproduced similar business events at home. At the meetings, tourism agents shared the most up-to-date research related to hospitality and collectively strategized new plans to promote the industry's continuous advancement. In light of Mexico's newly-forged national identity as a "tourism nation," national advertising campaigns for tourism, whether sponsored by FONATUR or corporate agents of tourism, reflected this new identity. The ads frequently featured images and copy which encouraged Mexicans to travel inside national borders and endorsed national pride in Mexican culture as well as tourism sites and attractions. This was especially true when agents marketed the campaigns to Mexican audiences. Thus, this fundamental shift in national priorities and the government's institutional backing of camaraderie among industrial agents as the key to tourism's success signaled a new inclusion of tourism into governmental rhetoric and ideology with regard to national identity formation. While prior to the Mexican Revolution, tourism was a mere political afterthought, in the post-revolutionary period, it became a top national priority. In the process, throughout the period under study, Mexico's tourism industry expanded rapidly and Mexico came to define itself as a tourism nation. The government's fostering of national pride in Mexican patrimony and the tourism industry itself, its investment in human capital through the development of hospitality-centered education programs, its creation and encouragement of social

[362] "MexFair Tries to Shed Sleepy Siesta Image," *The Times Herald Record* (Middletown, New York): August 17, 1976, accessed January 13, 2016, https://www.newspapers.com/image/69141406.

tourism, as well as its encouragement of solidarity among tourism agents in Mexico were central to that process.

In line with the government's initiatives to increase travel among Mexican nationals within Mexico's geographical borders and in light of the Jet Age and its inevitable link to an increase in foreign tourism, government officials also spoke of the need for Mexico and its citizens to support tourism and its associated industries as a means of achieving national economic development. On August 13, 1976, several years into the Jet Age and a mere year after the official inauguration of Cancún, Mario Ramón Beteta, the Secretary of Finance under President Luis Echeverría, highlighted the rising importance of tourism for the national economy. Beteta pointed out that income generated from tourism made the greatest contribution to Mexico's balance of payments.[363] For that reason, he urged private and public sectors of the industry, as well as Mexican citizens in general, to treat foreign visitors with "special consideration."[364] Thus, he called for an end to "abuses" aimed at tourists, as foreign and national travelers alike complained about overpriced hospitality services. Beteta argued that rates and prices in the hospitality sector had to be set and maintained at reasonable levels, comparable to those of other countries, in order to remain competitive in the international tourism market. He also pointed to FONATUR as a source of support for the industry, and underlined the institution as essential to the future development and sustainability of tourism in Mexico.[365]

---

[363] "Sec. Beteta Speaks out on Tourism, its Importance and Preservation," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* September 1, 1976, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 16.
[364] "Sec. Beteta," 16.
[365] Ibid.

As nationalist rhetoric and ideology increasingly permeated governmental speeches related to the importance of tourism for the nation, it also played a role in the shaping of how various entities within the hospitality industry interacted with one another. For example, Mexico's Tourism Friendship Day emerged in the mid-1970s as an annual event which fostered cooperation among industry leaders within Mexico's tourism industry. In 1975, Nacional Hotelera, which was one of Mexico's rising state-run hotel chains, hosted Mexico's Tourism Friendship Day for the second year in a row. The breakfast event gathered together 500 travel agents, airline executives, hotel administrators, and other representatives in the hospitality industry. The primary host of the affair was Julio Sánchez Vargas, who was the sitting president of SOMEX banking at the time. SOMEX was an industrial and hotel conglomerate which was fully owned by the Mexican government. Incidentally, Nacional Hotelera was a subsidiary of SOMEX. The event, then, was fully backed by the Mexican government and served as a gathering to promote "friendship" and collaboration among various entities within Mexico's hospitality industry. In this way, the event promoted tourism as a national priority for the federal government and framed tourism's success in the context of national cooperation among fellow Mexicans.

Minister of Tourism Julio Hirschfeld Almada was in attendance at the event and announced an overwhelming growth in Mexico's tourism sector, saying, "The development of Nacional Hotelera means an ever-growing inflow of tourism to Mexico

from all parts of the world."[366] Almada also made a call for more partnerships among the various entities of the hospitality industry, stating,

> Gone are the days when each sector of the tourist industry formulated its own plans and projects, utilized resources and programmed activities with no coordination, no common denominator to unite all those engaged in providing tourist services. We are of the opinion that, during the present administration, two highly significant steps have been taken in the field of tourism: enactment of the Federal Law of Promotion, and the creation of the Ministry of Tourism…but it is impossible for the Ministry of Tourism to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to it, even when the respective Law and its regulations exist, without the full collaboration and wholehearted participation of the Mexican tourist family.[367]

Thus, as the sitting Minister of Tourism at the time, Almada called for collaboration among the various agents of tourism in Mexico and a subsequent creation of "the Mexican tourist family." The use of the words "family" and "friendship" suggests the government's intention to nurture an unprecedented closeness and intimacy among colleagues in the tourism industry. Almada's speech and the event itself signaled a shift in the federal government's strategy to grow the tourism sector and, more broadly, Mexico's national economy, by investing in professional development through events, luncheons, conferences, and similar occasions. Such events lent themselves to social interaction and networking among attendees, which aided the government's efforts to promote camaraderie among those employed in Mexico's tourism sector and thus foster national collaboration and pride in tourism in the process.

Nationalism and State-Run Hospitality

In Mexico's post-revolutionary state, it often utilized protectionist economic policies as a means of warding off foreign domination of its national industries. In the

---

[366] "II Tourism Friendship Day at Hotel del Prado," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* October 1, 1975, 8-9. HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[367] "II Tourism Friendship Day," 8-9.

case of tourism, the Mexican state held interests in various parts of the hospitality industry including hotels and airlines. In 1959, the Mexican government also nationalized Aeronaves de México (which was later re-named Aeroméxico), the leading airline in Mexico at the time, and expanded its services to more remote areas.[368] While the state-run hospitality industry never grew to dominate the entire tourism industry and the state did allow foreign investment in tourism, the government nevertheless embraced other protectionist practices which transcended state-owned enterprises. For example, the state established limitations on the percentage of a hotel or other business which could be foreign-owned. Foreign capital investment was limited to minority ownership according to Mexican law. Foreigners were limited to forty-nine percent ownership according to laws passed during President Echeverría's administration. However, his administration also allowed foreigners to privatize beaches through the establishment of thirty-year trusts, which had previously been prohibited by the 1917 constitution. These protectionist practices together—nationalization and the limitations on foreign ownership—combined to underpin nationalism's ties to the tourism industry. However, they also joined policies which accommodated the insertion of foreign capital into the Mexican economy.

In 1972, the government bought the small hotel chain Nacional Hotelera (Hoteles Presidente) and transformed it into a chain of twenty hotels by 1975. Julio Sánchez Vargas, president of SOMEX banking, claimed the chain had improved its services, its personnel was being "expertly trained," and it had major plans to expand even further.[369]

---

[368] "Tourism Becomes Mexico's Number One Industry This Year," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, November 15, 1963, 38, accessed August 6, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/23122811.
[369] "II Tourism Friendship Day," 8-9.

Nacional Hotelera opened a 250-room hotel in Cancún and another hotel in La Paz, Baja California in 1975. In 1976, it completed the construction of El Presidente Chapultepec Hotel in Mexico City, which consisted of 800 rooms. For that project, Nacional Hotelera gathered capital support from a group of investors which was made up of 100 percent Mexican nationals.[370] While the government inherited a deficit when it first took over the hotel chain, within three years it had completely paid off its debt.[371]

The federal government's acquisition and subsequent transformation of Nacional Hotelera reflected the prominent shift toward a government-backed hospitality industry. In addition, the acquisition of Nacional Hotelera, coupled with the establishment of FONATUR and the vast increase of government funds being poured into the tourism sector, supported the move toward Mexico's new understanding of the support of tourism as an expression of nationalism. In that same vein, Nacional Hotelera's company slogan was "Serving Mexico…Serving Tourism."[372] The wording of the slogan nearly equates Mexico with tourism itself, and thus reflects the ostensible changes in Mexico's nascent definition of itself as a tourism nation.

Nationalism, Publicity and the Construction of National Identity

By the mid-twentieth century, the entanglement between the tourism industry and the construction of national identity became much more visible to the Mexican public due to programs, public speeches, and tourism ads by the federal government and tourism enterprises. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Mexican state, in the process of restructuring its newly centralized state-led tourism projects, became increasingly

---

[370] Ibid.
[371] Ibid., 9.
[372] "¡Todo pagado! Cancún," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, September 1, 1975, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 6.

concerned with Mexico's image both abroad and at home. The state acknowledged the central role that images and advertising played in constructing and projecting a national identity, which in turn influenced tourism. Since tourism was quickly becoming a national economic priority for Mexico, the state began to assert more control over the production and spread of Mexico's national image through various forms of cultural media including print advertising, radio spots, television commercials, and films. In 1971, Vicente Magdaleno, who was a writer, poet, and literature teacher at the National Preparatory School *(Escuela Preparatoria Nacional)* in Mexico City wrote a memo to the Ministry of Tourism outlining suggestions of how to restructure Mexico's image through tourism publicity.[373] In the memo, Magdaleno presents a perspective shared by President Echeverría that "almost all of the advertising has fallen into the hands of foreigners…which distorts [Mexico's image]."[374] Also, he claimed that while much of the advertising for travel to Mexico spoke well to Mexicans, it spoke "very little to the imagination of foreigners."[375] Finally, he concluded that the advertising did not adequately represent Mexico as a whole, and romanticized its indigenous past as a means of exploiting the appeal of "exotic" natives to foreigners.[376] Consistent with Magdaleno's concerns about foreigners' domination and distortion of Mexico's image abroad, the Mexican state launched new concerted efforts to control the construction and distribution of its appearance to both national and international audiences.

---

[373] "Magdaleno, Vicente," Coordinación Nacional de Literatura, accessed August 5, 2015, http://www.literatura.bellasartes.gob.mx/acervos/index.php/catalogo-biobibliografico/981.
[374] Sugerencias con respeto a la publicidad turística, AGN: LEA, 48, May 2, 1971.
[375] Sugerencias con respeto.
[376] Ibid.

"Here's What Mexicana Knows That They Don't" [377]

Even in the process of constructing and distributing its image for international audiences, Mexicans often took a decidedly protectionist and nationalist posturing. For example, in a 1975 Mexicana campaign, the privately owned airline claimed "Here's What Mexicana Knows That They Don't." In the title of the campaign, "they" refers to the airline's foreign competitors. In the print advertisement, Mexicana defined itself as "the airline that knows Mexico."[378] Reinforcing its identity as one of Mexico's two leading national airlines (Mexicana and Aeroméxico together held a monopoly over domestic flight routes in the 1970s and 1980s), the copy of the advertisement reads, "Mexico. Every mesa. Every mountain. Every jungle. Every beach. But then we should. Mexico's our home. Seven U.S. airlines can fly your clients to Mexico. But not one can fly your clients all over Mexico."[379] The copy in the advertisement attempts to highlight Mexicana's advantages over its foreign competitors by claiming to know

[377] "Here's What Mexicana Knows That They Don't," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, November 1, 1975, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 5.
[378] "Here's What Mexicana Knows," 5.
[379] Ibid.

Mexico better than its foreign counterparts and highlighting its identity as a Mexican airline. The ad therefore casts the airline itself as an embodiment of Mexican national identity. The images which accompany the copy in the advertisement include a map of Mexico which contains a mix of pictures which evoke both modern and ancient Mexico: a pyramid, a girl in a bikini, a group of mariachis, a bullfighter, a fisherman, and a colonial mission. These images reflect the Mexican state's attempt to redefine Mexico's national identity and offer a more nuanced, multidimensional representation of its national identity than ads had done in the past, in this case to a foreign audience. The images evoke a Spanish and an indigenous—as well as a simultaneously modern, colonial, and ancient—Mexico. This defies the backward and impoverished images or the overly romanticized images which Magdaleno and others had criticized as being misrepresentational of Mexico to foreign audiences abroad. Furthermore, the copy describing Mexicana's ability to fly all over Mexico references the Mexican state's protectionist policies from the 1970s. As this ad demonstrates, the state's protectionist policies came to define not only the state's economic practices, but the construction of its national identity, as well. The ad reflects an attempt by the state to draw foreign tourists inside Mexico's national borders by defining its airline as decidedly Mexican, but also by highlighting the advantages the airline could offer to tourists due to the state's nationalist economic policies.

"Conozca México primero" [380]

The state may have occasionally projected nationalist messages abroad, but such advertisements were much more commonplace among advertisements meant for national audiences. In line with the state's newly-cast link between nationalism and tourism, and in an attempt to reconstruct its national image at home, the Mexican state took a more active role in directing national tourism campaigns which often utilized explicitly nationalist rhetoric and imagery. In the July 15, 1969 issue of *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, The National Bank of Mexico (Banco Nacional de México)—which was particularly instrumental in the restructuring of Mexico's tourism industry—featured an advertisement in Spanish which read "Conozca México Primero" ("Get to Know Mexico First"). Intended for Mexico's national audience, the ad included a picture of a traditional mariachi band in Guadalajara with smaller copy below stating, "take advantage of the features of your bank card and its 12,000 affiliated establishments throughout the Republic."[381] The advertisement made an obvious plea for Mexican nationals to do more travel throughout their own nation before considering travel outside

[380] "Conozca México primero," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, July 15, 1969, 2. HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[381] "Conozca México primero," 2.

Mexico's national borders. This sentiment fell in direct line with the Mexican government's concerted and openly expressed efforts to increase travel within Mexico among Mexican nationals.

"Aeronaves de México abraza a la Nación" [382]

Also in 1969, Aeronaves de México (Aeroméxico) made similar efforts to promote national tourism when it announced the launch of several campaigns which entwined nationalist rhetoric and imagery with its aims to increase its sales of airline tickets. In light of its publicized intentions to meet a sales goal of $800 million dollars of airline tickets for 1970, Aeronaves de México announced the launch of a new campaign under the title "Mexico First."[383] Through the "Mexico First" campaign, Aeronaves de México professed that it hoped to promote domestic tourism while also attracting a greater number of foreign visitors to its airline. However, Aeronaves expressed a particular desire to increase sales among Mexican nationals in order to "accelerate

[382] "Aeronaves de México abraza a la Nación," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, December 1, 1969, 16. HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[383] "Aeronaves Sets Sales of $800 Million for 1970," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, December 15, 1969, 2. HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.

national integration and solidarity."[384] In this public statement, Aeronaves made clear its intentions to draw a connection between the construction of a common, unified identity among Mexican nationals and the increased sale of its airline tickets. In this instance, for Aeronaves, commerce and tourism became synonymous with Mexican solidarity and national identity formation. Similarly, a few months after this announcement, Aeronaves de México published a print ad in the *Mexico Travel and Hotel News* in December of 1969 which featured a cartoon depiction of a woman hugging an outlined map of Mexico with text which read, "Aeronaves de México abraza a la nación," which when translated to English means "Aeronaves hugs the nation." The woman in the ad appeared to be white with rosy cheeks, had a modern bob haircut, and a knee-length dress. The female Caucasian character emulated the "mod" fashion of the 1960s. Meanwhile, the ad also featured the logo for Aeronaves de México, which contained the head of a man wearing an indigenous eagle headdress. Next to the logo, the ad contained a rendering of an airplane. In this way, the ad celebrated both Mexico's indigenous heritage while also acknowledging its headway into modernity through the inclusion of the airplane and the Caucasian "mod" girl in the ad. The copy suggested a union between the travel industry and national identity. It also proposed that by providing the amenity of air travel that Aeronaves de México is offering a valuable service to the public. At the same time, it suggested that by frequenting Aeronaves de México (rather than foreign air carriers), Mexican nationals would be "hugging" their own nation by favoring a national air carrier over its foreign competitors. Thus, the ad suggests that Mexicans' patronage of Aeronaves would bolster the country not only economically by supporting a national

[384] "Aeronaves Sets Sales," 2.

brand, but symbolically and ideologically, thus fostering national pride and unity and forging a national identity defined and strengthened through the support of Mexico's national tourism industry.

"México…¡quiero conocerte!" [385]

Nationalist campaigns continued to saturate tourism ads throughout the 1970s and 1980s. A 1975 advertising campaign by Mexicana Airlines launched their "México…¡quiero conocerte!" ("Mexico…I want to meet you!") campaign through the Ministry of tourism.[386] Aimed toward a national audience, the Mexicana ad featured pictures from all over Mexico, as well as brief descriptions of various places where tourists could travel, such as Acapulco, Oaxaca, Merida, Cozumel, and Cancún, among others. The ad aimed to garner more national tourists and to encourage them to travel within their own country, while also nurturing national pride and forging a new national

[385] "Mexico…¡quiero conocerte!" *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, July 1, 1975, 5. HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[386] "Mexico…¡quiero conocerte!" 5.
Una carta de Ignacio Ovalle Fernández a Oscar de la Torre Padilla. AGN: LEA, 486 (April 9, 1975).

identity as a "tourism nation." Other similar tourism campaigns laden with nationalist ideology aimed toward Mexican nationals included "Ame más a México, conociéndolo mejor" (Love Mexico More, Getting to Know it Better") of 1975 and "Campaña de Conciencia Turística" ("Tourism Awareness Campaign") of 1976.[387] Similar promotions continued through the 1980s, with campaigns entitled "México te da a escoger" ("Mexico Gives You Options"), "México, una Aventura a tu alcance" ("Mexico, An Adventure within Your Reach"), "Acapulco Tradicional" ("Traditional Acapulco"), and "Viva Veracruz" ("Long Live Veracruz").[388] The Ministry of Tourism also acknowledged the potential impact of film on international audiences. In its 1976 annual report, it highlighted the granting of international cinematography awards to two films, *México, País de Mil Rostros* (*Mexico, Land of a Thousand Faces)* and *Fiestas de México* (*Festivals in Mexico*) as significant tools for proliferating more positive images of Mexico and its people. According to the Ministry of Tourism, films, advertisements, and even tourism itself provided a powerful means of "strengthening our [country's] international image and more firmly uniting the people of [Mexico]."[389] Here, the Mexican state acknowledges the importance that a two-pronged approach two tourism ventures held for the Ministry of Tourism; this approach utilized imagery and rhetoric in tourism ads to appeal to both nationalist sentiments among Mexican tourists and international camaraderie among foreign tourists.

National Reception of Nationalist Tourism Publicity

---

[387] Una carta de Ignacio Ovalle Fernández.
1976: Reporte en las actividades, 39.
[388] Unidad de la Crónica Presidencial, 3.
[389] 1976: Reporte en las actividades, 15-20.

While the Mexican state consistently praised the agents of state-led tourism for its ability to use tourism as a means of bringing about "collective well-being and social justice" through its social tourism programs, the success of those programs is unknown.[390] The state agents of tourism regularly released reports related to the total number of tourists, which included separate calculations of the number of national and foreign tourists, but official reports on the number of Mexican nationals who utilized the state's social tourism programs were non-existent among the Ministry of Tourism's papers. Even in the present-day, the number of Mexican nationals utilizing the state's social tourism programs remains unreported by the state and therefore unknown to the public. In 2014, the Spanish-language edition of *The Economist* published an article lamenting the lack of data on social tourism reported by the Mexican state.[391]

Conclusion

In the case of state-led tourism in Mexico, agents of tourism utilized ideologies informed by a combination of Pan Americanism, international brotherhood, and nationalism to promote their product. While usually Pan Americanism and international brotherhood permeated promotions meant for the foreign market of tourists, nationalism saturated the domestic market. These ideologies coincided with an expansion of state-led tourism projects. Thus, what resulted was an eclectic mix of nationalism, hemispheric brotherhood, and more broadly, international cooperation in the Mexican state's approach to its development of its tourism industry. Within the state's dynamic, multifaceted development plan, it harnessed a dual method to draw foreign tourists from abroad and

---

[390] Unidad de la Crónica Presidencial, 1.
[391] Alejandro de la Rosa, "Turismo social, sin indicadores para medir crecimiento," *El Economista,* August 26, 2014, 1, accessed August 4, 2015, http://eleconomista.com.mx/industrias/2014/08/26/turismo-social-sin-indicadores-medir-crecimiento.

entice Mexican nationals to travel throughout their homeland, primarily by utilizing language and imagery which was customized to each audience. While national campaigns evoked national pride in Mexican patrimony, folklore, tradition, and identity, international campaigns appealed to a common Pan American identity and international camaraderie. In addition to utilizing nationalist rhetoric and imagery in its campaigns, Mexican politicians tied nationalism to their tourism projects in their public speeches. This was an obvious ploy to encourage Mexicans to spend money in the national tourism sector rather than spending it in foreign countries. However, beyond that, some Mexican political elites held private investments in some of the tourism resort sites, and that was likely a primary motivation for the state-led promotion of tourism, as well. The Mexican state also developed social tourism programs which provided Mexican nationals discounts for travel and emphasized the importance of student travel as a means of indoctrinating young citizens' national identity. In addition, these "social tourism" programs likely aimed to engender populist support among the middle and lower classes for the state and the PRI (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional,* Institutional Revolutionary Party), which was Mexico's dominant political party for the majority of the twentieth century. In the context of rising economic inequality and increasing instances of leftist guerilla activity in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this would have been incredibly important to the government. Also, in line with a nationalist agenda, the government nationalized a hotel chain and several airlines. Finally, the state invested heavily in the nation's human capital and nurtured collaboration by building up formal and informal forums of tourism education through its support of tourism-related university programs, CICATUR fellowships, and industry-wide conferences.

State-led tourism projects dominated Mexico's tourism development plans in the second half of the twentieth century, and therefore on the surface they may appear to be purely nationalist. Due to its nationalist leanings in the post-revolutionary period, the Mexican state utilized some protectionist measures to prevent foreign domination of its economy. Nevertheless, Mexico's tourism projects were opening up to foreign investment, and the larger Latin American tourism market also reflected this trend. The World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank provided the funds for FONATUR's development of Cancún and four other new tourism resorts. In addition, foreigners could not own a majority of a business in Mexico, but foreign capital poured into Mexico's hospitality industry in the ensuing decades. Finally, Mexico's economy opened up increasingly through the remainder of the twentieth century and moved further away from its protectionist economic policies. The state maintained the links between nationalism and tourism, however, through imagery and language ads, discounts for nationals in social tourism programs, and a firm investment in university tourism programs.

The state's casting of tourism as a project of patriotism seems to have been rather successful, as Mexicans increasingly chose to travel throughout their homeland rather than abroad, which differed from earlier trends. However, while Mexican nationals certainly increased their tourism throughout their country, their patronage of the social tourism sector remains unknown to the public. Tourism scholars point to the undeniable impact of CICATUR on tourism development in Mexico and throughout Latin America. Thus, the Mexican state and its opening up to foreign investment as well as its principles of systematically planned tourism disseminated and influenced an entire generation of tourism planners throughout Latin America. For Mexico, then, nationalism, Pan

Americanism, international brotherhood, and state-led tourism through standardization and planning appeared to be a winning formula for developing a successful and influential international tourism industry.

Chapter 3: Mexico Rising: State-Led Tourism and the Jet Age

The first half of the twentieth century signaled extraordinary advances in tourism growth for Mexico. By the mid-twentieth century, in large part due to the expansion of the American middle class in conjunction with the Mexican state's efforts to improve infrastructure and expand its hospitality offerings, the tourism industry was exploding. Mexico's formal institutionalization of its tourism industry occurred as mass tourism was coming into being around the world. Social reforms which had occurred in the Western world during the late 1930s had been crucial in allowing for more free time and leisure activities for the working class. This influx of leisure time contributed significantly to the rapid growth of the tourism industry all over the world in the twentieth century. In the Americas, Mexico in particular benefitted greatly from the increased frequency of travel among westerners—principally Americans—to "exotic" lands for their vacations.[392] Prior to World War II, in 1929, as Mexico rebuilt in the aftermath of its revolution and the U.S. struggled economically with the start of the Great Depression, only 19,000 tourists visited Mexico from abroad.[393] That number increased to 139,000 in 1939 (not including tourists to the border region).[394] Later, between 1939 and 1950, the number of tourists coming to Mexico tripled and gross receipts from tourism spending increased more than five times.[395]

Despite its significant gains in foreign tourists throughout the post-war era, Mexico's tourism industry reached a critical point by the mid-1950s. Some of its main

---

[392] Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancun Bliss," in *The Tourist City*, edited by Dennis Judd and Susan Fainstein, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999, 125.
[393] Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancun Bliss," 125.
[394] William M. Bryan, "History and Development of Tourism in Mexico," *Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science for 1956* 37 (1956): 131, accessed August 12, 2015, http://ojs.library.okstate.edu/osu/index.php/OAS/article/view/3930/3604.
[395] Bryan, "History and Development," 130.

tourism cities and resorts such as Mexico City and Acapulco were already beginning to show signs of overcrowding, which was unattractive to tourists.[396] Mexico was in profound need of growth in its hospitality offerings. In 1956, scholar William Bryan from Oklahoma State University noted the Mexican government's recognition of this problem, saying,

> The Government Tourist Bureau is encouraging increased construction of hotels and motor courts, restaurants, and other tourist facilities; some with the aid of government loans. The most important single factor limiting further expansion of the tourist trade is the lack of facilities to accommodate a substantial increase in the number of tourists.[397]

Thus, by the 1960s, Mexico's youngest government technocrats turned to strategic and centralized state-led tourism development as a solution to the problems resulting from earlier largely unplanned development projects in the industry. They also relied on foreign and domestic private investment to fund these programs.

Throughout the 1960s, the Mexican government continued to invest in the tourism sector and the volume of foreign tourists traveling to Mexico grew accordingly. By 1961, tourism was generating an estimated national income of between 1.5 and two million dollars every day.[398] International tourism to Mexico increased so much that in 1963 the Mexican government declared that for the first time ever, tourism had become Mexico's number one industry, even surpassing oil in importance.[399] This was an incredible achievement, since four years prior in 1959 it lagged behind coffee and cocoa as

---

[396] Jeffrey S. Smith, "Three Generations of International Tourist Resorts in Mexico," *Geographische Rundschau International Edition* 5(1): (2009), 4-10.
[397] Bryan, "History and Development," 131.
[398] Henry Goethals, "Mexico Seeks to Attract More Tourists," *The San Bernadino County Sun* (San Bernadino, California): April 24, 1961, accessed February 1, 2016, https://www.newspapers.com/image/51564726.
[399] "Tourism Becomes Mexico's Number One Industry This Year," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, November 15, 1963, 38, accessed August 6, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/23122811.

Mexico's third largest industry and earner of American dollars.[400] Enthusiasm about the potential of tourism grew accordingly, with some nationals referring to it as the "industry without smokestacks," and "an inexhaustible vein of gold."[401] The number of tourists visiting Mexico reached one million in 1963 and by 1969 the number of foreign visitors to Mexico had doubled to two million.[402] At this point, the Mexican government openly recognized the potential of tourism for the national economy. In response to tourism's rising promise for Mexico, in the early 1970s the government completely overhauled the institutions directing tourism expansion. The state transformed the Department of Tourism into the Ministry of Tourism, which signified tourism's rise in importance for the Mexican state. Such a measure proved to be monumental for tourism development in Mexico, as by the 1980s Mexico attracted the highest volume of foreign tourists and foreign currency of any country in the Global South. This resulted in part to its proximity to the U.S. and due to the decline of Cuba as a principal destination of choice for U.S. tourists. Mexico emerged as a pioneer of tourism development—especially among fellow Latin American countries as well as throughout the entire Global South—and maintained its reputation as a global tourism leader through the remainder of the twentieth century and even to the present day.[403]

---

[400] "Tourism Growth Bolsters Mexico: Only Coffee and Cocoa Top It as an Industry—Many New Facilities Built," *The New York Times*, January 14, 1959, accessed February 1, 2016, http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1959/01/14/83662134.html?pageNumber=76.
[401] Goethals, "Mexico Seeks to Attract More Tourists."
[402] "Tourism Becomes," 38.
Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancún Bliss," 125.
[403] Michael J. Clancy, "Tourism and Development: Evidence from Mexico," *Annals of Tourism Research* 26 (1999): 9, accessed August 5, 2015, http://www.sciencedirect.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/science/article/pii/S0160738398000462; Tamar Diana Wilson, "Economic and Social Impacts of Tourism in Mexico," *Latin American Perspectives* 35, 37 (2008): accessed November 11, 2011, http://lap.sagepub.com/content/35/3/37, 38.

The expansive growth in Mexico's tourism industry is rooted in the state's development of five new tourism poles in Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo (Guerrero), Cancún (Quintana Roo), Loreto (Baja California del Sur), Los Cabos (Baja California del Sur), and Huatulco (Oaxaca) in the 1970s.[404] The poles spanned across the nation and were evenly spread out. In creating new tourism "poles" of economic development, the government aimed to generate sources of employment in some of the most impoverished states throughout the country. Also, the tourism projects arose in the context of rising waves of leftist resistance to government corruption and economic inequality throughout the nation. Leftist groups such as the Poor People's Party, led by Lucio Cabañas, a former school teacher, and the Movement for Revolutionary Action, performed acts of social banditry by robbing or kidnapping Mexican elites and demanding ransom money and then redistributing the money to the poor. These groups were especially popular in economically vulnerable states like Guerrero. Thus, the government embraced tourism as its newest economic development strategy to combat rising civil unrest. The most profitable of these new resorts would overshadow Acapulco and become the nation's premiere international resort in a matter of a decade—Cancún.

[404] Clancy, "Tourism and Development," 10.

Map of Mexico's 1970s tourism poles [405]

The Beginnings and Growth of State-Led Tourism in Mexico

Mexico's state-led tourism programs intensified in the 1960s and 1970s, but their roots lie early in the country's post-revolutionary period. In 1928, the Mexican government took its first step toward the formal institutionalization of tourism as a government-backed industry by creating the Pro-Tourism Commission (CPT), an agency within the Ministry of Interior made up of members of the Migration, Health, and Customs Departments. The CPT's primary role was to gather information and make recommendations on how to create a successful tourism industry in Mexico and thereby garner more tourists. Less than one year later, the federal government reorganized the CPT into the Mixed Pro-Tourism Commission (CMPT). Government officials recruited representatives from the private sector to join in the effort to promote tourism to Mexico.[406] In subsequent years, revolutionary elites from the state and private sector in the CMPT worked together to conduct studies, organize meetings and conferences, improve means of transportation, create and enforce new licensing regulations for hotels and restaurants, preserve historic tourist attractions, and discuss the possibilities of the

[405] Created by author Tracy A. Butler, October 2, 2015, www.visitedmexicomap.com.
[406] Dina Berger, *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry: Pyramids by Day, Martinis by Night,* Palgrave MacMillan, 2006, 7.

creation of new tourism sites.[407] In the formative years of these new governmental efforts to create a burgeoning tourism industry in Mexico, the state made little progress—in terms of profits at least—due to the economic depression of the 1930s, poor organization, and bad press throughout World War II. These early years of efforts by the state to build the foundation of the Mexican tourism industry were important, nevertheless, as the CMPT laid the groundwork for later generations of state-led tourism efforts through their improvements in transportation, infrastructure, hospitality standards, and preservation of national landmarks.

In the 1950s, the federal government established FOGATUR (*Fondo de Garantía de Fomento de Turismo,* Fund for Tourism Guarantees and Promotion) to promote hotel development.[408] While the foundation of FOGATUR was certainly important for Mexico's gains in tourism development in the post-World War II era, Mexico's subsequent state-led tourism ventures overshadowed its earlier efforts. Later, as a means of proposing and supporting these new government initiatives in the development of Mexico's tourism industry, the federal government created an agency known as INFRATUR (*Fondo de Promoción de Infraestructura Turística*, National Fund for Promoting Tourism Infrastructure) in 1967.[409] This new government agency continued to gather data, perform studies, and host conferences and meetings related to the tourism industry. It also worked with the Bank of Mexico to secure funds for the creation of new tourism sites, invited private capitalists to invest in Mexico's tourism development, and

---

[407] Ibid.
[408] Tamar Diana Wilson, *Economic Life of Mexican Beach Vendors: Acapulco, Puerto Vallarta, and Cabo San Lucas*, Lexington Books, 2012, 7.
[409] Wilson, "Economic and Social," 37.

headed public relations campaigns which aimed to attract tourism to Mexico both nationally and internationally.

By the 1960s, in conjunction with the government's concentrated efforts on its development of tourism as a valuable industry and source of foreign capital, Mexico's tourism industry was demonstrating enormous financial growth. Between 1950 and 1967, the Mexican tourism industry's financial contributions to the country quadrupled and Mexico earned nearly 1 billion dollars from tourism in 1967.[410] Tourism represented nearly eight-seven percent of Mexico's total export earnings in 1967.[411] Furthermore, tourism's total contributions to Mexico's gross national income rose from twenty-eight percent in 1950 to forty-four percent in 1967.[412]

As a result of its enormous success in tourism development, Mexico was quickly emerging as a regional leader of tourism development and other emerging economies in Latin America began to look to Mexico as a model to follow in their own tourism development laboratories. According to Jesús Rodríguez, Mexico's Under Secretary of the Treasury, Mexico's huge success in garnering tourism revenue signaled a new source of income to countries in the Caribbean and South America.[413] In 1967, South America only captured about two percent of the international tourism trade and nations in the Caribbean and Central America captured less than one percent.[414] However, worldwide—undoubtedly due to the facilitation of faster and cheaper travel with the rise of the commercial airline industry—tourists were visiting countries in the Global South in

---

[410] "Mexico Serves as Example to Rest of America in Tourism Development," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, April 1, 1969, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 2.
[411] "Mexico Serves," 2.
[412] Ibid.
[413] Ibid.
[414] Ibid.

increasing numbers. While in 1941, airlines carried a modest 3.5 million people around the world, by 1953, those numbers multiplied almost fifteen-fold to an impressive 52 million passengers.[415] Subsequent years reflected even bigger numbers, as 59 million passengers traveled by air around the world in 1954, and 70 million global air travelers a year later in 1955.[416]

As a result of the rapid increase in air travel around the world, Paul Rodgers, assistant to the president of Ozark Air Lines stated in 1956, "The world [was] getting smaller."[417] The *Beatrice Daily Sun* of Beatrice, Nebraska, commented on the reach of air travel to the most impoverished parts of the world, stating, "Air travel is reaching even what we consider dark corners of the world. Twenty-two cities of Ethopia are linked by an airline, and in all of Africa no one is further than 100 miles from an air strip."[418] As a result of advances of technology in air travel during the 1950s and 1960s, more people visited the Global South than ever before. In 1950, 2.5 million tourists visited such countries, but by 1967, 16 million tourists visited countries in the Global South.[419] Therefore, countries in the Global South with weak tourism offerings concluded that investing in their infrastructure, hotel inventories, and other venues of hospitality could present a profitable source of national economic growth. A study performed by the IDB in 1967 projected an increase in Latin American tourism revenue

---

[415] "Ozark Official Speaks: Grif Venz New President of Mason City Junior Chamber," *The Mason City Globe-Gazette*, (Mason City, Iowa), May 8, 1956, May 8, 1956, accessed September 30, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/5821178.
"World Air Travel Up," *The Pantagraph* (Bloomington, Illinois), December 31, 1953, accessed September 30, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/71519321.
[416] "World Air Travel Breaks All Records," *The Daily Times*, (New Philadelphia, Ohio), December 29, 1955, accessed September 30, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/82284522.
"Ozark Official Speaks."
[417] "Ozark Official Speaks."
[418] "Aviation Topic of CC Meeting."
[419] "Mexico Serves," 2.

by 1.7 billion dollars in the next five years. The estimate was based on a projected twenty percent increase in travel to South America and a sixteen percent increase in the Caribbean, Central America, and Mexico.[420] Latin American countries, inspired by Mexico's already demonstrated and impressive growth of its tourism industry, looked to it to lead them in their own pursuit of tourism dollars.

While Mexico was beginning to show fruitful signs of development in its state-led tourism industry by the late 1960s, the state made efforts to further centralize tourism development under the direction of the federal government in the 1970s. The state-led projects of the 1970s relied on a combination of state and private, foreign and domestic, capital. In 1973, the government merged INFRATUR with FOGATUR to create FONATUR (*Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo,* the National Fund for Tourism Development) under the leadership of President Luis Echeverría Álvarez in order to further centralize and streamline government tourism planning.[421] The Echeverría administration directed the creation of five new poles of tourism with an aim to funnel economic growth into some of the most impoverished regions in the country. This was a common economic strategy in Latin America which addressed concerns about over-centralization of economic growth in primary cities. Cancún and Ixtapa were the first of the new tourism locations to undergo construction. The tourism program was so successful that in 1986, a mere decade after its initial opening, Cancún was drawing more foreign visitors annually than Acapulco, Mexico's former tourism hotspot.[422] By 1989, Cancún surpassed even the expansive metropolis Mexico City as the leading destination

[420] Ibid.
[421] Smith, "Three Generations," 6.
[422] Ibid.

in Mexico for foreign visitors.[423] In terms of tourism growth, it appeared that the Mexican state's tourism programs of the 1960s and 1970s were beginning to pay off rather quickly.

Economic Development through State-Led Planning

The government turned to a standardized approach to economic development projects upon recognizing its past inadequacies. In relation to tourism, Mexico had learned firsthand what could happen if it did not build up its hospitality industry through better organization and more centralized planning when it hosted the second Pan Am Games in Mexico City in 1955.[424] Prior to the event, Mexico City tourism officials expected 34,000 tourists and athletes, but Mexico City hotels could only accommodate 10,000 people.[425] The Games were very good for tourism in Mexico City, but the hotels were overwhelmingly underprepared to accommodate so many people at once; they were at full capacity even before the events officially began. Thus, hotel staff had to redirect tourists to hotels in neighboring cities and even encouraged them to travel to other parts of the country until the Games were over.[426]

In addition, by the 1960s Mexico's most important resort areas were in a state of crisis, and the state felt that the problems had arisen largely due to a lack of adequate planning. Acapulco, the tourism star of Mexico which had been booming in the 1950s, suffered from insufficient infrastructure, pollution, and uncontrolled growth. In addition,

---

[423] Clancy, "Tourism and Development,"12.
Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolás, "Mitos y Realidades del Milagro Turístico," in *Teoría y Praxis del Espacio Turístico,* edited by Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolás (Mexico City: UAM-Xochimilco, 1989), 109-120.
Estadísticas Básicas de la Actividad Turística. AGN: CSG, SECTUR (1992).
[424] "Athletes Pouring Into Mexico City."
[425] "City Expects Jam," *Corsicana Daily Sun,* (Corsicana, Texas), February 5, 1955, accessed August 5, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/13120629/?terms=Corsicana.
[426] "Athletes Pouring Into Mexico City."

its residents agonized in abject poverty which, due to the geographic proximity of the slums to the resorts, was difficult to shield from the eyes of tourists.[427] Many *acapulqueños* lived in slums composed of shacks, huts, and lean-tos which they constructed themselves upon migrating to the booming tourist city.[428] Tourists and the international press had taken notice of the risks associated with travel to Acapulco. *New York Times* journalist Henry Giniger reported ominously in 1967, "With 100,000 permanent residents, it is the largest city in the state of Guerrero, a mountainous agricultural region where the peasant population leads a precarious existence on small plots of land. The people have a tendency to settle their disputes with guns and machetes, and bandits are not infrequent."[429]

The problems with lack of planning in tourism were not limited to Acapulco, however. In Mexico City, another leading tourism metropolis, the population had almost tripled between 1960 and 1970 as people migrated from the countryside in search of work.[430] On average, more than 350,000 people were fleeing rural areas, which amounted to about 1,000 people per day. Of the 8 million or more people living in the city, hundreds of thousands had no electricity, no potable water, and no sewers. 2 million of the city's residents lived in houses containing a single room, in which a family of ten or more might sleep. 3 million of the city's inhabitants were "economically inactive," or

---

[427] Marlise Simons, "Yucatan Plans with Acapulco as a Guide," *The Washington Post*, (Washington, D.C.), April 1, 1973, accessed August 19, 2015, https://aclarando.wordpress.com/2010/07/05/1973-yucatan-plans-with-acapulco-as-a-guide/.
[428] Thomas Meehan, "The in People Discover Acapulco," *The New York Times*, (New York, New York), February 13, 1966, accessed June 14, 2015, http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9F06E7D8143DE43BBC4B52DFB466838D679EDE.
[429] Henry Giniger, "Mexico's Leading Resort City Wears Two Faces," *The New York Times*, September 30, 1967, accessed February 1, 2016, http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1967/09/30/90404068.html?pageNumber=12.
[430] Francis B. Kent, "Peasants Swamp Mexico City," *Chicago Sun-Times*, (Chicago, Illinois), August 13, 1971, AGN: LEA, 487.

living without any sustainable source of income.[431] As a result of their poor economic plight, electric power was frequently pirated, water had to be carried great distances, and in large part as a result of the 50,000 cows and 20,000 pigs which were being kept illegally in the city, disease was widespread.[432] The overcrowding and extensive poverty in the big cities became increasingly difficult to hide from international press. Government officials worried this could negatively impact Mexico's tourism industry. Thus, tourism became a top priority for the federal government as a means of drawing the droves of impoverished populations toward other parts of the country in search of employment. Secretary of Tourism Julio Hirschfeld-Almada described the government's development of tourism "poles" in the 1970s accordingly, saying that they would emulate the "twin goals of better income distribution…and reduced migration of impoverished people to the cities."[433] In particular, the younger generation of Mexican government officials pushed for more direct government involvement in tourism as the solution to the problems with inadequate infrastructure, housing, and pollution they were currently experiencing due to uncontrolled growth in tourism.[434]

In 1961, recognizing the growing importance of tourism, the administration under President Adolfo Lopez Mateos launched a four-year tourist promotion drive to bolster the industry. This program involved sophisticated planning under the direction of the state. Under the program, the government called for improved roads and highways, especially those leading to tourist sites, more extensive and well-trained hotel and

---

[431] Kent, "Peasants Swamp Mexico City."
[432] Ibid.
[433] Frank Allen, "Mexico Adopting New Means to Improve Tourist Services," *Tucson Daily Citizen* (Tucson, Arizona), July 26, 1975, accessed February 1, 2016, https://www.newspapers.com/image/23618517.
[434] Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancún Bliss," 128.

restaurant service, more gasoline stations, tighter government regulation of hotel rates, and the increased preservation of traditional Mexican customs, regional costumes, and historic sites.[435] In line with the broader national plan, the government also launched PRONAF (*Programa Nacional Fronterizo,* Border Industrialization Program, or National Border Program), in 1961, which was a program designed to improve the seedy image of Mexico's border towns.[436] Investment in the borderlands was especially important for tourism at this time since in 1959, more than half of all travel earnings derived from expenditures along the border.[437] Through PRONAF the state poured money into the country's most prominent border cities, such as Tijuana, Ciudad Júarez, and Nogales. Shortly after PRONAF's establishment, an advisory committee composed of the country's prominent overseers of business and trade formed. The committee proceeded to meet on a weekly basis for the next five years (1961-1965).[438]

The program was financed by the *Secretaría de Hacienda* (Secretary of Finance) and distributed through Nacional Financiera, the state's development bank.[439] It supported the construction of shopping malls, hotels, convention centers, museums, and handicraft centers. In addition, the program sponsored cultural events such as art and photography exhibits as well as book fairs. [440] By building up cultural attractions and hospitality-related businesses, the state hoped to attract more diverse groups of tourists—particularly families. In that same vein, the program promoted Mexico's national cultural values in tourism campaigns in order to overshadow the border towns' traditional

---

[435] Goethals, "Mexico Seeks to Attract More Tourists."
[436] Smith, "Three Generations," 6.
[437] "Tourism Growth Bolsters Mexico."
[438] Lawrence Douglas Taylor Hansen. "The Origins of the Maquila Industry in Mexico." *Comercio Exterior* 53, no. 11 (November 2003): 4-5.
[439] Taylor Hansen, "The Origins of the Maquila Industry in Mexico," 5.
[440] Ibid., 6-7.

attractions like cantinas, gambling houses, and brothels.[441] It also funded the building up of social institutions, such as libraries and schools. Finally, it promoted the development of border industries by supporting projects such as the construction of an olive processing plant in Tijuana, a coffee company in Tecate, a pasteurization plant in Nogales, an oil filter factory in Reynosa, and a dairy products plant in Matamoros.[442] Through these measures, the federal government aimed to build up industry to create more local sources of employment.

A major drawback of PRONAF was that it did not possess the sufficient financial backing necessary to complete all of the projects on the proposed agenda. In addition, Ciudad Júarez received a majority of the funding by a wide margin—about a third, or 411 million pesos of the total amount—which left many of the other border towns without the sufficient capital needed to complete the projects on their wish lists.[443] PRONAF was a decidedly nationalist program, since its primary purpose was to create sources of employment and economic prosperity in the borderlands region for Mexican nationals, all of which occurred through Mexican state investment. While PRONAF was nationalist, it also marked an important shift in the state's economic development strategies toward more systematic planning, especially within the tourism sector.[444] PRONAF was the first carefully planned, federally funded tourism project which proved to be a profitable source of income for Mexico.[445]

---

[441] Taylor Hansen, The Origins of the Maquila Industry in Mexico," 6; México, Programa Nacional Fronterizo, 12, 21, 30-33; México, Programa Nacional Fronterizo/National Border Program: Ciudad Júarez, Chihuahua (México: PRONAF, 1961), 20-29; Antonio J. Bermúdez, *Rescate del mercado fronterizo: una obra al servicio de México* (1966), 46-47.
[442] Hansen, "The Origins of the Maquila Industry in Mexico," 7.
[443] Ibid., 7.
[444] Ibid., 5.
[445] Smith, "Three Generations," 6.

Although PRONAF represented a nationalist approach to development, on its heels followed a project which utilized a markedly different methodology. Inaugurated in May 1965 and formally instituted in October 1966, Border Industrialization Program (BIP) aimed to alleviate the widespread unemployment which plagued the border region. The border towns had become overpopulated with unemployed farm laborers after the U.S. government canceled the Bracero Program, a contract-based farm labor program, in 1964.[446] Originally intended to be a war-time program to supply sorely-needed farm labor to American farms during World War II, the Bracero Program had allowed hundreds of thousands of Mexicans to work in the U.S. each year through temporary work permits for two decades. Upon the Bracero Program's termination, many *braceros* (farm laborers) returned to Mexico and, rather than returning to their places of origin, settled (at least temporarily) in the border region. Consequently, between forty and fifty percent of the populations in the largest border cities such as Ciudad Júarez, Tijuana, and Mexicali suffered from unemployment.[447]

Through the BIP, the Mexican government attracted foreign companies to conduct business in Mexico by allowing them to establish factories in its northern border region and offering them tax incentives. The BIP effectively made the entire northern border region a free trade zone.[448] In this way, the state extended beyond the duty-free trade zones which had existed in particular parts of the border region since 1933 under the Abelardo L Rodríguez administration's *Ley de Perímeters Libres* (Free Zone Law).[449] Despite this measure, the BIP upheld the perimeters of Mexico's 1917 constitutional

---

[446] Hansen, "The Origins of the Maquila Industry in Mexico," 7.
[447] Ibid.,8-9.
[448] Ibid., 12.
[449] Ibid., 2.

prohibition of foreign ownership, since companies could not construct factories beyond twenty kilometers (twelve and a half miles) from the northern border, companies had to rent their facilities from nationals, and the foreign investors could not hold more than forty-nine percent of the factory's total shares.[450] While Mexico's business relations upheld some of the protectionist measures established by the post-revolutionary state, the institution of the BIP nonetheless indicated a significant shift in how the Mexican state would conduct business thereafter, especially in relationship to foreign capital investment.

In addition to PRONAF and the BIP, the state also turned to state-led tourism planning prior to the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City. With the 1955 Pan Am Games hotel room shortage in its recent memory, the state built up its hospitality offerings in anticipation of the arrival of visitors traveling to Mexico for the1968 Olympics. The international event proved to be especially important for the state's improvement of its hotel offerings not only in Mexico City, but throughout the country. Prior to the 1968 Olympics, private and public entities invested heavily in the development of the hospitality industry. In preparation for the influx of tourists during the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, the federal government offered special credits of up to $800 per room to owners of private houses located along Mexico's most frequently traveled highways in order to aid in the conversion of their homes to shelters or inns for tourists coming to Mexico for the 1968 Olympic games. The government reasoned that the financial aid would also contribute to the general expansion of tourism throughout Mexico which they

[450] Ibid., 10.

hoped would continue even after the conclusion of the Olympics.[451] Under the direction of the Minister of Tourism Agustín Salvat—a former publisher and financier—the Department of Tourism provided credit through the Promotional Fund of the Hotel Industry and recipients were required to agree to re-pay the loans within a period of five years.[452] The Department of Tourism also approved loans for the construction of new motels throughout the republic.[453] The Department of Tourism agreed to offer the credits in response to requests for financial aid from Guanajuato, Michoacán, Veracruz, Jalisco, Querétaro, Oaxaca, and Guerrero, where fewer hotels existed at the time.[454]

In addition to offering loans to private home owners, the government also supported the intensive construction of a series of brand-new hotels with the most up-to-date amenities in the nation's capital, where the Olympic Games would be held. A few months before the inauguration of the Games, on June 21, 1968, the Aristos Hotel opened on Mexico City's opulent avenue—the Paseo de la Reforma. The hotel contained 360 rooms and also held an auditorium with 431 seats. A print advertisement featured in the April 15, 1968 issue of *Mexico Travel and Hotel News* claimed that the Aristos Hotel was "the only hotel in Mexico with…a TV and FM in every room…automatic dial telephones…nightclub with [a] 9 p.m. to 4 a.m. continuous show…luxury 24-hour coffee shop," and more.[455] In order to compete internationally and impress foreigners coming

---

[451] "Shelters for Motorists," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, May 1, 1968, 10, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[452] "Shelters for Motorists," 10.
[453] "Mexico Steps Up Its Tourist Program," *The New York Times*, February 28, 1965, accessed February 1, 2016, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1965/02/28/98454836.html?pageNumber=488.
[454] "Shelters for Motorists." 10.
[455] "360 Fabulous Rooms Right on Magnificent Reforma," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, April 15, 1968, 2, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.

from other countries for the 1968 Olympics, Mexico's burgeoning hospitality industry offered the highest quality of luxury in its newest hotels.

A few months later, President Diaz Ordaz inaugurated the Camino Real Hotel in August of 1968.[456] The new Camino Real Hotel had double the space of the Aristos Hotel, with 720 rooms including junior suites, master suites, and a Presidential suite. Like the Aristos, it was located on the Paseo de la Reforma in an upscale neighborhood of Mexico City across from Chapultepec Park and Castle.[457] It was quite extravagant, even in comparison to the Aristos, with the highest quality of amenities available at the time, including swimming pools, fountains, gardens, and sunbathing nooks. The hotel was made up of seven separate wings, or "missions." Each mission had a separate structure, some of which resembled pyramids, undoubtedly to mimic the pyramids at Teotihuacan in order to highlight the magnificence of Mexico's indigenous lineage. The separate missions were connected by inner passageways. The newly inaugurated Camino Real opened with ten bars, each of which had a separate theme and décor. In addition, the hotel contained seven different restaurants: a French restaurant, one cafeteria, one restaurant which served Mexican delicacies and four others which served international cuisine. Surpassing even the accommodations at the Aristos, it had the most up-to-date amenities, including air conditioning, wall-to-wall carpeting, color television, a convention center, Cook's travel agency, a flower shop, a newsstand, saddle horses, two tennis courts, and a heliport.[458] It also contained eight elevators, twelve stairways, and

[456] "President Diaz Ordaz," 1.
[457] Ibid., 8.
[458] Ibid., 8.

two escalators. The hotel was equipped to host a convention of up to 3,000 people.[459] In short, the Camino Real was a world-class hotel. Its construction was a significant step forward in improving Mexico's rising reputation as a first-rate international tourism destination, designed specifically for U.S. and other foreign tourists accustomed to such amenities.

The Olympic Committee was to be lodged at the Camino Real during the nineteenth Olympics in October in Mexico City, as Mexico aimed to offer its most elegant accommodations to the most important international spectators for the event. At the inauguration, President Díaz Ordaz humorously suggested that perhaps the Olympic Committee could be persuaded to have the construction of hotels as an Olympic event, and Mexico would win the gold medal.[460] Díaz Ordaz's joke indicated the augmented importance of not only hotel construction, but the tourism industry in general, for Mexico, by the late 1960s. His equation of the construction of hotels with an Olympic event symbolized the federal government's newfound commitment to the expansion and improvement of Mexico's hospitality industry, during the Olympics and beyond.

While Mexico City's inventory of hotel rooms expanded considerably, it was not the only city which expected an unusual influx of tourists upon the arrival of the participants and attendees of the 1968 Olympic Games. Development companies constructed new hotels throughout the nation in areas they anticipated tourists might desire to travel, such as municipalities near archaeological zones and beaches. In preparation for the Games, ABC Travel Service started building hotels in the "Mayan Empire" area of Mexico. They constructed the hotel Chichén Itzá next to the famous

---

[459] Ibid., 9.
[460] Ibid., 9.

ruins and completed it before the opening of the 1968 Olympic Games. ABC Travel Service also began construction in other locations in the southeast, such as Palenque and Isla Mujeres.[461] The state also installed light and sound systems designed by French and Dutch engineers at three of the top archaeological sites in the country: Chichén Itzá in the Yucatán Peninsula, San Juan Teotihuacán near Mexico City, and Tlatelolco in the heart of Mexico City.[462] The Mexican government, private investors, and Mexican citizens alike seized the 1968 Olympic Games as an opportunity to not only showcase the supreme athletic talents of Mexican citizens, but to capitalize on the nation's growing tourism potential. In order to do so, Mexico's various agents of tourism both expanded the number of the hotel rooms in the nation and elevated the standards of hospitality in order to meet the demands of the tourists who most regularly traveled around the globe at the time.

The volume of air travel to Mexico increased exponentially throughout the duration of the 1968 Olympic Games due to the unique appeal of the international sporting event. In fact, the event set an air travel record for Mexico, as an all-time record number of foreign passengers passed through Mexico's customs and immigration at the international airport in Mexico City. During the first eleven days of October in 1968, 61,158 foreigners passed through immigration at the airport, of which 10,822 carried special Olympic documentation. This number included only those arriving into Mexico from other countries, and excluded those arriving on domestic flights. The figure represented about 6,000 passengers per day between October 8 and October 10, and

---

[461] "ABC Travel Service," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, February 1, 1969, 3. HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[462] Mexico City Steps Up Its Tourist Program."

about 7,400 on October 11.[463] The successful draw of tens of thousands of tourists to Mexico for the 1968 Olympics, the increased frequency of air travel among tourists, Mexico's significant steps toward further standardization of its hospitality industry, as well as improvements in its hotel offerings all signaled Mexico's increased readiness for its debut as a world-class international tourism destination.

The state's succeeding tourism development projects continued to use the systematic planning and foreign investment strategies which the PRONAF, the BIP, and the 1968 Olympics had already initiated. Of particular importance was the state's reliance on foreign investment to shore up FONATUR's largest tourism projects to date: the construction of Cancún and four other new tourism resorts. A young Harvard-educated technocrat, Antonio Enríquez Savignac headed up FONATUR in the 1970s and directed Mexico's tourism development approach in the 1970s and 1980s. Mario Ramón Beteta was the Secretary of Finance under President Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) and oversaw FONATUR's new projects. Like Savignac, Beteta also studied in the U.S., receiving a Master's degree in economics from the University of Wisconsin.[464] He pushed tourism as a national priority for the Mexican economy and was instrumental in the government's establishment of official rates and prices in the hospitality sector.[465] Julio Hirschfeld Almada, who served first as Mexico's Director General of Airports (1970-1973) and then as Mexico's Minister of Tourism (1973-1976), was another instrumental cog in the PRI political machine throughout the state's adoption of a

---

[463] "Olympic Games Set Air Travel Record for Mexico," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* December 1, 1968, 2. HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[464] Roderic Ai Camp. *Mexican Political Biographies, 1935-1993*, University of Texas Press, 1995, 77; "Sec. Beteta," 16.
[465] "Sec. Beteta," 16.

systematic approach to tourism development by relying on foreign investment.[466] Like Savignac and Beteta, Almada also received an American education at the University of Michigan, and he too endorsed a centralized, carefully planned approach to tourism development in Mexico and encouraged foreign investment in the projects.

With Beteta, Almada, and Savignac at the helm, FONATUR gathered impressive amounts of data prior to initiating construction at any of the five new tourism poles in Cancún, Ixtapa, Loreto, Los Cabos, and Huatulco.[467] A great amount of research and planning permeated the Ministry of Tourism in the 1960s and throughout the 1970s, and the data which resulted from those studies influenced the Mexican state's embrace toward tourism as an important source of foreign currency. These changes defined the tourism industry's status as a permanent fixture in Mexico's national economic development strategies throughout the remainder of the twentieth century. In 1967, reports released by the Bank of Mexico portrayed tourism as the industry holding the greatest potential for the attraction of hard currency with minimal investment which could also create employment. While Mexico's national economy had been growing at a rate of only five to six percent per year, tourism was growing by eleven percent.[468] FONATUR's initial studies conducted in the late 1960s revealed that while 50 million Americans crossed the Mexican border every year, only 1.5 million of them ventured twenty-five miles or more into the interior of the country.[469] Thus, the Mexican state created detailed plans for five attractive new tourism poles spread throughout the nation and made plans to set and

---

[466] *Historical Dictionary of Mexico,* ed. Donald C. Briggs and Marvin Alisky, (Scarecrow Press, 1981) s.v. "Hirschfeld Almada, Julio."
[467] "Yankees, Come Back," *The Emporia Gazette* (Emporia, Kansas), January 13, 1977, accessed July 31, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/10739050.
[468] "Yankees, Come Back."
[469] Ibid.

enforce higher standards of accommodations, amenities, rates, and policies in hospitality in order to draw more foreign tourists to the interior.

The 1968 Olympics and Tourism Development as a Response to Leftist Guerilla Groups

In the midst of the centralization of Mexico's tourism projects, the 1968 Olympics proved to be an important impetus for state-led tourism development. First, the anticipated influx of tourists incentivized the expansion of the nation's tourism holdings. In addition, the 1968 Tlatelolco Massacre caused a surge in leftist resistance movements, which further encouraged the state to quell the rebellions through tourism development. The state reasoned that since the leftists' primary concern was economic disparity, it could suppress the movements through job creation and state-directed economic development projects. Thus, in the aftermath of the 1968 Olympics, the state poured capital into the tourism sector in the most impoverished regions throughout the country.

Some leftist groups formed in the mid-1960s as a result of widening economic inequality across the country. They gained further momentum in the wake of the horrifying Tlatelolco Plaza massacre of 1968, a national tragedy which had left the public reeling from the event's clear associations with government corruption and systemic violence. On October 2, 1968 Mexican police officers and military troops opened fire on a crowd of thousands of unarmed university students ten days before the Olympics.[470]

---

[470] "Mexico's 1968 Massacre: What Really Happened?" narrated by Robert Siegel, *All Things Considered,* December 1, 2008, accessed August 13, 2015, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=97546687. For more reading on the 1968 Olympics, see: Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power, and Terror in 1968 Mexico,* University of New Mexico Press, 2005; Luis M. Castañeda, *Spectacular Mexico: Design, Propaganda, and the 1968 Olympics,* University of Minnesota Press, 2014; Julia Preston and Samuel Dillon, *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy,* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2004; Kevin B. Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World: Mexico and the 1968 Olympic Games,* Northern Illinois University Press, 2008; Eric Zolov, "Showcasing the 'Land of Tomorrow': Mexico and the 1968 Olympics," *The Americas* 61 (October 2004): 159-188.

Official reports released by the government declared four dead and twenty injured in the aftermath of the shootings, but eyewitnesses described hundreds of bodies being pulled away from the scene in government trucks. Thousands of students were beaten and jailed, and countless others disappeared.[471] The government later released official documents to the public, revealing that hospitals reported that twenty-six students died and 100 were wounded. The documents also uncovered that the state had detained more than 1,000 students. Nevertheless, due to the public's lack of faith in the state's credibility, the final death toll remains a mystery.[472]

The surge in leftist attacks and protests in the 1960s and 1970s signified a trend of increasing dissatisfaction with the government and rising economic disparity, despite the growth of the Mexican middle class in the preceding decades. Through the Mexican Miracle (1940-1968), Mexico's middle class had widened and a new class of families was able to afford to send their children to study at universities in unprecedented numbers.[473] This resulted in an intellectual awakening among the students, and in the summer of 1968, they took to the streets of Mexico City to protest what they viewed as an oppressive, violent regime. With the 1968 Summer Olympics quickly approaching, the *priísta* Gustavo Díaz Ordaz administration (1964-1970) could scarcely afford an international embarrassment, especially since Mexico held the great honor of being the first country in the Global South to ever to host an Olympic Games.[474] Approximately thirty years after the massacre took place, investigations revealed that plainclothes army snipers had opened fire on fellow troops, which had provoked the soldiers to open fire on

---

[471] "Mexico's 1968 Massacre."
[472] Ibid.
[473] Ibid.; Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancún Bliss," 125-126.
[474] *Priísta* is a term which refers to a member of Mexico's PRI political party.

the students.[475] The investigations exposed evidence that the Díaz Ordaz regime had intentionally staged the massacre in order to quell the student protests only days before the Olympic Games.

In the wake of the massacre at Tlatelolco in 1968, a wave of uneasiness befell the international community, Mexican government officials, and the Mexican people alike. The International Olympic Committee called a meeting to discuss the violence and its possible effects on the 1968 Summer Olympic Games one day after the massacre. The presidential press secretary Fernando Garza stated, "There is no danger. All necessary precautions have been taken." He claimed that the violence erupted when "one group of students began firing at [one] another." Finally, he added, "The end has come to this group of militant students. A cleaning out has been made already."[476] While Mexican government officials assured its international guests that there would be no further incidents, newspapers speculated whether the event would in fact affect attendance at the Olympic Games. Journalist Ted Smits stated two days before the Opening Ceremony, "No one knows to what extent the violence beset this nation has affected the expected influx of tourists…[since] the government required rooms to be paid for in advance. The hotels…report they are sold out."[477] Despite the vulgar display of violence perpetuated by the Mexican state just a week before the Opening Ceremonies, the Olympic Games proceeded without a hitch. The Olympic Stadium held a sold-out crowd of 80,000

---

[475] "Mexico's 1968 Massacre."
[476] "Army Ordered to Quell Riot at Any Cost," *The Circleville Herald*, (Circleville, Ohio), October 3, 1968, accessed September 30, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/72761498.
[477] Ted Smits, "Mexico City Sits in Uneasy Calm Awaiting 1968 Games Saturday," *Abilene Reporter-News*, (Abilene, Texas), October 10, 1968, accessed September 30, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/47515605.

attendees on October 12, 1968.[478] The 1968 Games in Mexico City hosted a record 7,639 athletes from 110 countries—this surpassed the previous records with 5,555 athletes from eighty-four countries attending the 1961 Olympic Games in Tokyo (Japan) and 5,867 athletes from sixty-nine countries in Helsinki (Finland) in 1952.[479] In addition to garnering record attendance at the international event, the state also perpetuated a façade of national harmony and prosperity for its international guests, even in the wake of such horrible violence perpetrated against an unarmed group of its own people. In a veiled display of remorse and sorrow in the aftermath of the massacre, 10,000 doves and pigeons were released at the Opening Ceremonies, purportedly to symbolize peace.[480]

While on the international stage the Mexican government frequently prided itself on being a "revolutionary" regime, a rising current of leftist groups throughout the republic by the late 1960s suggested a state of civil unrest and a broadening of economic inequality. As the state turned toward more foreign investment in its industries, common Mexicans' standard of living only worsened. While the Mexican Miracle (1940-1968) had greatly expanded the middle class, economic inequality widened significantly with Mexico's increased reliance on industrialization and foreign capital investment in its industries.[481] Also, economic growth slowed as a result of massive international debt which the Mexican state had accrued, which one leading economist described ominously in 1970 as "a time-bomb sitting under successive governments."[482] In 1970, the

---

[478] "Senorita Lights Flame to Open Olympiad," *Tucson Daily Citizen,* (Tucson, Arizona), October 12, 1968, accessed September 30, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/23545424.
[479] "Senorita Lights Flame"; Smits, "Mexico City Sits in Uneasy Calm."
[480] "Senorita Lights Flame."
[481] Phillip Knightley, "Rights Eroding in Mexico: The Revolution Grows Stale," *Dispatch of the Sunday Times,* (London, United Kingdom), in *The Edwardsville Intelligencer,* (Edwardsville, Illinois), June 25, 1970, accessed September 30, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/26481429.
[482] Knightley, "Rights Eroding in Mexico."

wealthiest ten percent of the population earned fifty percent of the entire national income.[483] Journalist Phillip Knightley of the *Dispatch of the Sunday Times* in London (United Kingdom) described the dire socioeconomic conditions of the Mexican population in 1970 as follows:

> Seventy-one percent of houses have no sanitation, eighty percent have only one or two rooms, sixty-eight percent have no water supply, seventy-nine percent had no bathroom, seventy percent of village houses and forty percent of town houses are in urgent need of repair. Most of the working class, which comprises 40 million out of a population of 48 million, already can find work for only three or four months of the year. The unsuccessful birth control program (the population is increasing at a rate that will double it by the end of the century) puts 400,000 new hands on the labor market each year.[484]

Many Mexicans tried to escape poverty by crossing illegally into the U.S. In April of 1970 alone, the U.S. immigration authorities caught and deported 25,000 undocumented immigrants from Mexico.[485] Meanwhile, others battled socioeconomic inequality by resisting the state and national elites at home.

Some Mexican economists directly criticized the state's reliance on tourism as a viable and sustainable source of economic growth for fellow Mexicans. As one economist stated, "Americans are our main tourists. But they come here on American-owned airlines, they stay in American-owned hotels, and they book their tours through American travel agencies. Mexican tourism is a great business for American companies."[486] In that same vein, journalist Phillip Knightley explained that the tension between Mexican and American ownership of tourism industries in Mexico led to resentment of tourists, especially Americans, and the quality of jobs the tourism industry

---

[483] Ibid.
[484] Ibid.
[485] Ibid.
[486] Ibid.

provided. Accordingly, Knightley noted that some Mexicans wondered bitterly, "Why be a schoolteacher when you can earn more money as a waiter?"[487]

In the midst of the state's surging embrace of foreign investment and the shoring up of its biggest state-led tourism ventures, a rash of leftist resistance to social inequality and PRI authoritarianism arose throughout the country. The state of Guerrero, where Acapulco offers a stark and visible contrast between foreign affluence and local poverty, was commonly a site of political tension. In 1960, Alfredo López led 10,000 men, women and children who could not find homes in the occupation of an eighty-acre plot of land overlooking the city and the bay. The property belonged to Manuel Suárez, an entrepreneur who planned to construct luxury homes on the site. Suárez faced great difficulties attempting to remove the occupants from the land, so the government eventually compensated him. Each squatter was then allowed to purchase a lot from the government for a nominal sum. The local poor hailed López as a hero, while others considered him a gangster. On August 4, 1967, he was assassinated. Fifteen thousand people attended his funeral.[488] A few weeks later, in an unrelated incident, Acapulco again made headlines when a group of disgruntled unionized growers of copra (the dried coconut meat which yields coconut oil) held a strike which ended in bloodshed. Some members of the Union Copra Growers of Guerrero felt they had been paying union dues while receiving few benefits in return. So on August 20, 1967, several hundred union copra growers marched into a union meeting and demanded entry. They were met with

[487] Ibid.
[488] Giniger, "Mexico's Leading Resort City Wears Two Faces."

armed resistance and as a result, thirty-three people were killed and 100 more were wounded.[489]

Perhaps most notably, state tourism developer Julio Hirschfeld Almada was kidnapped in 1971, and the Marxist guerrilla group *Frente Urbano Zapatista* (FUZ, or Zapatista Urban Front) claimed responsibility for the kidnapping.[490] The incident received worldwide news coverage and signaled a growing leftist resistance to economic disparity and the PRI's domination of Mexico's political system. The FUZ joined other groups in a series of attacks by leftist insurgents on the PRI-led government and other national elites—events which Echeverría had been trying to keep out of the international limelight since the beginning of his presidency.[491] Through the kidnapping of Hirschfeld, the FUZ joined ranks with other leftist groups who were creating a mounting challenge to the regime. One group—the Poor People's Party—was led by a former school teacher by the name of Lucio Cabañas. The group took hold in Guerrero in 1966 and for nearly a decade, the Poor People's Party performed ambushes, kidnappings, and other forms of violent resistance to economic inequality and state authoritarianism.[492] After each exploit, they distributed all of their booty to poor peasants in the impoverished state of Guerrero. In 1974 alone, they were credited with four kidnappings from which they acquired $720,000 in ransom money.[493] On December 2, 1974, Cabañas was shot dead

---

[489] Ibid.
[490] Camp, *Mexican Political Biographies*, 485.
[491] "Hirschfeld Almada, Julio," in *Historical Dictionary of Mexico*, ed. Donald C. Briggs and Marvin Alisky,(Scarecrow Press, 1981), s.v.; "Mexico Admitting Threat From Left: Prisoners Traded for Kidnap Victim," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, November 29, 1971, 1, accessed August 13, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/23534570.
[492] "Decade of Defiance Ends: Lucio Cabanas, Leftist Mexican Leader, Killed," *Redlands Daily Facts*, (Redlands, California), December 3, 1974, accessed October 5, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/15125948/?terms=Lucio%2BCabanas.
[493] "Decade of Defiance Ends."

during a shoot-out with the Mexican military in the Sierra Madre Mountains near Acapulco. He was memorialized through café ballads afterward and is still honored by the peasantry and leftist supporters.[494]

Another leftist guerrilla group—the Movement for Revolutionary Action—was credited with carrying out a series of burglaries and bank robberies between 1968 and 1971. One of their associated groups, led by former schoolteacher Génaro Vázquez Rojas, claimed credit for the kidnapping the director of the State University of Guerrero Jaime Castrejón Diez, whose family owned the Coca Cola bottling enterprise in Guerrero. The Castrejón family's assets were valued at more than $15 million dollars.[495] The Vazquez group demanded a ransom of 2.5 million pesos ($200,000 dollars) and the release of nine political prisoners in exchange for Castrejón's release. One member of the group directly cited economic disparity and a corrupt political structure as motivations for the group's kidnapping of Castrejón, stating that he was a "well-known member of the pro-imperialist oligarchy which governs us."[496] The Vazquez groups' earlier activities had included the kidnapping or murder of wealthy landowners who they accused of exploiting the impoverished peasants of Guerrero and the surrounding region.[497] After sixty hours in captivity, the FUZ released Almada after a $3 million peso ($240,000 dollars) ransom was paid which the group claimed to want to distribute to Mexico City's urban poor.[498]

Even though the FUZ claimed responsibility for Almada's kidnapping, the prominent Mexican intellectual Carlos Fuentes suggested another scenario. Fuentes

---

[494] Ibid.
[495] "Mexico Admitting."
[496] Ibid.
[497] Ibid.
[498] "Hirschfeld Almada, Julio"; Camp, *Mexican Political Biographies*, 486; "Mexico Admitting."

raised the possibility the FUZ had been a fabricated group which had been fronting for a group of right-wing officials in the Echeverría administration who, given the rise in leftist attacks on national elites, capitalized on the divisive political climate to extort money from the state under the guise of a Marxist rebellion.[499]

Regardless of which group of actors was truly responsible, Almada's kidnapping, in light of the other rash of insurgencies, was an international scandal. Not only was it embarrassing for the government and distressing for the country as a whole, but it also signaled a mounting grassroots resistance to manipulations of power and money on the part of the country's ruling elites. In this way, it turned the tide on the Mexican government's strategies with regard to tourism. While the state continued with its plans to finance its new programs through foreign capital investments and loans borrowed from international institutions such as the World Bank, it nevertheless renewed its commitment—at least on the surface—to nationalism. From the 1970s onward, the government exploited public rhetoric and imagery related to tourism from a consistently nationalist point-of-view. It framed tourism as a patriotic act for Mexican nationals and also created new "social tourism" programs designed to allow Mexican nationals of all classes to patronize and celebrate their nation's patrimonial holdings. In addition, the state initiated its tourism development projects in the 1970s by citing tourism as an ample source of job creation. In doing so, the state undoubtedly aimed to suppress the surge of leftist insurgent groups who frequently cited economic injustice as the primary reason for their attacks. For the Mexican state, the hospitality sector posed an attractive solution to civil unrest; through tourism it hoped to generate substantial employment in order to

[499] Camp, *Mexican Political Biographies,* 486.

subdue the increasingly commanding leftist threat to Mexico's ruling oligarchy. In line with tourism development, the state also pushed forward substantial investments in infrastructure in order to facilitate further expansion of Mexico's tourism sector.

Economic Policy

The 1960s and 1970s marked a period of transition in the state's economic policy, but especially with regard to tourism. While the state still espoused a nationalist and state-led approach, it also began to open its industries to foreign investment more commonly than it had in the most recent preceding decades. In line with nationalism, the early Mexican post-revolutionary state had adopted a variety of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) economic policies to protect select industries from foreign domination. ISI policies were popular throughout Latin America between the 1930s and the 1980s and they aimed to limit foreign control of their economies by emphasizing local production for local consumption. ISI policies therefore promoted diverse production and national autonomy, especially with regard to basic goods and services.[500] Another similar protectionist policy involved the state's assumption of control of any single industry or company, or "nationalization." Mexico's most notable nationalist economic policy manifested itself through the state's acquisition and nationalization of the oil industry during President Lázaro Cárdenas' administration in 1938. In the case of tourism, the Mexican state owned the Nacional Hotelera hotel chain (Nacional Hotelera operated Hoteles Presidente hotels and was nationalized in 1972), Aeroméxico airline

[500] Walden Bello, "Structural Adjustment Programs: 'Success' for Whom?" in *The Case against the Global Economy for a Turn to the Local*, ed. Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1996), 288, accessed August 18, 2015, http://www.converge.org.nz/pirm/structur.htm. For more reading on ISI and the economic history of modern Latin America, see: Victor Bulmer-Thomas, *The Economic History of Latin America Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, 1995; Thomas O'Brien, *Making the Americas: The United States and Latin America from the Age of Revolutions to the Age of Globalization*, University of New Mexico Press, 2007.

(acquired as Aeronaves de México and nationalized in 1959), and Mexicana de Aviación (nationalized in 1982).[501] While the state never fully owned *all* of the hospitality enterprises in Mexico's tourism market, its airlines monopolized the domestic flight market through most of the 1970s and 1980s until they were re-privatized in 1988.[502] Meanwhile, Nacional Hotelera remained under the control of the state between 1972 and 1985.[503]

Despite the popularity of ISI and nationalization during this period, the Latin American region never completely eliminated foreign investment from their economies. However, in the 1970s Latin American states began to open themselves up more willingly to foreign capital investment. By the 1970s and 1980s, Latin American countries began to borrow money from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for development projects to weather a series of economic crises, and the loans contained stipulations which required Mexico and other Latin American countries to open their economies to foreign investment. The World Bank and the IMF had resulted from the Bretton Woods Conference at the Mount Washington Hotel in New Hampshire resort of Bretton Woods in July of 1944.[504] Almost a thousand delegates from more than forty countries gathered to discuss a new monetary and financial order, in which international banking institutions

---

[501] "II Tourism Friendship Day," 8-9; "Tourism Becomes"; Wilson, "Economic and Social," 39; "Mexicana Jet Crash Killed 167," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, September 1, 1986, accessed August 19, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/65272969.

[502] Ira W. Lieberman and Christopher D. Kirkness, ed., *Privatization and Emerging Equity Markets*, World Bank Publications and Flemings, Washington, DC: 1998, accessed September 1, 2015, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1999/08/15/000009265_3980624143509/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf, 63.

[503] Wilson, "Economic and Social," 39.

[504] Jeffrey A. Frieden, *Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006, 259.

would be able to direct and shape individual countries' economic policies through loan stipulations.[505] Thus, Bretton Woods and the subsequent founding of the World Bank and the IMF fundamentally transformed the global economic system. The World Bank and the IDB were instrumental in providing the financial backing for Mexico's development of its five new tourism resorts in the 1970s, which included Cancún.

As a result of the influence of international banking institutions, more multinational corporations began to infiltrate Latin American economies, especially in the tourism sector. However, there were limits set by the state on the levels of foreign capital investment. President Luis Echeverría instituted a hybrid approach toward economic development. While he promoted foreign investment in tourism and other industries and even facilitated it through some of his policies, he nevertheless used protectionism in his methodology. In fact, he felt that his predecessors had embraced the sale of Mexican enterprises too readily. During his inaugural address to in 1970, President Echeverría strongly condemned the sale of Mexican companies to American multinational corporations. Instead, he favored the reception of foreign investors willing to contribute to the development of new businesses, new technology, and the manufacture of export goods. He fortified protectionist economic policy through the Foreign Investment Law of 1973, under which foreign ownership of Mexican corporations was capped at forty-nine percent. In addition, under this law some economic activities were set aside exclusively for the federal government and Mexican investors.[506] Despite Echeverría's nationalist leanings, he did facilitate foreign investment in tourism through

---

[505] Frieden, *Global Capitalism*, 259.
[506] Dionisio J. Kaye, "Mexico: Liberalizing Foreign Investment," *Temple Int'l & Comp. L.J.* 4, (1990): 81, accessed January 5, 2016, https://www.copyright.com/ccc/basicSearch.do?&operation=go&searchType=0&lastSearch=simple&all=on&titleOrStdNo=0889-1915.

the implementation of a trust mechanism which allowed foreign ownership of coastal land.[507] Through this two-pronged approach, the state expressed an inclination to protect Mexican industries from complete foreign domination, while also facilitating the extraction of the capital investment from foreigners that it viewed as essential to the build-up of its tourism holdings. Ninety-one percent of foreign tourists were Americans in 1973.[508] Thus, American brand recognition was incredibly important to the success of the tourism industry. John H. Dunning and Matthew McQueen reported that in 1978 Mexico became the country in the Global South with the highest number of foreign-affiliated hotels and hotel rooms.[509] In addition, Mexico's number of foreign-affiliated hotel rooms doubled that of the Philippines, its closest competitor in the Global South.[510] Nevertheless, these numbers alone do not tell the entire story. Many of the hotels were associated with foreign chains since Mexico's agents of tourism recognized the value of brand recognition among its primary tourism consumers. However, the ownership caps under the Foreign Investment Law of 1973 guaranteed domestic majority ownership.

In the aftermath of the Latin American debt crisis of 1982, Mexico pursued liberal trade and economic policies and opened up its economy even further to foreign investment. Furthermore, in 1986, Mexico joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which reduced tariffs and other international trade barriers.[511] In the

---

[507] Clancy, "Tourism and Development," 13.
[508] Actividades del turismo para el mes de Agosto 1974 hasta el presente, AGN: LEA, 486, (August 13, 1975).
[509] John H. Dunning and Matthew McQueen, "Multinational Corporations in the International Hotel Industry," *Annals of Tourism Research* 9 (1982): 77.
[510] Dunning and McQueen, "Multinational Corporations," 77.
[511] Kaye, "Mexico: Liberalizing Foreign Investment," 81; Ana de Ita, "The Impact of Liberalization of Agriculture in Mexico: from the GATT to NAFTA," Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, April 20, 1999, accessed January 5, 2016, http://www.iatp.org/files/Impact_of_Liberalization_of_Agriculture_in_Mex.htm.

process, Mexico's participation in the agreement influenced the state to favor export strategies over former ISI policies.[512] This was followed by government efforts to reduce the number of state-owned enterprises by more than sixty-two percent in the late 1980s.[513] As a result of these policies, foreign investment, especially U.S. investment, in Mexico and Latin America reached unprecedented levels in subsequent years. In the early 1990s, U.S. investments in industry, equipment, and infrastructure in the Latin American region averaged $15 billion per year. U.S. capital investors had an especially big year in the region in 1995 by surpassing the $15 billion mark in the first six months of that year, and much of that investment was in Mexico.[514]

Upon first glance, it would appear that the influx of foreign capital overshadowed domestic capital investment in hospitality. The fact that foreign capital infiltrated Latin American economies during this period at record numbers is unquestionable. According to one estimate, seventy-one percent of the top two classes of hotels in Mexico in 1987 were associated with foreign franchises.[515] However, more recent scholarship has discredited the underlying assumption that foreign franchises equated with exclusive foreign ownership. Even though foreign investment increased dramatically during this period, and foreign brands permeated the hospitality industry, domestic ownership nevertheless dominated the sector overall. For instance, in the early 1990s, Mexican-owned Grupo Posadas (formerly Posadas de México), absorbed its foreign affiliate Holiday Inn. It became the biggest hotel chain in Latin America and the sixty-second

---

[512] Kaye, "Mexico: Liberalizing Foreign Investment," 81.
[513] Ibid.
[514] Dan A. Cothran and Cheryl Cole Cothran, "Promise or Political Risk for Mexican Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 25, no. 2 (1998): 485; Somerset Waters, *Travel Industry World Yearbook: The Big Picture*. (New York: Child and Waters, 1996), 79.
[515] Andreas Schédler, "El capital extranjero en México: El caso de la hotelería," *Investigación Económica* 184 (1988): 137-178.

largest (by rooms) in the world by the end of the twentieth century.[516] Another national hospitality corporation, Grupo Situr, also became one of the leading chains in the world. In addition, Camino Real Hotels became one of the top five chains in Mexico by the end of the century.[517] In 1995, the top five hotel chains included Grupo Posadas, Holiday Inn Worldwide, Grupo Situr, Hoteles Camino Real, and Best Western International—most of which by then had a majority Mexican ownership.[518]

Despite the complexities of the difference between foreign affiliation and foreign ownership, the influx of foreign capital into hospitality was nevertheless imperative to the historical expansion of Mexico's hotel industry. In part, the increase of foreign capital investment Mexico's tourism industry resulted from the influence of American-trained Mexican technocrats on the state's economic development strategies and the Mexican government's decision to turn to the World Bank and the IDB—two international financial organizations which frequently required their borrowers to comply with stipulations that did not always work in their favor—to fund some of its newest economic development projects.[519] Some of the requirements from international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the IDB, and the IMF included "opening up to foreign investment, privatizing state-owned enterprises in the interest of attracting such investment, emphasis on exports to earn foreign currency, maintaining or reducing wages to make exports competitive, lowering import restrictions, devaluation of the local currency, and the deregulation of labor and environmental protections."[520] In the period

---

[516] Clancy, "Tourism and Development," 13; *Hotels* 29, no. 7 (1995): 38-40.
[517] Clancy, "Tourism and Development," 13.
[518] Ibid.
[519] Capanegra, et al., "Historia del turismo."
[520] Wilson, "Economic and Social," 42; Donald G. Reid, *Tourism, Globalization, and Development: Responsible Tourist Planning,* (Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2003), 98; Bello, "Structural Adjustment," 286.

after 1982 and the Latin American debt crisis, these policies made debtor countries especially vulnerable to the international financial institutions. According to political science scholar Walden Bello, "agreeing to a structural adjustment loan (SAL) was virtually to turn over the control of a country's economy to the World Bank and the IMF."[521]

Also, being highly influenced by the educations they had received in the U.S. at the University of Wisconsin, Harvard University, and the University of Michigan, the Mexico's youngest generation of technocrats touted strategic planning and foreign capital investment as core principles of their strategy for advancing tourism. Their American university educations undoubtedly influenced their approach to economic development. While they would not abandon nationalism and protectionism altogether, foreign capital investments infiltrated Mexico's tourism industry in the 1970s and beyond. In addition, neoliberal economics—an economic philosophy which touts free trade, privatization, deregulation, and limited government spending as the core principles of economic development—later permeated Mexico's economy in the1980s and 1990s, in large part due to the debt crisis of 1982. Mexico took loans from the World Bank and the IMF to dig itself out of debt, and those loans stipulated an embrace of neoliberal economic principles.

Neoliberalism first emerged as a project by a group of scholars from the University of Chicago. It endorsed tax and spending cuts, deregulation and privatization in the U.S. and was first embraced by the Carter (1977-1981) and Reagan (1981-1989) administrations as a way to keep the U.S. competitive in a global economy where

[521] Bello, "Structural Adjustment," 286.

Germany, Japan, and other countries had become major rivals. This was dubbed the "Washington Consensus" by economist John Williamson.[522] This economic philosophy disseminated throughout the globe, as the Global South struggled through the debt crises of the 1980s. In particular, Mexican president Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), who studied economics at Harvard University, fully incorporated privatization, deregulation and free market principles into his administration's economic strategies. The increased embrace of foreign investment—and later, neoliberalism—marked a key shift in Mexico's overall economic growth strategies and greatly influenced the nation's tourism ventures in the ensuing decades.

From Protectionism and Nationalism to Systematic Planning and Foreign Investment

The 1960s and 1970s marked the start of Mexico's shift toward an embrace of systematic planning and foreign investment. FONATUR borrowed significant funds from international financial institutions to fund its newest projects, but also, the youngest generation of technocrats who had commonly studied in Ivy League schools in the U.S. began to dominate the political space in Mexico. Having studied economics from an American perspective during the Cold War—an era in which the Chicago School of Economics influenced an entire generation of economists (particularly from Latin America) to favor free trade and open markets over protectionism—these predominantly foreign-trained Mexican technocrats imported these ideas back home and they ideas infiltrated Mexico's economic policies in the 1960s and beyond.[523] Development plans and strategies touting an increased participation of foreign investment began to overshadow the former nationalist protectionist economic policies of the earlier post-

[522] Frieden, *Global Capitalism,* 399.
[523] Varisco, et al., "El relevamiento turístico," 6-7; Capanegra, et al.

revolutionary state. Consequently, the state rooted its development plans in academic studies and embraced projects with capital investments gathered from foreign sources more readily than it had in the preceding decades.

While many Mexican nationals—fearful of recreating the foreign economic domination which had permeated the Mexican landscape prior to the spark of the Mexican Revolution—favored protectionist policies in hospitality and other industries, some Mexican technocrats began to identify the drawbacks of such practices. The lack of competition in nationalized industries, for example, sometimes led to glaring inefficiencies which they argued were ultimately harmful to the national economy. In hospitality, two airlines dominated Mexico's domestic flight schedule throughout the 1970s and 1980s: the state-owned Aeroméxico and the privately-owned airline Mexicana. Their virtual monopoly over Mexico's domestic flights was commonly a point of resentment for foreign air carriers, and foreign and domestic critics alike pointed to inadequacies which they claimed resulted from a lack of adequate competition in the domestic airline market. Meanwhile, the rivalry between the two gave rise to the national debate among technocrats and intellectuals of the virtues and pitfalls of nationalization.

While it was a privately owned company, Mexicana did not represent an exact antithesis of nationalist protectionism. In January of 1969, forty-five years after its founding in 1924, Mexico's first airline, Compañía Mexicana de Aviación, became 100 percent owned by Mexicans. Prior to that, it had been partially owned by the U.S.-based company Pan American Airlines. Cresencio Ballasteros, CMA's first vice president, bought the thirty-five percent of the company from Pan American Airlines, and officially became Mexicana's largest stockholder. This made Ballasteros virtually the sole

proprietor of the airline, since the other stockholders owned much smaller percentages of the capital stock. Nacional Financiera, for example, owned only ten percent of the company's stock. Ballasteros bought his shares for 7 million pesos, or approximately US $87,500.[524]

On November 12, 1975, Presidential Candidate José López Portillo endorsed the idea of merging the two major airlines in Mexico at the time—Aeroméxico and Mexicana de Aviación, in order to eliminate competition, streamline the use of equipment, and reduce personnel, which at the time totaled 7,000 employees.[525] López Portillo proposed this solution since the state-owned Aeroméxico had not turned a profit in the entire fifteen years of its existence. The privately owned Mexicana, on the other hand, showed a substantial profit every year.[526] However, a merger of the two competing airlines would not actually take place until several years later.

Due to its chronic cancellations and delays, over time Aeroméxico had earned the nickname "Aeromaybe."[527] In 1977, the airline completely overhauled a new computer reservations system, added twelve planes to its fleet, and increased the number of peak-season flights to major resorts, all of which the state hoped would improve the airline's tainted image.[528] However, Aeroméxico's reputation for incompetence continued and critics argued that its ineffective management and lack of innovation eventually led to the

---

[524] "Mexicana Airlines Becomes 100 Percent Mexican," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* February 1, 1969, 3. HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México. "Converter in the Past," accessed December 22, 2015, http://fxtop.com/en/currency-converter-past.php?A=1&C1=MXN&C2=USD&DD=01&MM=02&YYYY=1969&B=1&P=&I=1&btnOK=Go%21
[525] "Merger of Mexican Airlines Proposed by López Portillo," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* December 1, 1975, 2. HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[526] "Merger of Mexican Airlines," 2.
[527] "Yankees, Come Back."
[528] Ibid.

demise of its privately owned rival Mexicana. They surmised that since Aéroméxico was state-owned, Mexicana hesitated to dominate its competitor, which ultimately undermined the airline. The government absorbed fifty-eight percent of Mexicana's stock in 1982 following a financial crisis, which in effect nationalized the airline. Mexicana's financial problems occurred as the national economy faltered during the 1970s oil crisis, followed by the 1982 peso devaluation and a rise in interest rates on Mexico's national debt. Critic of the national airline Aeroméxico, Ingolf Otto of Mexico's Banking and Finance Institute, blamed Mexicana's decline on Aeroméxico's lack of efficiency as a state-run enterprise. He stated, "Mexicana was in a no-win situation because it was not allowed to drive the competition out of business…Eventually, Aeroméxico's inefficiency dragged Mexicana down. Then the government decided there was no point in having two inefficient airlines."[529] Both airlines joined to operate as a single airline in 1982, but the state ultimately declared Aéroméxico bankrupt in October of 1988. A new company called Aerovías de México was incorporated. It was initially owned by the state-owned development bank Banobras and the Mexican Airline Pilots Union (*Asociación Sindical de Pilotos Aviadores de México,* ASPA) and was created to acquire Aéroméxico's assets in the bankruptcy proceedings.[530] In November of 1988, Bancomer (then a state-owned commercial bank) acquired all of Banobras' shares in Aerovías de México (and some of ASPA's shares). Meanwhile, fifty-one percent of Mexicana's stock was transferred to a holding company, CMA, the controlling interest of which could be sold with the government sustaining a

---

[529] Richard Boudreaux, "Mexicana in Downdraft?" *The Seguin Gazette-Enterprise,* (Seguin, Texas), August 18, 1982, accessed August 19, 2015, www.newspapers.com/image/9775739.
[530] Lieberman and Kirkness, *Privatization,* 63.

minority position in the company's decision-making. In August of 1989, twenty-five percent of Mexicana's stock was transferred to the winning investor group, Grupo Xabre, whose members included Chase Manhattan Bank, DBL American Development Association, GO Limited, and six Mexican individuals.[531] Grupo Xabre thereafter maintained majority control of the airline.[532] In effect, the Mexican state no longer held sole ownership of either airline by 1989.

Despite the Mexican state's reliance on foreign investment, the state continued to possess substantial holdings in hospitality even through the late 1980s. Aeroméxico remained a nationalized airline until 1988.[533] Meanwhile, Nacional Hotelera (Hoteles Presidente Inter-Continental) stayed in the state's possession until it was sold to four Mexican families in 1985.[534] President Echeverría (1970-1976) was an outspoken nationalist, and many of the tourism programs and advertisements his administration promoted possessed decidedly nationalist leanings. In addition, he proposed and administered one of the most stringent foreign investment laws in Mexico in 1973, as it completely outlawed the presence of foreign capital interests from many areas of the Mexican economy and limited foreign investment in many others.[535] Even so, his administration also made the foreign acquisition of coastal land—a practice which article 27 of the Mexican Constitution of 1917 expressly prohibited—much easier. A new clause allowed foreign owners to acquire coastal land holdings through the establishment of a trust obtained through a Mexican financial institution. Under the new provision, the

---

[531] Ibid., 63.
[532] Ibid., 63.
[533] Ibid., 63.
[534] Wilson, "Economic and Social," 39.
[535] Clancy, "Tourism and Development,"13.

Mexican bank legally possessed ownership of the land.[536] While this measure remains controversial and is openly contested by Mexican nationals to the present day, the granting of coastal land trusts to foreigners was instrumental in Mexico's security foreign investment in tourism and the subsequent explosion of its coastal resorts, especially in Cancún.

The biggest wave of denationalization happened in Mexico between 1982 and 2003, after Echeverría's tenure as president (1970-1976) as a result of the debt crisis of 1982. The privatization of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) followed as a proviso in relation to Mexico's devaluation of the peso in 1982 as well as its acquisition of a US $2.2 billion loan borrowed from the World Bank, a stand-by credit of $1.7 billion from the IMF, and a US $7.7 billion loan from a group of international lenders in 1986.[537] By 1987, Mexico owed US $100 billion to its creditors, $80 billion of which it owed to banks in industrialized countries, and one-third of that, to banks in the U.S.[538] This occurred primarily due to the stark decline in OPEC oil prices in the 1970s. With the sharp fall of oil prices, Mexico was unable to repay its lenders on time, and they turned to Structural Adjustment Loans (SALs) gathered from international lenders to pay its debt which had accrued additional interest in the midst of the financial crisis.[539] Also, rising dollar exchange rates in response to soaring U.S. interest rates made it even more difficult

---

[536] Ibid.
[537] "Déjà vu of Policy Failure: the New $14 Billion Mexican Debt Bailout," *The Center for International Economic Growth*, No. 588 (June 25, 1987), 1, accessed August 14, 2015, http://s3.amazonaws.com/thf_media/1987/pdf/bg588.pdf.
"The Effect of Developing Country Debt-Servicing Problems on U.S. Trade: Report to the Subcommittee on Trade of the House Committee on Ways and Means on Investigation no. 332-234, under Section 332 of the Tariff Act of 1930," U.S. Congress: House of Representatives, U.S. International Trade Commission, (1987), x.
[538] "Déjà vu of Policy Failure,"1.
[539] Bello, "Structural Adjustment Programs," 288.

to pay off debt, since the majority of the debt was in dollars.[540] Against the strongest currencies, the value of the dollar increased by eleven percent in 1981 and seventeen percent in 1982.[541] The resulting debt crisis occurred all over Latin America, although Mexico was one of the largest countries owing money to international banks. In October 1983, twenty-seven countries owed $239 billion and had rescheduled their debts to banks or were attempting to do so. Sixteen of the twenty-seven countries were Latin American, and the four largest—Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela, and Argentina—collectively owed several commercial banks $176 billion, or around seventy-four percent of the total unresolved debt.[542] The subsequent SALs provided by international financial institutions to resolve the debt crisis required Mexico to re-structure its economy, primarily by opening up its markets to foreign investment and privatizing its SOEs.

While international creditors such as the IMF and the World Bank pointed to ISI policies and SOEs as the source of Mexico's 1980s debt crisis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) economist Lance Taylor and his associates concluded that protectionist nationalism was not to blame. Instead, they pointed to the 1970s decline in oil prices, combined with the resulting inflation, stagnant economic growth, and combined interest on Mexico's existing debt as the primary source of the debt crisis. In fact, using the bank's own data, Taylor and his colleagues found that rather than breeding inefficiency and economic decline, the often-ridiculed ISI policies had been quite

---

[540] Andrew C. Hove, Jr. *History of the Eighties—Lessons for the Future. Volume I: Symposium Proceedings,* (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, 1997), accessed October 5, 2015, https://www.fdic.gov/bank/historical/history/191_210.pdf, 199.
[541] Hove, *History of the Eighties,* 199.
[542] Ibid., 191.

effective at fostering productivity.[543] This evidence directly refuted the IMF and World Bank's vilification of protectionism and ISI policies.

Nevertheless, because of the SAL stipulations, the Mexican state privatized its national holdings, and American-trained Mexican economists endorsed the turn toward privatization. The Mexican state directed one of the world's largest privatization programs between 1982 and 2003, based on both the number of companies privatized and their size.[544] The number of state-owned companies plummeted from 1,155 to 210 during this period.[545] The bulk of these privatizations—both in size and scope—occurred during the presidency of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994).[546] Ninety-six percent of all assets privatized by the Mexican government between 1982 and 2003 occurred during Salinas de Gortari's presidency.[547] Salinas de Gortari was a fervent supporter of neoliberal economics who, like many other Mexican technocrats, studied in the U.S. Thus as a graduate of Harvard, like his predecessors, he was influenced by an American approach to economic and public policy.[548]

This vast privatization program occurred in conjunction with land reforms under Salinas de Gortari. Between the 1930s and 1970s, the Mexican state had transferred nearly half of national land holdings to the *ejido* sector.[549] In the post-revolutionary state, the *ejido* had allowed small landholders to gain access to natural resources which had

---

[543] Bello, "Structural Adjustment Programs," 288.
[544] Alberto Chong and Florencio López-de-Silanes, "Privatization in Mexico," in *Privatization in Latin America: Myths and Realities,* eds. Alberto Chong and Florencio López-de-Silanes (World Bank Publications, 2005), 353.
[545] Chong and López-de-Silanes, "Privatization in Mexico," 353.
[546] Ibid.
[547] Ibid.
[548] Camp, *Mexican Political Biographies*, 870.
[549] Eric P. Perramond, "The Rise, Fall, and Reconfiguration of the Mexican *Ejido," The Geographical Review* 98, no. 3 (July 2008) 357, accessed August 19, 2015, http://momscholar.net/files/2012/08/2012-11-09-Mesa-Central-Haciendas-Reading-Perramond.pdf.

previously been unavailable to them. In addition, it re-structured the political and economic power dynamic in the countryside by allowing previously disenfranchised, indigenous groups more influence at the local level.[550] However, neglect of the public *ejido* sector in the late 1970s, combined with the 1980s debt crisis, led to the decline in federal support of the *ejido* sector.[551] In addition, with the expansion of state-led tourism in the 1970s, the federal government expropriated thousands of acres of *ejido* land to promote tourism and other economic development projects.[552] Chapter 4 will discuss the 1970s tourism-related land expropriations at further length.

In light of the government's movement away from nationalism toward foreign investment open markets, *ejidatarios* sensed the eventual demise of their communal lands early on. At a 1970 gathering of 400 of the original followers of revolutionary Emiliano Zapata—who is considered the "father of land reform" in Mexico—one reporter asked an elderly Zapata lieutenant whether he felt his leaders ideals had been realized. "No," lamented the old man, "We still live in misery. We still have nothing to eat."[553] Decades later, one Sonoran *ejidatario* echoed the old Zapata lieutenant's sentiments that the state had failed Mexico's landless peasants. As he reported to geographer Eric P. Perramond at the start of the new millennium, "Since [the presidency of Luis Echeverría Álvarez, 1970-1976], we knew we [were]…screwed."[554] In 1992, Salinas de Gortari dismantled the *ejido* sector by allowing the communal lands to be sold to private interests.[555] In

---

[550] Perramond, "The Rise, Fall, and Reconfiguration," 357.
[551] Ibid.
[552] Mark Fineman, "Tourist Paradise in Baja Trapped: Mexican Standoff between Hotel, Local Farmers," *San Francisco Chronicle,* January 31, 1997; Wendy Call, "Lines in the Sand: A Tourism Debacle in Southern Mexico," *Dollars and Sense,* November/December 2001, 27.
[553] Knightley, "Rights Eroding in Mexico."
[554] Perramond, "The Rise, Fall, and Reconfiguration," 358.
[555] Ibid., 356-359.

doing so, Salinas de Gortari essentially undid nearly a century of federal land reform which had been designed in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution to redistribute wealth and political power to the marginalized indigenous populations of the Mexican countryside.

Planes, Trains, and Automobiles: The Growth of Transportation Technology

From the outset, extensive and consistent investments in infrastructure were at the forefront of the Mexican state's efforts to develop the nation's tourism industry. During the Porfiriato, the railroad system expanded dramatically from 400 miles of track in 1876 to 15,000 miles in 1911.[556] The expansion of the railroads drew foreign tourists—primarily from the U.S.—to Mexico in unprecedented numbers.[557] During the 1930s and 1940s, the Mexican state invested heavily in the development of ample highways as automobiles became a more commonplace means of travel. Finally, the introduction of air travel provided an even faster means of moving from one place to another, which inevitably led to a boost in the tourism industry. In the post-World War II era, commercial air travel accelerated at an unprecedented pace. The use of planes throughout World War II, and the need for more efficient, reliable aircraft, led to a post-war revolution in commercial air travel. This change occurred in part due to technological leaps which had occurred throughout the course of the war. These advances in technology made air travel both faster and cheaper. In addition, a substantial growth within the American middle class resulting from the G.I. Bill allowed even more

---

[556] William Dirk Raat, *Mexico's Sierra Tarahumara: A Photohistory of the People of the Edge,* (University of Oklahoma Press: 1996), 137.
[557] Jason Ruiz, *Americans in the Treasure House: Travel to Porfirian Mexico and the Cultural Politics of Empire*, University of Texas Press, 2014, 178.

Americans to afford the time and money required to partake in leisure travel.[558] Even so, more international travelers ventured to Mexico by car than air until 1970, since air travel was still quite expensive in comparison to traveling by land.[559] As airplanes became more efficient and were able to travel farther distances and carry more passengers at the same cost to the airlines, the price of air fare became accessible to middle-class tourists for the first time ever, which caused an explosion in the ever-expanding frontier of mass tourism. The advent of the Jet Age in 1958 brought about new possibilities for international travel. The Jet Age ushered in a revolution for commercial air travel as sleek jets with super-powered turbine engines replaced the slower, less efficient propeller planes. The "jumbo jets" of the 1960s could carry more passengers at a faster pace than propeller planes, which further accelerated air travel and made it even more affordable. Airlines began offering economy class airfares for middle-class tourists for the first time ever in 1958, just as jets were being introduced to the air travel market.[560] Pan American World Airways in particular pushed hard to extend economy class airfare beyond the domestic market to the global market in the 1960s.[561] Jets also made air travel less nerve-

---

[558] The G.I. Bill was a law passed in 1944 which offered substantial benefits to veterans who had served in World War II. Benefits included low-cost mortgages, low-interest loans to start a business, cash payments of tuition and living expenses to attend university, high school or vocational education, as well as one year of unemployment compensation. It was made available to every veteran who had been on active duty during the war for at least one hundred twenty days and had not been dishonorably discharged. Combat was not required to qualify for benefits. By 1956, approximately 2.2 million veterans had used the G.I. Bill education benefits in order to pursue a higher education, while roughly 5.6 million used these benefits for some kind of training program. Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin, *The G.I. Bill: A New Deal for Veterans* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 118; John Bound and Sarah Turner, "Going to War and Going to College: Did World War II and the G.I. Bill Increase Educational Attainment for Returning Veterans?" *Journal of Labor Economics* 20, no. 4 (October 2002): 784–815; Keith Olson. "The G.I. Bill and Higher Education: Success and Surprise," *American Quarterly* 25, no. 5 (December 1973).

[559] Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancún Bliss," 125.

[560] Barney Laschever, "With Abacus or IBM Machine, Figuring Air Fares is Futile," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, (Corpus Christi, Texas), July 28, 1963, accessed August 13, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/22450209.

[561] John M. McGuire, "Pan-Am Airways Chief Wants Lower Air Fares," *El Paso Herald Post*, (El Paso, Texas), December 14, 1959, accessed August 14, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/68815928.

racking, since the new air craft were designed to navigate turbulence more efficiently.[562] The Jet Age, the resulting air fare revolution, and the increase in commercial air travel in the 1960s became indispensable to the expansion of international mass tourism to Mexico and all around the world throughout the rest of the twentieth century.

The first major leap forward for commercial air travel occurred in 1934, when C.R. Smith, the president of American Airlines at the time, asked Douglas Aircraft Company to create the Douglas DC-3. The Douglas DC-3 was the first plane which had both the speed and range to collect a profit collected solely by carrying passengers. Prior to the creation of the Douglas DC-3, airlines relied heavily on the support of the U.S. government by providing air mail services along with its passenger services.[563] Two years later, the Douglas DC-3 began service and revolutionized the airline industry and the tourism sector.

Despite its significant contribution to air travel technology, the Douglas DC-3's capabilities paled in comparison to those of the turbine-powered air craft which sparked the Jet Age. 1959 was a revolutionary year for commercial jet travel; while in 1958, less than one percent of U.S. scheduled airline passenger miles were flown via jet planes, in the first three months of 1960, jet travel represented twenty-five percent of those miles.[564] Jets cut the duration of the coast-to-coast travel route across the U.S. from eight hours to five hours, and eliminated the constant vibration of the formerly common propeller planes.[565] By the late 1960s, airlines announced their intentions to create and launch the largest commercial air craft in the history of air travel. First introduced in 1968, the

---

[562] Vern Baugland, "Jets Bring Headaches," *Independent Star-News*, (Pasadena, California), August 21, 1960, accessed August 19, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/31782598.
[563] "At Your Service," *American Way*, April 2015, 122.
[564] Baugland, "Jets Bring Headaches."
[565] Ibid.

jumbo Boeing 747, Lockheed L-1011 Air Bus, and the Douglas DC-10 Air Bus all had the capacity to carry 300 or more passengers.[566] These were much larger than the commercial air craft of earlier eras, and as a result, the cost of traveling by air decreased considerably. Airlines projected that by 1970 an estimated 25 million Americans would enjoy incomes of at least $7,500 dollars per year after taxes, a large percentage of which would be left over for discretionary spending, including travel.[567] Walter J. Raucher, American Airlines' Vice President for Passenger Sales and Services, estimated at the time that approximately 255 billion dollars per year would be available for Americans' discretionary spending in the 1970s.[568] As a result, U.S.-headquartered airlines estimated that they would serve approximately 200 million passengers by 1975 and the number of U.S. citizens traveling abroad was expected to quadruple the previous year's numbers in 1968.[569]

The rapid developments in commercial air travel required the Mexican state to act quickly in order to accommodate the projected upsurge in tourists traveling by air. The early construction of airports was originally conducted by private airlines, but this changed as air travel became more common, affordable, and important for tourism development. Thus, following World War II, Mexico started a program to construct and improve its airports in 1947. As a result of the government's efforts, by 1951, there were a total of fifteen airports with adequate structures in addition to 365 registered landing

---

[566] "Prospect of Jumbo Age Brings Boom to Hotel Industry," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, October 1, 1968, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México, 4.
[567] "Prospect of Jumbo Age," 4.
[568] Ibid.
[569] Ibid.

fields throughout the nation.[570] By 1959, the number of airports and airfields in Mexico had increased to 770, eleven of which were used by international air carriers.[571]

Due to technological advances in transportation and the decreased cost of air travel in the post-war era and the Jet Age, the means of travel preferred by tourists changed quite rapidly in a matter of a few decades. In 1944, when 126,000 tourists came to Mexico, only thirty percent traveled by automobile due to gas rationing during World War II and nineteen percent arrived by air. In 1950, automobile arrivals represented fifty-nine percent of all foreign tourists traveling to Mexico and air travelers made up twenty-three percent of all arrivals.[572] However, in 1960, fifty percent still arrived by automobile and the percentage of those traveling by plane had risen to forty-two percent.[573] By 1970, the number of international tourists arriving by air to Mexico exceeded the number of those traveling by land.[574] Within a few short years, travelers' preferred method of travel had switched from automobile to airplane. This small change would be a game changer for Mexico's international tourism industry. The ability to travel by air allowed for a wider demographic of tourists to travel abroad, since it appealed to middle-class tourists who had less available leisure time to travel than members of the upper class.

In the Jet Age, a close relationship developed between hotels and airlines as the two became increasingly dependent on one another for growth and continued success. In 1975, this relationship became publicly apparent when the executive board of the Mexico

---

[570] Bryan, "History and Development," 131.
Report of Combined Mexican Working Party. *The Economic Development of Mexico.* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1953).
[571] "Tourism Growth Bolsters Mexico."
[572] Bryan, "History and Development," 131.
[573] Goethals, "Mexico Seeks to Attract More Tourists."
[574] Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancún Bliss," 125.

City Hotel Association hosted a banquet honoring Manuel Sosa de la Vega, general director of Mexicana Airlines, and José Patiño, marketing director of the airline.[575] Manuel Suárez, president of the Mexico City Hotel Association, awarded certificates to each of the airline executives. Upon receiving his certificate, Sosa de la Vega cited the importance of the close relationship for both industries, saying "We must get together, be aggressive, and work hand in hand to fill your rooms. Every one of your empty rooms means empty seats for us, so our promotions and efforts must be well-balanced and offer potential tourists the best in prices and services."[576] Many of the hotels were owned by the airlines themselves, such as Intercontinental Hotel Corporation, which was a subsidiary of New York-based Pan American World Airways, Incorporated at the time. Henry W. Beardsley, Senior Vice President of Intercontinental Hotel Corporation, commented at the time, "You can't sell the seat without a bed," thus underlining the intimate relationship between the transportation and housing in the hospitality industry.[577] Other independently operated hotel chains which were not affiliated with any airlines, such as Howard Johnson, Holiday Inns, and Sheraton, also increased their room inventory in the U.S. and expanded their operations abroad in preparation for the projected influx of airline passengers.[578]

Hotels in Mexico were no exception to this trend, as Mexico's inventory of hotel rooms increased enormously under President Luis Echeverría Álvarez (1970-1976) in conjunction with the expansion of air travel. When Echeverría took office in 1970,

---

[575] "Mexicana Airlines' Executives Honored by Mexico City Hoteliers," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* June 1, 1975, 4. HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[576] "Mexicana Airlines' Executives," 4.
[577] "Prospect of Jumbo Age," 4.
[578] Ibid.

Mexico had a total of 4,700 lodging establishments with 132,000 rooms in operation. Throughout Echeverría's *sexenio* (Mexico's presidential term of six years), Mexico added 2,000 new hotels and motels holding a total of 58,000 new hotel rooms, to its national inventory. This represented an increase of approximately thirty percent in a matter of six years. Also by 1976, Mexico had 10,000 spaces in trailer parks and an equal number of establishments for the consumption of food and beverages.[579] Not only did Mexico increase the sheer number of its hotel rooms, but the quality improved as well. The hotels constructed under Echeverría's supervision presented a significant upgrade in comparison to past accommodations, with telephones in individual rooms, elaborate lobbies, and the most up-to-date amenities.

Mexico was already making major plans for revolutionizing its hospitality industry by planning the construction of five new resorts just as air travel was expanding and discretionary spending for the average American family was steadily increasing. As a result, international tourism was becoming more accessible to the bulk of American middle-class travelers. By the early 1970s, airlines introduced the public to the new jumbo jets and sales for seats skyrocketed.

Public Relations

Public relations campaigns took on a new importance for the Mexican government as it became increasingly involved in state-led tourism projects. By the mid-twentieth century, in recognition of the importance of advertising and international image in the capture of tourism revenue, the state assumed a more active role in the production

[579] "Foreign Tourists to Mexico Number 19 Million in 1970-1976 Period," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, July 1, 1976, 23, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.

and regulation of public relations campaigns for travel to Mexico. The Federal Tourist Bureau (*Dirección General de Turismo)* launched a vigorous campaign to encourage travelers to visit Mexico during President Avila Camacho's presidency (1940-1946). At that time, the Minister of the Interior, Miguel Alemán, appointed Alejandro Buelna to re-structure the tourism department and strengthen the public relations and advertising campaigns for tourism to Mexico. The Federal Tourist Bureau invited the press, radio station companies, and movie industry from the U.S. to send managers, publishers, journalists, and directors to tour Mexico as guests of the federal government and return to report on their experiences in the American media. Meanwhile, in the U.S., the Federal Tourist Bureau released a series of special exhibits which included 16-millimeter colored travelogues narrated in English as well as a distribution of descriptive travel brochures.[580] Overwhelmingly, the campaign resulted in mostly positive reactions among American audiences. In 1948, ninety-five percent of foreign tourists in Mexico came from the U.S.[581] As of 1975, American tourists still made up ninety percent of Mexico's foreign visitors; in 1984 the percentage dropped to eighty-six percent.[582] By the 1990s, Americans represented more than ninety percent of all international tourists to Mexico and at the turn of the twenty-first century, Americans still represented eighty-seven percent of all international tourists in Mexico beyond the border zone.[583] They also made up nearly all of foreign tourists who traveled within the U.S.-Mexico border area.[584]

---

[580] Bryan, "History and Development,"130-131.
[581] Ibid., 131.
[582] "Armendáriz-Foreign Trade Bank," 7; "Mexico Retains Share of Foreign Tourists," *The Seguin Gazette-Enterprise* (Seguin, Texas), February 20, 1985, accessed September 30, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/19846900/?terms=Americans%2Bforeign%2Btourists%2BMexico.
[583] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "National Tourism Policy Review of Mexico," Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry, Mexico: 2001, accessed September 30,

State campaigns targeting foreign audiences continued and only intensified in the following decades. As of the 1960s, Mexico's federal tourism department had established fourteen offices in North America—located in Tucson, San Diego, Los Angeles, San Antonio, Washington, D.C., New York City, New Orleans, Miami, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, San Francisco, and two cities in Canada.[585] The offices distributed pamphlets and information to the community at its office locations and also coordinated with local media sources to place advertisements, participate in local events, and plan its own events to publicize travel to Mexico. For example, the federal tourism department frequently held booths at state and county fairs in the U.S. In 1963, Mexico's tourist department dispersed 3,000 travel brochures during the Arizona State Fair in Phoenix.[586] The Mexican state's tourism offices continued to launch similar campaigns throughout the U.S. in the subsequent years. In the 1960s, the Tourism Department disseminated a series of ads in prominent U.S. newspapers with the slogan "Mexico: So Foreign, Yet So Near."[587] The theme of this campaign was remarkably similar to an ad run by the U.S.-based Missouri Pacific Lines railroad company in the 1930s which read, "Mexico: A Foreign Land a Step Away."[588]

2015, http://www.oecd.org/mexico/33650486.pdf, 18; Cothran and Cothran, "Promise or Political Risk," 486.

[584] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "National Tourism Policy Review of Mexico,"18.

[585] "Tourism Becomes."

[586] Ibid.

[587] "Mexico," New York Times, March 6, 1966, xx, accessed February 1, 2016, http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1966/03/06/129235602.html.

[588] Andrea Boardman, *Destination Mexico: A Foreign Land A Step Away, U.S. Tourism to Mexico, 1880s-1950s,* DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, 2001, 84.

"Mexico: A Foreign Land…"[589]

"Mexico: So Foreign, Yet So Near"[590]

"Mexico" [591]

The copy and imagery in the ads were quite similar. Both the 1930s and one of the 1960s ads featured a mariachi in traditional dress. While the mariachi in the ad from the 1930s leaned over a Mexican woman, seeming to engage with her in conversation, the mariachi in the 1960s happily serenaded a white (perhaps foreign) tourist while playing the guitar. The second ad from the 1960s portrays a white (probably foreign) couple exploring a Mexican archaeological site. All three of the ads demonstrate continuity in promoters' marketing Mexico as simultaneously foreign (and therefore "exotic" and exciting) and yet close in proximity (and therefore inexpensive and requiring less time to get there). This shows several elements of Mexico's appeal to a U.S. audience, including proximity, "exoticism," and affordability. However, the 1930s Missouri Pacific Lines railway company ad focuses entirely on displaying the Mexican "other" as part of the sights to be seen while traveling to Mexico. The foreign guest is notably absent from the 1930s ad. Meanwhile, the ads from the 1960s, which the Mexican Tourism Department created,

---

[589] Boardman, *Destination Mexico*, 84.
[590] "Mexico," *New York Times*, March 6, 1966, xxi, accessed February 1, 2016, http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1966/03/06/129235602.html.
[591] "Mexico," *New York Times.*

show interaction between the foreign guests and the local Mexican host or the hosting environment. This could reflect a shift in advertising trends, the difference between who was creating the ads, or changes in the diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and Mexico between the 1930s and the 1960s.

Regulation, New Amenities, and Improved Technology

Under the state's centralized approach to tourism through careful planning and foreign investment, the state-led tourism projects included the vast expansion of the nation's hotel inventory, significant improvements infrastructure and technology, and clear regulations of rates and amenities. The Mexican state recognized that in order to compete with more developed nations for tourism dollars it would have to standardize the industry more rigorously. The increased regulation of hospitality in Mexico proved to be challenging for government apparatuses, however, as the informal hospitality market continued to flourish due to an inadequate supply of well-paid jobs in the formal labor market. The informal hospitality market operates as part of the informal economy, which is common throughout Latin America. The informal economy is an economic system based on income and capital exchanges which occur in part or fully outside of government regulation and taxation.[592] For example, in June of 1976, the *Mexico Travel and Hotel News* reported that a high official of the Mexican Association of Travel Agencies (AMAV) cited an excess of "hole-in-the-wall" travel agencies throughout the country. The offices made promises to tourists of being able to "travel now, pay later." The AMAV official seemed puzzled as to how the "hole-in-the-wall" travel agencies

[592] The World Bank, "Workers in the Informal Economy," The World Bank, accessed December 29, 2015, http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALPROTECTION/EXTLM/0,,contentMDK:20224904~menuPK:584866~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:390615,00.html.

obtained licenses from the Ministry of Tourism.[593] However, the official offered no direct criticism of the informal operations other than to imply that they were somehow inferior to travel agencies which were officially associated with the AMAV.

In addition to more regulation, the hospitality industry also experienced improvements in technology which increased the convenience and added to the appeal of international travel. In 1968, Pan American Airways de México (which later became Aeroméxico) announced the modernization of its reservations and ticketing system designed to make buying and selling tickets much easier and faster for both consumers and travel agents alike.[594] Since telephone, teletype, and telex communications lines had become saturated by the increased demand in global travel throughout the previous decade, Pan Am de México (Aeroméxico) amplified its systems to facilitate more rapid and efficient management of airline and hotel reservations all over the world.[595]

Throughout the 1970s, undoubtedly due to the state's capital investments in tourism development and its concentrated efforts to standardize the industry's practices and improve the nation's hospitality holdings, Mexico made major advancements in attracting more foreign tourists. Between 1970 and 1976, Mexico attracted 19 million foreign tourists. This was 7 million more during the previous *sexenio* (1964-1970), which represented an increase of approximately fifty-eight percent.[596] In the same period, income from tourism and border transactions doubled, reaching an unprecedented

---

[593] "Hole-in-Wall Travel Agencies, Criticized," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, June 1, 1976, 16, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[594] "Pan American Inaugurates New Reservation System," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, April 15, 1968, 6, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[595] "Pan American Inaugurates," 6.
[596] "Foreign Tourists to Mexico Number 19 Million," 23.

amount of 12 billion dollars.[597] In addition, while between 1964 and 1970, 360 million foreign travelers crossed the U.S.-Mexican border into Mexico, between 1970 and 1976 that number grew to 396 million. The upsurge in foreign tourists to Mexico was especially impressive considering the increased financial difficulty experienced by many middle class Americans in the 1970s due to the recession, the energy crisis, and the currency devaluation underwent by many countries.[598] Mexico posed a cheaper alternative to their preferred destination, Western Europe, during the global financial crisis.

On January 7, 1974, the Federal Law of Tourism Promotion formally endowed a strong, legal state presence in matters related to the development of tourism. This law indicated a momentous shift toward the further centralization of federal planning and promotion of the tourism sector. Despite the strength of state-led tourism development under Cárdenas and Alemán in earlier decades, with the passing of the Federal Law of Tourism Promotion in 1974, the federal Mexican government became involved in the development of tourism at an unprecedented level. The law created and funded the National Fund for Tourism Promotion (FONATUR), thus marking a further centralization of the state's role in the planning, creation, and promotion of new and existing tourism locations. At the same time, the Mexican state's passage of the law manifested a new regard for tourism as an important technical trade. Not only did the law create a formal fund for the development of tourism locations throughout Mexico, but it also established an extensive training structure for tourist industries at the national level, which assured that both the public and private sectors of tourism would provide a

[597] Ibid.
[598] Ibid.

steady supply of trained, professional technicians in the field.[599] Later, on December 31, 1974, in response to the accelerated growth of tourism, the Mexican state took another step to emphasize the rising importance of tourism for Mexico's national economy by elevating the Department of Tourism to the category of a Government Ministry.[600]

During this same period, a vast increase of both private and public investment poured into the tourism sector, which also led to substantial growth. The development of the five new planned tourism poles demanded an enormous influx of capital into the tourism sector. The project development of a new tourism location in Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo on the Pacific Coast required an initial investment of $64 million dollars. Meanwhile, the development of the new planned tourism pole in Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca cost $8.5 million dollars. This figure did not include the cost of basic infrastructure which was needed in many of the other locations which were developed at this time. In Baja California Sur, development cost $65 million dollars, while in Cancún—the most costly of the projects—private investors and the Mexican state contributed a total amount of $120 million dollars in the initial stages of construction between 1970 and 1976.[601] The total amount of money invested in tourism during this period was completely unparalleled in Mexican history. Under the Echeverría administration, more than $600 million dollars financed the construction of 23,000 new hotel rooms throughout the nation.[602]

The new interest on the part of the Mexican state in the tourism sector resulted in rapid growth in job opportunities for Mexican nationals. The initial stages of

---

[599] Ibid.
[600] Ibid.
[601] Ibid.
[602] Ibid.

concentrated state-led tourism development led to an increase from approximately 300,000 people directly employed in tourism in 1970 to about 650,000 people working in tourism by the end of 1976.[603] According to an estimate by the hospitality publication *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* if those 650,000 employees supported an average of four additional people within their families, then approximately 3,250,000 Mexicans depended upon tourism for their livelihood in 1976.[604] This was more than double the figure from six years earlier at the beginning of Echeverría's presidency. In addition, there were more than 650 travel agencies and 2,600 registered tourist guides throughout Mexico. Also, between 1970 and 1976, the Ministry of Tourism's "Green Angels," who were radio patrolmen who offered roadside assistance to tourists, served more than 1.5 million vehicles and covered more than 80 million miles.[605] Mexico's tourism industry made significant strides throughout this period, and it seemed that the state's promises of using tourism as a means of creating more jobs and economic development were coming to fruition.

Appealing to the American Middle Cass: Selling Mexico

The increase in middle-class foreign tourists made marketing Mexico as an affordable place to travel just as important in the state's strategies to sell tourism as the standardization of prices and amenities. One of the ways in which American hospitality companies, the Mexican government, and other agents of tourism marketed Mexico to middle class American tourists was by selling Mexico as the most affordable option for international tourism. By the mid-1970s, hotels, transportation companies, travel agents,

---

[603] Ibid.
[604] Ibid.
[605] Ibid.

and other agents of tourism began collaborating to offer all-inclusive tourism packages. In May of 1975, Aeroméxico, Holiday Inn-Acapulco, and Hertz Rent-A-Car teamed up to offer an all-expense package tour, which according to Ignacio Gómez of Aeroméxico's sales team was "economical yet with all the trimmings."[606] The package included the cost of air tickets, hotel accommodations, automobile rentals, as well as visits to night clubs, restaurants, and tours of the bay. Gómez expressed hopes to create more partnerships and be able to offer more varieties of packages to consumers, stating,

> Aeroméxico will make this kind of arrangement and elaborate an economical package with any hotel and car rental agency to any of our Mexican destinations. It is our purpose to help the travel agent sell a complete package, commissionable, in a first-class hotel and with the advantage of a rental car. This amounts to a completely carefree vacation pre-planned by us. This time we have gotten together with Holiday Inns and Hertz for the Acapulco package, but we are structuring several other packages in which we will include Tijuana, up north, Cozumel in the southeast, La Paz, Mazatlán, Monterrey, and many other destinations.[607]

By the 1970s, the name Aeroméxico had become synonymous with nationalism due to its state-owned status and its monopoly on domestic air routes. However, as its national strategy to grow tourism among the foreign middle class, Aeroméxico developed collaboration with international companies rather than other state-owned companies in the hospitality sector.

In the summer of 1975, American Express, Braniff International Airways, Hertz Rent-A-Car, and Western International Hotels followed suit and offered a series of new all-expense package tours to various locations throughout Mexico, including Mexico City, Querétaro, Puebla, Toluca, Cuernavaca, Guadalajara, Puerto Vallarta, and Cancún.

---

[606] "Aeromexico-Holiday Inn Acapulco Hertz Join in Attractive Package," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, May 1, 1975, 22, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[607] "Aeromexico-Holiday Inn," 22.

Under the title "More Mexico for Less," the packages offered tourists a means of paying for the major expenses of a trip abroad combined into one singular payment. As the pre-packaged, all-expenses-paid trips became more commonplace, this contributed to the rise of American middle-class tourism abroad, as these packages made international travel more affordable and more accessible for the average American tourist. The simplification of the purchasing process into a singular bill, as well as the streamlining of travel expenses into affordable monthly payments, appealed to the American middle class, as many middle-class Americans by the 1970s were already accustomed to using credit cards and payment plans to obtain their version of "the American dream." Now, with the rise of pre-packaged travel options, "the American dream" could include luxury travel to an "exotic," tropical location like Mexico. Overall, then, international travel in general became more attainable and less daunting for middle-class American tourists. The growth of international travel among the American middle-class in the 1970s set the stage for the successful launch of Mexico's newest tourism poles, most notably Cancún.

Cancún's Construction

Mexico continued its state-directed approach through careful tourism planning as well as a combination of state capital and substantial foreign investments in Cancún. Cancún was the biggest and best-funded project of the five new resort locations proposed by the federal government. In 1986, a mere decade after its initial opening, Cancún was drawing more foreign visitors annually than Acapulco, Mexico's former tourism hotspot, and by the year 2000, Cancún had become Mexico's most important international tourist

destination, as it was attracting twenty-five percent of its foreign tourists.[608] The construction of Cancún began in February of 1970, its first few hotels opened in 1974, and the resort became a huge success in the ensuing decades. Although the international community had already begun to recognize the enormous growth of Mexico's tourism sector by the 1960s, Cancún's successful development throughout the remainder of the twentieth century was central to Mexico's continuous rise to power in the global tourism industry.

Prior to its inception in 1970, Cancún was a small Maya fishing community with a population of approximately 140 inhabitants.[609] At the time of the government's initial surveillance of the community, there were no modern amenities in place in Cancún: no running water, no electricity, and no telephones.[610] Cancún's massive growth in subsequent years resulted from a substantial amount of investment in infrastructure and amenities. In 1968, Augustín Salvat Rodríguez, who was the head of the Tourism Department between 1964 and 1970, outlined plans in a press conference to construct a Maya Circuit highway, with new routes through Chiapas and Yucatán.[611] He also announced desires by a group of Mexican investors, under the leadership of Manuel Espinosa Yglesias, president of the Banco de Comercio, to invest 250 million pesos in the establishment of hotels in that area.[612] In addition, Salvat announced the federal

---

[608] Smith, "Three Generations," 6; Rebecca Torres, "Cancun's Tourism Development from a Fordist Spectrum of Analysis," *Tourist Studies* 2, No. 87 (2002), accessed November 11, 2011, http://tou.sagepub.com/content/2/1/87, 95.
[609] Smith, "Three Generations," 6; Rodolfo Casparius. Interview by author. Houston, TX. November 17, 2011.
[610] Casparius.
[611] Camp, *Mexican Political Biographies;* "Tourism Chief Opposes Airport Tax on International Travelers," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* February 1, 1968, 6, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[612] "Tourism Chief Opposes Airport Tax," 6.

government's intentions to build roads, airports, small ports, and other necessary infrastructure to aid in the attraction of tourism to the southeast region of Mexico. He stated that two million tourists visit the Caribbean area per year, and that "southeastern Mexico, once all the required facilities are constructed, with its added inducement of numerous Maya ruins, should be able to attract a large percentage of those visitors."[613] The state encountered difficulty attracting investors in its newest projects at first. As one public sector interviewed by Michael Clancy explained, "Not one hotel chain wanted to operate a hotel in a place where there was nothing."[614] However, the state used a few strategies to combat the setback. First, it directed its own hospitality expansion through Nacional Hotelera. Second, FONATUR offered preferential loans for hotel investments for private investors.[615] Thereafter, capital investment poured into the development of Cancún and its surrounding areas.

Cancún, according to *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, was "grown from nothing, carved out of the jungle."[616] To create a tourism space in the small, isolated fishing village, a team of engineers and economists initially laid out the infrastructure. Developers cut down the jungle and filled in swamps to create a level surface for construction.[617] They created roads, hotels, motels, golf courses, ports, worker housing, schools, clinics, civic facilities, restaurants, a potable water system, electric power, and a $16 million-dollar international airport. The city also contained a hotel training school, a bus system for tourists, and taxis. By 1975, the government had constructed 1,000 hotel

---

[613] Ibid.
[614] Clancy, "Tourism and Development," 11.
[615] Ibid., 12.
[616] "El Presidente Inaugurated July 19th as Cancún's Newest Resort Hotel," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, August 1, 1975, 1, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[617] "El Presidente Inaugurated," 1.

rooms through $50 million dollars from the federal government and $90 million dollars from private enterprises.[618] In that time, the town had grown to a population of 30,000 people as people migrated to Cancún from all over the country in search of employment.[619] In 1974, Cancún opened its first hotels—Playa Blanca, Hyatt Cancún Caribe, and Nacional Hotelera, which was fully owned by the government.[620]

On August 4, 1975, Minister of Tourism Julio Hirschfield Almada inaugurated the Hotel Camino Real Cancún. At the time of this opening, Camino Real was a well-established and widely recognizable brand for international travelers. Owned and operated by the American hotel corporation Western International, Camino Real was a chain of luxury hotels which operated in Mexico and throughout Latin America. The Camino Real brand represented hospitality at the highest level of prestige and extravagance. Thus, its opening in Cancún marked an important step toward legitimacy and recognition for the new resort. The Banco Nacional de México fully financed the construction of the Hotel Camino Real Cancún, at an approximate cost of $16 million dollars.[621] The 250-room hotel sat on grounds which covered approximately 52,000 square yards. The structure of the hotel itself mimics a pyramid, consisting of a series of staggered terraces. The hotel grounds also provided access to two beaches.[622]

The designers of Cancún's layout intentionally established a separate town to house the thousands of workers employed in the construction of both the tourist facilities

---

[618] Ibid., 8-9.
[619] Ibid.
[620] Ibid., 9; "Cancún without Phone Service," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* May 1, 1975, 11, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[621] "The 250-Room Camino Real Cancún Inaugurated by Sec. Hirschfeld Almada," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* September 1, 1975, 1, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[622] "The 250-Room Camino Real," 1.

and the new city of Cancún. Developers made plans to accommodate 70,000 workers upon completion of its first phase of development.[623] The city planners also constructed the new $16 million dollar international airport twenty miles from the hotel zone.[624] Construction of the airport was completed in 1974.[625] The airport included immigration, customs, and health services and it was built to accept all types of aircraft, including the 747 jet. At the time of Cancún's opening, the airport accepted commercial jets from Mexico City, Mérida, Los Angeles, and Miami.[626] Advertisers boasted that by plane, it was a mere 70-minute flight from Miami, four hours from Los Angeles, and an hour and a half from Mexico City.[627]

Julio Hirschfeld Almada, the Tourism Minister of Mexico in 1975, personally cut the ribbon to inaugurate Cancún's El Presidente (owned and operated by the state-owned hotel chain Nacional Hotelera) on July 19, 1975. The new hotel had 183 rooms, including thirteen suites.[628] During the winter season (December 15 until May 2), the rates were on the Modified American Plan (a plan which included the cost of lodging as well as both breakfast and either lunch or dinner provided by the hotel) and ranged from fifty-two dollars for a single to eighty-eight dollars for a triple. A reduction of twelve dollars was made when guests preferred the European Plan (a plan which covered the cost of lodging only). Summer rates, however, were on the European Plan—thirty-two dollars for a single and forty-eight dollars for a triple. For those who prefer the Modified

---

[623] "Abre el Primer Hotel en Cancún: Hotel Playa Blanca," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, May 1, 1975, 2, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[624] "El Presidente Inaugurated," 1.
[625] "Abre el Primer Hotel en Cancún," 2.
[626] "El Presidente Inaugurated," 1; "Abre el Primer Hotel en Cancún," 2.
[627] "Abre el Primer Hotel en Cancún," 2.
[628] "El Presidente Inaugurated," 1.

American Plan there was an added charge of twelve dollars per person.[629] In pesos, the rates were $300 pesos per night for two people for a package of three days and two nights.[630] Meanwhile, at the Camino Real Cancún, guests paid $335 pesos per person for a three-day, two-night package.[631]

While tourism agents originally conceived Cancún as an exclusive vacation spot for international elites, early reports on the status of the tourism project cast doubt on Mexico's ability to adequately carve a resort of such luxury out of the completely isolated overgrown jungle in such a short amount of time. A mere months before the official opening of hotels in Cancún, newspapers reported that Cancún was still without adequate phone service, and Mexican authorities feared it could compromise the vast investments which had already been poured into the project. *Mexico Travel and Hotel News* reported that according to statements made by Eduardo Bojórquez of Promotores de Turismo Nacional, "the vast investment already made in Cancún, on the coast of Quintana Roo, not to mention the additional investment planned, is being endangered by lack of telephone connections with the rest of the country." At the time of the report in May 1975, Cancún had only one phone booth established. However, there were four hotels already in operation with 304 hotel rooms—Playa Blanca with seventy rooms, the Bojórquez with 32, Cancún Caribe with 170, and El Parador with thirty-two rooms.[632]

With the extensive government planning and financial support, Cancún expanded rather quickly. On August 26, 1975, a mere year after the first hotel opened for business

---

[629] Ibid.
[630] "Cancún Hotel El Presidente," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* August 1, 1975, 10, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[631] "Vacaciones en Venta en el Camino Real Cancún," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* August 1, 1975, 12, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[632] "Cancún without Phone Service," 11,

and only three months after the startling phone service report, Cancún was already showing impressive growth. Guillermo Grimm, marketing director of FONATUR, announced at a meeting at the Hotel del Prado in Mexico City with other tourism agents that Cancún already offered more than 1,200 international quality deluxe rooms.[633] This represented a growth of 400 percent in hotel room inventory in a matter of three months.[634] This represented more than Puerto Vallarta's entire inventory of rooms, more than that of Cozumel Island, and almost half as many rooms of the same quality as Acapulco.[635] According to Grimm, within another year, FONATUR planned to construct an additional 1,200 rooms. Thus, the new resort would be nearly on par with Acapulco in terms of hotel room inventory—at least with regard to the supply of international quality deluxe rooms—a mere two years after its initial opening. In the same span of time, developers also added a Convention Center, twenty shops, and two restaurants to the resort.[636]

The opening of a Convention Center in 1976 signaled tourism agents' desires to attract elite business clientele in addition to wealthy international jetsetters. The Cancún Convention Center was made up of 17,000 square feet and contained 1,400 seats. In May 1976, the Convention Center hosted its first meeting—the Inter-American Development Bank Convention, thus signaling the resort developers' intimate ties to the IDB and similar global financial institutions. André Ambron, who directed the Convention

---

[633] Ibid.; "FONATUR Makes Special Presentation to Agents," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* September 1, 1975, 16, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.
[634] The 400% growth was calculated by the author based on numbers gathered from "Cancún without Phone Service," 11. "FONATUR Makes Special Presentation," 16.
[635] "FONATUR Makes Special Presentation,"16.
[636] "Cancún Convention Center Appoints Marketing Firm," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* May 1, 1976, 6, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, México.

Center's marketing in North America, stated that the new Convention Center would "make Cancún one of the most desirable of convention destinations."[637] The attraction of international business elites and their investment capital through the construction of the Convention Center was crucial in tourism agents' efforts to create a world-class luxury resort in Cancún.

Development in Cancún was extremely fast-paced, largely due to the unprecedented amount of capital which the state and private investors poured into the project. In the initial stages of development, the Mexican government had invested $60.4 million dollars into the Cancún project. In addition, the state had accepted nearly $90 million dollars from private investors.[638] Cancún's construction also required extensive planning on the part of the Mexican government. Its creation and subsequent success in attracting tourists from abroad ushered in a new era of tourism development based on state-led planning and increased foreign investment in Mexico and throughout Latin America.

Conclusion

While Mexico had made significant gains in capturing tourism from abroad in the first half of the century, the Mexican state realized that its strategies would have to change if it were to make more strides in the tourism sector. It had already gained some international recognition as a country with an emerging international tourism industry by the 1950s with the expansion of Acapulco and the growth of Mexico City, but by the 1960s, its most successful tourism locations were rife with overpopulation, pollution, and poverty. Mexico's former strategies of vast investments in infrastructure with less

[637] "Cancún Convention," 6.
[638] "FONATUR Makes," 16; "El Presidente," 8-9.

emphasis on hotel inventories were beginning to take their toll. Mexico City's lack of sufficient hotel rooms during the Pan Am Games in 1955 had been a disaster. The city's hotels had only been able to provide one-third of the necessary rooms for the number of visitors traveling there for the international event and as a result, hotel personnel had to turn guests away in droves.[639] Afterward, the international community and the Mexican government alike expressed the need for Mexico to rise to the challenge of providing the adequate lodging needed for any further growth in its tourism sector.[640]

In the midst of the Jet Age, the international tourism market of the 1960s and 1970s was becoming increasingly competitive. Thus, Mexico consciously stepped up its game by streamlining its tourism planning. As a result, it transformed its former Department of Tourism into a Ministry of Tourism (FONATUR) and tourism planning conducted by the federal government became much more centralized. While beforehand several different government entities had handled the planning, advertising, and funding of tourism projects, FONATUR assumed responsibility for it all with the merging of FOGATUR and INFRATUR in 1973.[641] In the ensuing decades, FONATUR conducted in-depth studies, made detailed development plans, increased the standardization of rates, amenities, and business practices in hospitality, improved technology, enhanced infrastructure, expanded the nation's hotel room inventory, produced and regulated public relations materials, and handled the funding of tourism projects. Systematic planning characterized Mexico's state-led tourism projects from the 1970s onward.

---

[639] "Athletes Pouring into Mexico City," 52.
[640] Bryan, "History and Development," 131.
[641] Smith, "Three Generations," 6; Wilson, *Economic Life of Mexican Beach Vendors*, 7.

While it would not abandon protectionism or nationalism altogether, the Mexican state opened its markets to foreign investors and competitors more than the post-revolutionary state had in the preceding decades. The Mexican state increased its foreign investment portfolio by borrowing capital from the World Bank and the IDB to fund its biggest tourism projects as of the 1970s. FONATUR also invited both corporations and private financiers from abroad and at home to invest in its tourism sector.

As a result of these changes, 1970s Mexico provided an ideal laboratory for state-led tourism development bolstered by foreign capital investment. Cancún in particular offered scholars and policy-makers alike an interesting case study to examine. As Mexico's biggest and best-funded tourism project to date, Cancún expanded at lightning speed in comparison resorts of the past, and it demonstrated considerable success in a relatively short amount of time as a result. In light of the Mexican government's 1970s methodology of tourism development, Cancún quickly emerged as Mexico's rising star of tourism. At least initially, the combination of the saturation of financial capital into the project, state-controlled systematic planning, and an opening to foreign investment appeared to be a success in Cancún and Mexico's larger tourism project of the 1970s.

Despite Cancún's remarkable growth and its extraordinary contribution to the buttressing of Mexico's international tourism market, nevertheless it presented some of the problems of Mexico's tourism ventures of the past, even from the outset. As with Mexico City and Acapulco, the newest tourism resort was rife with overcrowding and racialized socioeconomic inequality, despite the state's extensive development plans which aimed to avoid such problems. In addition, the influence of foreign capital—particularly American tourist dollars—characterized the space in Cancún which differed

from the most popular tourism resorts of the past. Unlike Acapulco, Mexico City, and Tijuana—all of which were cities in their own right long before they became tourism centers—Cancún ascended from the state's centralized efforts to create a planned tourism space. It was created to *be* a tourism center. Given that the majority of Mexico's foreign tourists hailed from the U.S. (and still do), this greatly determined the shape and cultural identity of the city itself. In addition to race and culture, gender also played an important role in determining the cultural identity of Cancún. Socially constructed gender norms drove many of the marketing strategies used by Mexico's agents of tourism to attract tourists to Cancún and simultaneously shape the resort's identity among foreign and national tourists alike as a sexualized American paradise. This strategy proved to be successful—at least for Cancún's investors—since it quickly emerged as Mexico's most important tourism resort.

Chapter 4: Race, Gender and the Commodification of Culture in Cancún

An examination of the interaction between capitalism and socially constructed categories of identity such as race and gender is essential to expanding historical knowledge and understanding of Mexican tourism development, particularly with regard to Cancún. The two have an interdependent relationship in that while socially constructed categories of identity inform the contours of capitalism, capitalism also shapes socially constructed categories of identity. This plays into feminist theorist bell hooks' concept of the "imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy," in which hooks contends that the economic system of capitalism is not separate from socially constructed hierarchies based on race and gender. Thus, hooks argues that the social-political systems of patriarchy, imperialism, white supremacy, and capitalism are interlocking.[642] Within this interconnecting system, the maintenance of social hierarchies supports the accumulation of capital to those at the top—mostly white western males. This concept relates to Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of "intersectionality." Like hooks, Crenshaw asserts that social categories of identity such as race and gender overlap and intersect within related systems of oppression and domination.[643] Thus, in the context of tourism, race and gender have often corresponded in the construction and marketing of Cancún. In this light, the Cancún project demonstrates that when tourism developers, state actors, and private investors lay out their plans for a creating a new tourism project, they manipulated gender, race, and culture in order to draw a maximum amount of capital from their project.

---

[642] bell hooks, "Understanding Patriarchy," in *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love,* bell hooks, Atri Books: 2004, 17.
[643] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43 (July 1991): 1241-1299.

First, in Cancún private and public developers constructed an international tourism destination on racialized lines through the removal of indigenous inhabitants from their native land and the subsequent construction of a racialized socioeconomic apartheid in the city. As researcher Rebecca Torres explains, "Fordist production regimes often construct… 'enclavic' spaces, which are typified by highly ordered, clean, monitored 'environmental bubbles' where tourists are spatially segregated from local workers and cultural manifestations that might be potentially unpleasant."[644] Meanwhile, tourism investors maintained racial divisions in Cancún through restrictive hiring practices and privatized beaches. In addition, gender frequently informed men's and women's separate roles in the construction of Mexico's tourism industry. Men typically dominated the most active economically and politically powerful roles in tourism as property developers, government planners, and hospitality executives. Meanwhile, women frequently filled more passive roles in tourism development. By working as beauty pageant contestants, models in print advertisements, flight attendants, and sex workers, their participation in tourism denoted less economic and political power but more physically aesthetic and sexualized appeal.

Also, social constructions of culture informed tourism agents' creation of Cancún. With regard to culture, consumer appeal demanded a dual approach to tourism marketing: an appeal to both the consumers' longing to encounter the "exotic" Mexican "other" in their travels abroad as well as their desire to maintain western standards of comfort, convenience, and standardization. In this way, Mexico's agents of tourism merged culture and consumerism by commoditizing culture itself, and this overlaps with social

---

[644] Rebecca Torres, "Cancun's Tourism Development from a Fordist Spectrum of Analysis," *Tourist Studies* 2, No. 87 (2002), accessed November 11, 2011, http://tou.sagepub.com/content/2/1/87, 90.

constructions of race. Consumers' appetite for the "exotic other" demanded the incorporation of local Maya culture and broader Mexican culture into local architecture, activities, advertisements, tour packages, and other aspects of the tourist experience. In particular, the mysterious charm of local Maya culture infiltrated Cancún's local landscape in the form of indigenous street names, "Maya-inspired" images and designs on souvenirs like coffee mugs, t-shirts, and keychains, and daily tours to nearby Maya ruin sites such as Chichén Itzá and Tulum. In the case of architecture, several hotels even mimicked the shape of pyramids. Local business owners utilized the appeal of Maya culture in their own marketing of goods and services.

The use of local Maya culture has been central to Cancún's construction of "authenticity" for tourism consumers. As Dean MacCannell argues, "The alienated modern tourist in quest of authenticity…looks for the pristine, the primitive, the natural, that which is as yet untouched by modernity."[645] Thus, in line with MacCannell's argument, the construction of "authenticity" is an essential part of attracting tourism dollars. However, unlike MacCannell, who contends that "authenticity" is a static, unchangeable idea, Eric Cohen asserts that "authenticity" is a socially constructed concept, and therefore its definition is negotiable.[646] Similarly, Stuart Hall argues that culture is malleable and transient in nature.[647] Thus, while some theorists have asserted that in order for something to be authentic, it must not be manufactured specifically for the market, Cohen and Hall argue against that idea.[648] Instead of thinking of

---

[645] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class,* University of California Press, 2013, 160.
[646] Erik Cohen, "Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 15, (1988): 374.
[647] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation," *Framework* 36 (1989): 68-81.
[648] Cohen, "Authenticity and Commodiization in Tourism," 375.

commoditization as the antithesis of "authenticity" in tourism, Cohen and Hall contend that it actively participates in its definition and re-definition. In line with MacCannell, this chapter will assert that Mexican tourism agents used "authenticity" as an essential element to attracting the modern tourist. However, like Cohen and Hall, it will argue that the commoditization of goods and the insertion of Maya symbols, language, and culture into the local landscape has been a key part of constructing the "authenticity" which attracts many tourists to Cancún. Taking Cohen's idea even further, this chapter will assert that authenticity becomes a product in and of itself through the process of commoditization. This is contrary to MacCannell's assertion that commoditization cannot be a part of "authenticity."

Developers, planners, and investors also tried to appeal to local residents' desires to partake in both a national and local collective identity. Throughout the process of Cancún's development, most inhabitants were not locals of the city. They migrated from nearby cities, states, and other parts of the country. Therefore, developers carved a new space entirely and infused the city with recognizable elements of both local and national culture. For example, buildings, streets, and municipalities contained names of both national heroes and local indigenous ruin sites. For example, the city outside the hotel zone—where most locals live—was named Benito Júarez after one of the nation's most popular presidents and its first indigenous president. The city hosted a series of dances and festivals which celebrated the culture of the Maya people and other local indigenous groups. Incidentally, the federal government granted statehood to Quintana Roo, where Cancún is located, in 1974 just as Cancún's first hotel was opening its doors for business. This measure seemed to be the federal government's symbolic acknowledgement of

Quintana Roo's growing importance for the nation as a whole in the context of Cancún's establishment there. In this way, it allowed residents of the state to feel a part of the national community and therefore partake in its national identity.

The Commodification of Culture

In Cancún, tourists purchase "authentic" Mexican culture in the form of manufactured goods, "local" cuisine tailored to tourists' tastes, and commercial tours of the region. In the modern era of global capitalism, "authenticity" is marketed through manufactured products and planned, commercialized experiences. "Authenticity" is packaged as part of the tourist experience in order to satisfy foreign travelers' search for an authentic cultural exchange with the "exotic" Mexican "other." In the Yucatán, the Maya are the local form of the "exotic" Mexican "other." Therefore, the local Maya culture is often marketed through superficial Mayan images and symbols incorporated into the local architecture in hotels, restaurants, and monuments and printed onto t-shirts, coffee mugs, and other souvenirs.[649] Thus, the few Mexican cultural representations that tourists encounter are artificially created through the capitalist system. Local residents meet tourists' search for "authenticity" with a robust participation in the local economy in order to exploit the dollar's economic advantage and market "branded" local products, thereby asserting their own agency.

Land Disputes and Socioeconomic Apartheid in the City

City planners created their ideal paradise by expelling the minute local Maya population from their ancestral lands to make way for the new resort. This was part of a larger nationwide trend which occurred during the 1970s and 1980s in which the federal

[649] Henry Geddes Gonzales, "Tourism, Mass Media, and the Making of Visual Culture in the Greater Yucatán Peninsula," *Journal of Film and Video* 60, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 50-58.

government expropriated thousands of acres of *ejido* land to promote tourism and other modes of economic development.[650] As a result, land disputes raged between Mexican state officials and *ejidatarios* all across the country, beginning in the 1970s and into the new millennium. For example, in the small village of Mulege in Baja California, ninety-four *ejidatarios* occupied the Hotel Serenidad on July 14, 1997, claiming that they were the rightful owners of the property. Nancy Ugalde de Johnson, a fifth-generation native of Mulege, and her California-born husband, Don Johnson, had invested nearly $1 million into the hotel since Nancy bought it from the previous owners in 1968. While they initially rented the land from the *ejidatarios,* in 1982 they purchased it from the federal government for $100,000 after the government claimed it had expropriated the property from the peasant collective.[651] In the process of expropriating nearly 150 acres (approximately 45 square miles) from the *ejidatarios*—a parcel of land which included the entire town of Mulege—the government promised to reimburse them for the land. However, it did not begin to do so until after the peasants seized their property from the Johnsons, nearly twenty years after the government originally took it from them.[652] Despite the twenty-year delay in payment to the *ejidatarios,* a federal judge in Mexico City still deemed the Johnsons the rightful owners of the land parcel. In response to the court ruling, the peasant collective continued to occupy the hotel and demanded that the Johnsons pay 16 years of rent and for years to come if they wanted to continue to conduct business there.[653]

---

[650] Mark Fineman, "Tourist Paradise in Baja Trapped: Mexican Standoff between Hotel, Local Farmers," *San Francisco Chronicle,* January 31, 1997; Wendy Call, "Lines in the Sand: A Tourism Debacle in Southern Mexico," *Dollars and Sense,* November/December 2001, 27.
[651] Fineman, "Tourist Paradise in Baja Trapped."
[652] Ibid.
[653] Ibid.

Meanwhile, in the municipality of Santa María Huatulco, Oaxaca, one of FONATUR's five new tourism poles, similar expropriations of *ejido* lands were underway. On May 28, 1984, the local press announced that the Mexican government was taking control of nearly 51,380 acres of coastal land in order to construct the new tourism resort. Within five years of the expropriation, almost all of the 500 residents of the tiny beach town of Santa Cruz had moved from the beach to the government-made town of La Crucecita, which was constructed about one mile inland.[654] In other parts of the Huatulco, however, *ejidatarios* firmly held their ground. Bajos de Coyula was a community on the western edge of the expropriated territory where Laurentino Cormona, a local *ejidatario*, founded the Bajos de Coyula Civic Association to fight the expropriation. In 2000, sixteen years after the government first initiated the land expropriation in Huatulco, about 160 of the 446 communal landowners in Bajos de Coyula were still holding out in their fight against the government's expropriation of their communal landholdings.

Peasants in Jalisco also resisted similar projects of government *ejido* land expropriation. Tensions rose between *ejidatarios* and the government in the lush coastal area of Costalegre, which is located between Manzanillo and Puerto Vallarta. This area contains the Chamela-Cuixmala Biosphere Reserve, which boasts 13,000 hectares of dry tropical forest. This type of ecological setting is exceptionally rare—it is one of only a few of its kind in the entire country. In 2007, the government told the 600 local residents of a small community off the Costa Careyes, called Playa Tenacatitas, that they were

[654] Call, "Lines in the Sand," 27.

expropriating their land, alleging that they were residing in "barren and virgin areas."[655] A few kilometers away, in another beach called Careyitos, the government informed around fifty fishermen that their land concession, granted by the federal government fifteen years before, was not valid. Later, the fishermen discovered that José Manuel Bosoms, who was married to Lourdes Hernández, (the daughter of ex-banker for Banamex Roberto Hernández who also had substantial tourism investments in the area), had solicited a land expansion for Imagen y Espectáculos de Lujo (IEL) La Huerta, a development project which entailed plans to construct a hotel and luxury villas just 2 kilometers from the biosphere.[656] Months prior to the land expropriation, Roberto Hernández's associates Jean Carlo Brignone and his son Giorgio asked the *ejidatarios* to abandon their land with the promise to construct a luxury marina and offer them employment there. However, according to Alejandro Suverza, a reporter for the Mexico City-based publication *El Universal*, "What those making the offer didn't understand was that…the land they were demanding was the only thing the fishermen had."[657]

At the helm of the Costalegre land expropriation project were a team of land developers including heirs to British financial speculator James Goldsmith. The Goldsmith heirs had particularly lucrative holdings in Mexico's coastal lands. For example one hotel they own costs between 9,000 and 15,000 dollars per night for one room. Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones, Madonna, and Bill Gates have all stayed at this hotel. Other land developers in the biosphere region included the ex-banker for Banamex Roberto Hernández, the ex-Secretary of Defense during the 1968 Tlatelolco Massacre

---

[655] Alejandro Suverza, "Los Reyes de Las Playas," *El Universal*, December 25, 2007, accessed September 2, 2015 from http://archivo.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/156711.html.
[656] Suverza, "Los Reyes de Las Playas."
[657] Ibid.

Marcelino García Barragán, the ex-governor of Jalisco Jesús González Gallo and ex-governor of the state of Mexico Arturo Montiel Rojas.[658] Thus, the project was dominated by some of Mexico's most powerful political elites. On at least three occasions, these investors resorted to acts of intimidation such as burning houses and forced evacuations in order to coerce the inhabitants of the beach at Tenacatitas to leave. In 1993 the former general Marcelino García Barragán's ordered his relatives, who owned land adjacent to Tenacatitas, to destroy all property in the area.[659]

The projects at Costalegre not only threatened the livelihoods of local peasants, but they endangered the local ecosystems, too. Ironically, the Goldsmith heirs created the nature reserve in 1993, and then afterward began its development projects under the guise of ecological preservation. In 2007, Alberto Zsékely, speaking a representative of The Council for the Defense of the Pacific Coast (*El Consejo para la Defensa de la Costa del Pacífico),* condemned the Goldsmiths' local development projects, saying that they were "falsely presented and disguised as ecological."[660] Zsékely also claimed that developers commonly lie on the required environmental impact studies in order to push forward their projects.[661] The Council for the Defense of the Pacific Coast is an environmental organization which aims to protect the biosphere and the surrounding ecological treasures. The proposed IEL La Huerta development project promised even greater ecological damage, as it planned the construction of a 215-room hotel, forty villas, and 200 houses. According to environmentalists, this posed a great threat to the local

[658] Ibid.
[659] Ibid.
[660] Ibid.
[661] Ibid.

ecosystem since it would consume millions of liters of water.[662] Even so, Roberto Hernández and his associates the Brignones proposed even more development projects for the biosphere; they proposed to construct several tourist attractions including a golf course. According to environmentalists, these plans threatened to destroy the Teopa Beach Turtle Sanctuary *(Santuario de Tortugas de Playa Teopa)* and the Chamela Bay Islands Sanctuary (*Santuario de las Islas de la Bahía Chamela).*[663]

In Cancún, Mexican government officials allegedly promised some local Maya inhabitants access to shorefront property, only to deny it to them decades later as the land became more valuable. In the 1990s, hotel construction and beach privatization intensified as tourism continued to grow. Meanwhile, land—especially beachfront property—became scarcer in the Cancún Corridor, or hotel zone. One Mexico tourism analyst commented at the time, "Ten years ago Mexican businessmen dismissed all that property as if it were swampland…Now they decide they want it."[664] The value of land in the Cancún Corridor exploded in the 1990s. U.S. baby boomers Dan Vallejo and Susan Bohlken had purchased some coastal property in the Cancún Corridor in the 1980s for two dollars per square meter. Ten years later, the same land was worth eighty dollars per square meter. However, land developers offered them only fifteen dollars per square meter. After Vallejo and Bohlken refused the developers' offer, they suddenly faced reviews of their immigration status and delays in building permits. Vallejo explained, "It's like open season on us because they need beaches for casinos and marinas."

---

[662] Ibid.
[663] Ibid.
[664] Tim Padgett, "The Battle for the Beach," *Newsweek,* July 1, 1996, 58.

Another small landowner said a Mexican developer warned him to sell the property or "we'll take it from you."[665]

In the midst of the 1990s beachfront land grabs between large transnational corporate developers and small landowners, a group of impoverished Maya fisherman and coconut farmers emerged, filing legal claims to some shorefront property in the Cancún Corridor which they alleged the Mexican government had promised to them decades before as part of its land reforms.[666] In the fall of 1995, one peasant group even occupied a small bungalow resort owned by Cancún local José Luis Soto and his family, and held the guests hostage for a day in protest.[667] Many of the small property owners expressed worries that if the peasants won the title to the land, they would sell it at rock-bottom prices to developers. While locals denied having such plans, the property owners' fears were not so far-fetched. A similar outcome had occurred in 1995 when a group of *ejidatarios* in Guerrero sold their land to foreign land developers at around US $10,000 per lot.[668] Some of the land speculators—most of whom were foreigners—resold those same land parcels for more than US $40,000 each.[669] While the ultimate outcome of the 1990s beachfront land disputes in Cancún is unknown, the dynamic between the Maya fishermen, the large land developers and the small landholders demonstrates a general lack of consideration for the plight of those who held less political and economic power. Mexican developers and government officials alike seemed generally unconcerned with fulfilling any promises to land ownership which they had

---

[665] Padgett, "The Battle for the Beach," 58.
[666] Ibid.
[667] Ibid.
[668] Ibid.; Jonathan Friedland, "Impoverished Village in Mexico Strikes Pay Dirt in the Sand," *The Wall Street Journal,* January 6, 2000.
[669] Friedland, "Impoverished Village in Mexico Strikes Pay Dirt in the Sand."

made to the local Maya population, especially as the capital value of the land appreciated at exorbitant rates.

Race, Class and Urban Design

Cancún's planners intentionally created racialized socioeconomic apartheid within the city by geographically separating the tourists from local residents. According to scholar Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolás, "The designers of Cancún were very strict about segregation. Low-and medium-skilled workers could travel to the hotel zone by bus and those with higher skills by car. The ideal organization of space would provide special locations for work and allow a minimum of interface between workers and the public."[670] In that same vein, Cancún's developers created an intentional separation of space based on class and race through the creation of zones and differentiated architectural designs. The Master Plan notes on Design Criteria for Cancún read accordingly:

> The physical-spatial distribution of zoning uses must be done so as to result in harmonious integration, orderly, clear, and differentiated; using basic landmarks, points of reference and urban identity, places of urban reference and recognition; places for people to gather and mingle; paths and pedestrian walkways, and the clear demarcation between lower class 'barrios' and better residential areas by architecture and style.[671]

Thus, Cancún's developers created a deliberate urban design with divisions organized by class and race, not only through geographic separation between zones of the city, but within the architectural designs of the buildings in the distinct zones.

---

[670] Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolás, "Cancún Bliss," in *The Tourist City,* Dennis Judd and Susan Fainstein, eds., New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999, 129.
[671] Fernando Martí, *Cancún, Paradise Invented: Notes on Landscape and Architecture*, Impresora Formal S.A. de CV, 1998, 87.

Map of Cancún [672]

A large lagoon divides the hotel zone and the workers' part of the city, and thus serves as a physical, economic, cultural, and racial partition between the two. The Mexican government aimed to correct mistakes it had made while developing Acapulco, Mexico City, and other tourism cities, since by the 1960s these tourism destinations were suffering greatly from overpopulation, uncontrolled growth, and widespread poverty.[673] In Acapulco, the city was rife with "eyesores that have long blemished the cityscape…[like] flimsy hillside shacks," which were visible to foreign visitors. For tourism developers, Acapulco's image, tarnished by widespread poverty and the growth of informal shanty towns, was a liability.[674] The government felt that these issues had arisen largely from a lack of adequate planning, since in the 1960s Mexicans had mass-migrated from the countryside to the bigger cities in search of employment. In fact, the government headed the construction of Cancún and other planned resorts in the 1970s in

[672] World Atlas, "Cancún," World Atlas, accessed August 21, 2015, http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/namerica/caribb/cancun.htm.
[673] Call, "Lines in the Sand," 27.
[674] Philip Sousa, "There Have Been Changes, But It's Still Acapulco," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, April 15, 1979, accessed July 31, 2015 from www.newspapers.com/image/62660833.

an attempt to create more employment in the most impoverished regions of the country and thereby stem further migration to metropoles which were already experiencing dire overpopulation.[675] Thus, urban planners of Cancún attempted to correct the government's past failures. They reasoned that in order to achieve this, it was best to maintain geographic divisions of space, race, and socioeconomic conditions when constructing the new tourism projects.

After having learned early on that "integrating tourists and local residents within a world-class resort was not optimal," FONATUR re-produced the Cancún model of spatial segregation in its later projects.[676] While construction of the first hotel in Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo began in 1976—only two years after Cancún's first hotel officially opened for business—FONATUR did not pour the bulk of its capital investments into the project until the mid-1980s. At that time, FONATUR invested approximately $22 million in loans borrowed from the World Bank.[677] Like they had done in Cancún, developers used the natural environment as well as man-made barriers to guarantee the segregation of tourists and local residents.[678] However, in Ixtapa, instead of a lagoon, the tourism zone Ixtapa was separated from the residential zone Zihuatanejo by a mountain range. FONATUR's marketing brochure highlighted the local landscape as one of its most advantageous features, stating, "Where many saw only an immense mountain range next to the sea, we saw a perfect scenario."[679]

---

[675] Jeffrey S. Smith, "Three Generations of International Tourist Resorts in Mexico," *Geographische Rundschau International Edition* 5(1): (2009), 5-6.
[676] Smith, "Three Generations," 8.
[677] Ibid., 7.
[678] Ibid.
[679] FONATUR, "Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo 2003: Estadísticas de turismo," Tourism Statistics: Ixtapa. Mexico, DF; Smith, "Three Generations," 8.

In addition to capitalizing on the natural environment, FONATUR also made more deliberate attempts to uphold segregation in the city. In the late 1980s, local business investors pressured the local government to provide more affordable worker housing. Thus, Colonia La Puerta was established in 1994 just one and a half kilometers (.9 miles) from Ixtapa's primary beach. Afterward, FONATUR created a separate commercial center for Colonia La Puerta in order to guarantee as little social interaction between foreign tourists and local residents as possible. Perhaps most significantly, FONATUR also constructed a cinder block wall to create a physical man-made barrier between the tourist zone in Ixtapa and the working-class Colonia La Puerta. Under this model of racially and socioeconomically conscious spatial segregation, Ixtapa became FONATUR's second most successful tourism development project with an average of 300,000 visitors per year (with Cancún as FONATUR's most successful resort and Los Cabos as its second most popular location).[680] FONATUR also used a variation of this model in Acapulco in 1979. Through a multimillion dollar government project, they relocated former shanty dwellers into new public housing blocks. At the very least, this guaranteed less public facetime between impoverished locals and wealthy foreign guests.[681] Therefore, according to researcher Jeffrey S. Smith, "FONATUR has employed the strictest regulations on development with the intent of ensuring a high quality tourist experience."[682] By utilizing natural barricades and constructing additional man-made barriers, FONATUR has repeatedly engineered a profitable model of tourism defined by racialized and class-based spatial segregation.

---

[680] Smith, "Three Generations," 7.
[681] Sousa, "There Have Been Changes."
[682] Smith, "Three Generations," 8.

Beach Privatization

Cancún developers also restricted access to privatized beaches, which aided in the preservation of racialized and socioeconomic enclaves in Cancún's public tourism space.[683] Sonia, a middle-aged single mother of two who serves drinks and snacks to tourists at a four-star hotel, stated in 2003, "I have worked here for twenty-two years, and never once have I been able to bring my kids to this beach…Employees and their families are simply not allowed to use the facilities. We're prohibited."[684] As a result of the 1990s explosion in hotel construction and beach privatization, Cancún locals had free, open access to only two beaches—*Delfines* and *Langosta* (Dolphin Beach and Lobster Beach). Meanwhile, the rest of the coastal lands in the hotel zone were privatized (and still are).[685] The privatization of beaches is not unique to Cancún, however. In the Costalegre region of Jalisco, for example, only twenty kilometers of a ninety-kilometer stretch of coastal property is public. In addition, the Goldsmiths own substantial land holdings in Mexico's coastal regions, and no one is allowed to enter the land without prior authorization from the family.[686]

Beach privatization alone has left local *cancunenses* feeling as if "they have been stripped and segregated from development and from the best opportunities. Additionally, their rights in their roles of natives are not respected, and on the contrary, those who come from outside are benefited."[687] In order to accommodate foreign investors' desires

---

[683] Geddes Gonzales, "Tourism, Mass Media, and the Making of Visual Culture," 52.
[684] Marc Cooper, "Behind Globalization's Glitz," *The Nation*, September 4, 2003, par. 7.
[685] Elva Esther Vargas Martínez, Marcelino Castillo Nechar, and Felipe Carlos Viesca González, "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades: Cancún's Creation, Peak and Agony," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 3, no. 8 (April 2013): 24.
[686] Suverza, "Los Reyes de Las Playas."
[687] B. Campos, "La Actividad Turística Internacional y Su Repercusión en la Población de Quintana Roo," in *Descentralización y Manejo Ambiental Gobernanza Costera en México*, ed. J. Fraga, G.J. Villalobos, S.;

to ensure privacy and exclusivity in their beachfront properties, President Echeverría's administration issued a Presidential Decree on April 30, 1971, announcing his allowance of foreigners to buy coastal property through the establishment of a 30-year trust, since foreigners had previously been prohibited from buying any property within 50 kilometers of the coast or within100 kilometers of the northern and southern borders. Congress later adjusted article 29 of the 1917 Constitution on March 9, 1973 to continue the practice.[688] Prior to Echeverría's decree, foreigners had already been purchasing land in the prohibited zones through *prestanombres* ("borrowed names"), in which Mexican corporations purchased land for foreign investors under their names.[689] Therefore, Echeverría's measure legalized a common practice among Mexico's political elites and foreign investors. The privatization of beaches remains a highly controversial practice in Mexico, since the 1917 Constitution had expressly prohibited it.

Tourism, Indigenous Maya Culture, and the "New" Authenticity

The close proximity of Cancún to Maya ruins sites served as a major selling point for the initial construction and subsequent development of the resort site as a successful international tourist attraction. Developers and investors alike were convinced that the Maya heritage of Cancún and the surrounding region would be a key element to its success. Mexican journalist Fernando Martí refers to these ruins as the Cancún planners' "Maya inheritance."[690] Most notably, the world-famous ruins site Chichén Itzá lies inland approximately 120 miles west of Cancún. Meanwhile, Tulum is located about

---

Doyon and A. García (México: Centro Internacional de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo CINVESTAV-IPN, 2008), 1; Vargas Martínez, et. al, "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades," 24.
[688] Clancy, "Tourism and Development, 13; Zack V. Chayett and Leonard V.B. Sutton, "Mexican Real Estate Transactions by Foreigners," *Journal of International Law and Policy* 4, no. 15 (1974): 20-21.
[689] Chayett and Sutton, "Mexican Real Estate Transactions by Foreigners," 20.
[690] Martí, *Cancún, Paradise Invented*, 67-68.

eighty miles south of Cancún in the Cancún-Playa del Carmen Corridor. There are other noteworthy Maya settlements in the region as well including Xel-Ha and Xcaret (both of which were transformed into ecological parks in the 1980s), Playa del Carmen, Xaac, Chakalal, Kantenah, and Xpu-hah. In addition, some smaller, lesser-known ruins also inhabit parts of the city of Cancún itself. These include Ruinas del Rey as well as a hollow temple in the Sheraton Hotel gardens. There are two additional structures on the golf course which was once an island in the lagoon. Finally, another half dozen shrines as well as San Miguelito and El Meco, which are two nearby ancient archaeological sites, occupy the San Buenaventura zone.[691] The sites add to the appeal of travel to Cancún and Mexico in general, as visitors to the sites are able to connect to a foreign indigenous heritage which represents a culture and span of time extending outside of themselves. According to Martí in his book *Cancún: Paradise Invented: Notes on Landscape and Architecture,* when tourists visit the Maya ruins, "The observer can become one of the city's fabled builders, feel what they felt, see what they saw, be those people. For a moment the soul gains antiquity, nativeness, becomes Maya…"[692] Martí suggests that in this transaction in which a tourist consumes the "other" through their visit to a ruins site, they themselves become the "other," at least in their imaginations of themselves.

Newspaper stories, print advertisements, and investor brochures from the mid-1970s for the newly-developed resort highlighted Cancún's proximity to some of the best-known ruins, such as Cobá, Tulum, Kabah, Uxmal, Xel-Ha and its "Temple of the Jaguar," Chetumal, and the biggest and most famous Maya ruins site of them all: Chichén

---

[691] Ibid.
[692] Ibid., 66-67.

Itzá.[693] They even mentioned some of the lesser-known sites like Izamal, Xpuhil y Becan, Chemui, Yaiku, Kohunliche, and Akumal, with its "Cave of the Tiger," thereby highlighting the seemingly ubiquitous presence of Maya ruins in the region.[694] Perhaps most famously, an ad with the headline "Walk in the Footsteps of Mayan Kings" appeared in major newspapers and magazines across the U.S. in 1974. It contained the image of a palm-lined beach with a single line of footprints running into the distance across the beach.[695] The exploitation of Cancún's Maya identity continued into the late twentieth century and to the present day. An ad from 1993 for Apple Vacations read, "Discover the hidden treasures of the Mayans."[696] This copy evokes a feeling of mystery, adventure, and exoticism in association with a trip to Cancún. In this ad, Apple Vacations promoted the resort's Maya heritage as its principle point of attraction to foreign tourists. The advertisements of the past offer a window into prominent American travel brands' and common American tourists' imaginations of Mexico, Cancún, and the Maya.

Foreign tourists' search for the "exotic other" greatly influenced the commodification and marketing of local Maya culture in the context of the local tourism industry. Cancún's tourism industry has commodified and sold the "authenticity" of local indigenous culture through the architecture of hotels and local businesses, print and

---

[693] "Abre el Primer Hotel en Cancún," 2.
FONATUR, "Cancún: El Nuevo y Millenario Mundo en el Caribe Mexicano," AGN: JLP, Box 2935.
FONATUR, "Cancún: La Costa Turquesa del Caribe Mexicano," AGN: JLP, Box 2935.
[694] "Abre El Primer Hotel en Cancún," 2.
FONATUR, "Cancún: El Nuevo y Millenario Mundo."
FONATUR, "Cancún: La Costa Turquesa."
[695] Bob Shulman, "Kaank'uun to Cancun: The Backstory of Mexico's Blockbuster Resort," *Huffington Post*, May 13, 2014, accessed November 18, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bob-schulman/kaankuun-to-cancun-the-ba_b_5303141.html.
[696] Apple Vacations, "Escape the Winter Blues," *Indiana Gazette* (Indiana, Pennsylvania), April 19, 1993, accessed October 23, 2015, https://www.newspapers.com/image/33648012.

televised advertisements, souvenirs, local trips to archaeological sites, and local events. This has also included the marketing of coffee mugs, t-shirts, keychains, magnets, and other consumer goods with the images of the best-known and most popular local archaeological sites such as Chichén Itzá or Tulum. In this way, authenticity is literally a product to be purchased. In addition, the material merchandise remains an artifact of remembrance for the tourist. The souvenir with a Maya image serves as a material "proof of purchase." It subtly declares to all of the tourists' friends, acquaintances, and family members who may see it on a living room table or a refrigerator door: "I encountered the 'other'" in question.

In addition, the commodification of local Maya culture infiltrates Cancún's geographical space through the names of streets and buildings. Indigenous street names highlight Cancún's local indigenous heritage with the purpose of expressing local identity and culture for both domestic hosts and foreign guests. *Avenida Kukulkán,* (Kukulkán Boulevard), for example, is the main street which cuts through the Hotel zone. Meanwhile, *Plaza Kukulkán* (Kukulkán Plaza) is the main shopping center on Kukulkán Boulevard. *Kukulkan* means "feathered serpent" in Maya.[697] It also represents one of the Maya people's primary deities. Meanwhile, on the southernmost section of the Hotel zone, *Punta Nizuc* (Nizuc Point) also deifies the local indigenous culture. *Nizuc*, meaning "cape" or "promontory" in Maya, was the name for Cancún island dating back to the early colonial era. It also may have been its prehispanic name.[698] Furthermore, the main highway which runs between Cancún and Playa del Carmen, and also connects

---

[697] Kay Almere Read and Jason González, *Handbook of Mesoamerican Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs of Mexico and Central America,* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 180-182.
[698] FAMSI, Anthony P. Andrews, "Some Historic Notes and Observations on Isla Cancún, Quintana Roo," (New College of Florida, Sarasota, Florida, 2006), FAMSI, accessed August 26, 2015, http://research.famsi.org/aztlan/uploads/papers/Andrews-Cancun-06-Aztlan.pdf.

Cancún to its international airport, is Highway 307—also named *Carretera Cancún-Tulum* (Cancún-Tulum Highway). This name obviously conjures images of Tulum, one of the most popular Maya archaeological sites in the region.

Cancún developers also mimicked Maya architecture in the construction of hotels and other local buildings.[699] Pyramid designs of hotels abound in the hotel zone. Martí notes accordingly,

> The architectural designs of Cancún mimic these pre-Hispanic skyscrapers to exaggeration. In their zeal, to establish a bond with their geographic location, builders added inclined planes to an assortment of projects. Remarkably, other attributes of native design such as Mayan arches, carved lintels, and monumental sculpture, were rarely used. There is probably no other place in the world where pyramidal structures are used as extensively and deliberately as in Cancún.[700]

Architects constructed hotels in pyramidal shapes even though they are less cost-effective than traditional hotels built at right angles, primarily because they require more land. For example, a fifteen-cell hotel built at right angles could be constructed on forty percent less land than a pyramidal hotel with an equivalent number of cells.[701]

While pyramids are perhaps the most easily recognizable symbol of Maya heritage, architects also incorporated other recognizable Maya elements of design into Cancún's visual landscape. For example, developers frequently constructed *palapas* (straw huts) on beaches and near hotel pools.[702] Palapas are particularly common in Cancún. Their traditional design dates back at least 2,000 years.[703] Artisans traditionally construct palapas by following a strict regimen. First, trees can only be cut on nine of

---

[699] Martí, *Cancún, Paradise Invented*, 70.
[700] Ibid.
[701] Ibid.,72.
[702] Ibid.
[703] Sylvanus Morley, *The Ancient Maya*, (Stanford University Press, 1947).
Martí, *Cancún, Paradise Invented*, 74.

every twenty-eight days, during seven days of full moon and two more. According to popular theory, just like ocean tides, the sap of trees rises during the full moon and their trunks reach full capacity when the cycle is at its height. After timbering, when the sap dries, it allegedly provides a natural repellant against boring insects.[704] Some of Cancún's builders emulated the traditional palapa designs. However, they also created gargantuan commercial versions of palapas to cover restaurants and businesses.[705] In doing so, architects had to stray from traditional building techniques in order to construct much larger palapas. While classic Maya palapas are rectangular, in Cancún developers took many liberties with their traditional design. As a result, the grass huts took all sorts of new shapes, including square, round, triangular, pyramidal, hexagonal, and oval.[706] While the palapa may be a representation of Maya culture and heritage for the average tourist, it is a newly constructed and modified symbol of authenticity. Cancún's designers reformed the original palapa designs to fit the market needs of the city's commercial tourism spaces. In this way, this demonstrates the idea of an intentional commercialized construction of "authenticity." While the palapa fulfills tourists' imaginations of Maya culture, in Cancún's hotel zone it is a carefully crafted image of "authenticity" designed for capital gain.

Architectural designs intended to draw on Maya heritage extended beyond the basic shape of the structures themselves to more detailed design elements in the facades of buildings and even in the city's landscaping plans. Thus, the organization of the city's environment also capitalized on Cancún's constructed "authentic" Maya identity.

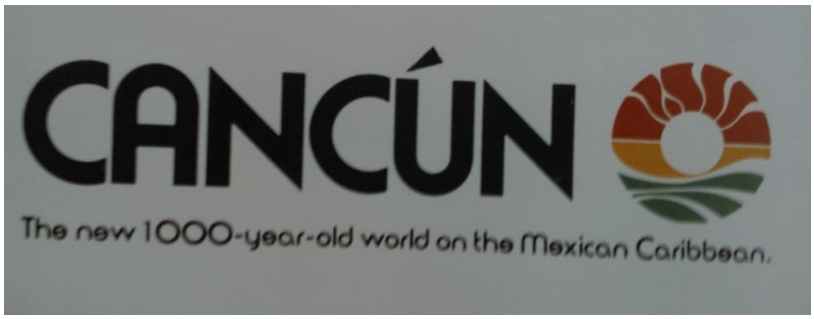
---

[704] Martí, *Cancún, Paradise Invented*, 80.
[705] Ibid.
[706] Ibid., 81.

Designers inscribed Maya glyphs into the sides of buildings, planted plush gardens around the city, and established hanging gardens inside hotel lobbies. The hanging gardens are meant to evoke images of the Maya jungle. Cancún's urban gardens bolster a tropical atmosphere, and city planners have consistently supported rigorous maintenance of its green spaces in the hotel zone. In order to maintain lush foliage, Cancún claimed to have the most gardeners on its payroll of any municipality in Mexico.[707] In the name of "authenticity" and the preservation of the local ecosystem, FONATUR maintained in its early ads that it only planted local flora from Quintana Roo.[708] The environmental design of the tourism space assumed an essential role in constructing and upholding Cancún's Maya identity. This supported tourists' strong association of tropical landscapes with the "natural," indigenous, and "exotic" identity of the Maya civilization. Similarly, FONATUR marketed Cancún on environmental lines through headlines in its initial investment brochures from the 1970s that read "Cancún: The Turquoise Coast of the Mexican Caribbean."[709] Later, Apple Vacation's 1993 ad further drew the connection between Cancún's environmental landscape and its Maya heritage by stating in the copy, "Discover the hidden treasures of the Mayans, where turquoise water, white beaches, tropical jungles, and archeological sites will send your spirit soaring."[710]

---

[707] Ibid., 50.
[708] FONATUR, "Cancún: La Costa Turquesa."
[709] FONATUR, "Cancún: La Costa Turquesa."
[710] Apple Vacations, "Escape the Winter Blues."



"Cancún: The New 1,000-Year-Old World on the Mexican Caribbean"[711]

In line with market demands for indigenous, ancient, "exotic authenticity" as well as luxury, modernity, comfort, and up-to-date amenities, in its tourism campaigns FONATUR commonly made a connection between the old and the new in Cancún. For example, the 1970s slogan "Cancún: The New Thousand-Year-Old World in the Mexican Caribbean" clearly markets Cancún as a tourism destination which combines ancient environmental elements with new and modern accommodations in order to attract an audience of international and mostly western American tourists. In addition, the Club de Golf Pok-Ta-Pok (which means "ball game" in Maya), emulates this concept, as well. The name itself evokes antiquity and supports Cancún's constructed Maya identity. In addition, the golf course contained authentic Maya ruins at its twelfth hole.[712] Meanwhile, it also supported Cancún's image of luxury, as the Club de Golf Pok-Ta-Pok, designed by the world-renowned golf course architect Robert Trent Jones, included an eighteen-hole golf course, a club house with a restaurant and bar, a pool, and two tennis courts.[713] By all accounts, it met western standards of luxury while also incorporating elements of Cancún's local indigenous heritage into its design.

[711] FONATUR, "Cancún: The New 1,000-Year-Old World on the Mexican Caribbean," AGN, JLP: Box 2935.
[712] FONATUR, "Cancún: La Costa Turquesa."
[713] Ibid.

Tourism promoters created packaged trips to local archaeological sites, as well. Developers have equipped the most popular local sites such as Chichén Itzá, Uxmal, and Tulum with modern amenities demanded by western tourists, such as snack bars, gift shops, tour guides, and English-language brochures.[714] In addition, most tourists arrive in large groups on air-conditioned tour buses and view the sites with English-speaking guides. As Rebecca Torres concludes, "In the case of the Yucatán, ancient Mayan civilization has been processed, packaged and standardized for mass consumption by tourists."[715]

Some smaller niche markets have emerged in recent years to meet the demand for "closer encounters" with Maya natives. The internet has opened up a whole new realm of possibilities for locals to scrounge up opportunities to garner more tourism dollars. Tourists who want to escape the overcrowded, standardized mass tourism packages pay a premium price for private tours led by locals customized to their individual tastes and curiosities. Some of these private tours to Chichén Itzá include a trip to the local market, a tour of a Mayan chocolate factory in nearby Valladolid, and a homemade lunch with Mayan natives. These smaller private tours embody the commodification of the "other" and authenticity on a micro scale. Just like the tourists of the overcrowded buses, these foreign tourists crave consumption of authenticity and the "exotic other," but they receive up-close and personal access to indigenous life. One enthusiastic tourist, Ellen K. of Milwaukee, Wisconsin described her experience on a private tour, saying

> We scheduled an all day tour with Mexigo tours and loved it! Our guide (Gilberto) took us to the city market and explained how the foods were used in typical Mexican and Mayan diets. Next we went to several cenotes

[714] Torres, "Cancún's Tourism Development," 105.
[715] Ibid.

> for exploring and swimming. After that we visited a real Mayan family and, after learning how to make tortillas, had lunch. We also visited a Valladolid chocolate factory and heard about the history of chocolate making in the Yucatan area…Gilberto was a super good guide! He related very well with our two 12-year-old grandsons and also his English was excellent.[716]

While the small private tours provide more intimate access to the "exotic" Mayan "other," tourists' enjoyment of their consumption is not limited by language or cultural barriers, since private English-speaking tour guides like Gilberto act as go-betweens for the tourists and the indigenous locals. Through this process of small-scale capitalism, "exoticism," culture and "authenticity" are actively commodified through real, live people rather than via Mayan symbols, names, images, and architecture. The latter are commonly associated with mass tourism consumption and its commoditization of "the other" in Cancún. These small-scale capitalist ventures offer the local Maya population a means of participating in tourism and garnering tourist dollars. This could be viewed as a valuable new opportunity for local indigenous populations, since fierce competition in Cancún's saturated labor market often makes it difficult for them to gain employment in hospitality through traditional means, by working in hotels, bars, restaurants, travel agencies, and other similar businesses.

Race and Employment: Discriminatory Hiring Practices

Transnational corporations (TNCs) which have investments in Cancún often maintain racialized and socioeconomic divisions through discriminatory hiring practices. Sometimes, they promote practices designed to intentionally weed out the local Maya population from the labor market. However, when the resort first began, developers

[716] Trip Advisor, "Review of Mexigo GoWonders Tour," Trip Advisor, accessed August 31, 2015, http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g499453-d1728152-r196144032-MexiGo_Tours-Valladolid_Yucatan_Peninsula.html.

relied heavily on a migrant, and mostly Maya, labor force.[717] The local Maya population constructed the buildings in the hotel zone and the residential part of the city. They also worked in the hotels. As a result of their experience working in the industry, many of them learned to speak Spanish as well as basic English. They also replaced their traditional garments with western clothing.[718] In Cancún, they commonly worked as help in the hotel kitchens, as workers servicing the underground systems, or as gardeners, all of which were professions guaranteed to minimize facetime with hotel guests.[719] However, some Maya did end up in positions with more exchange with foreign tourists by working as waiters and waitresses. Some tourists viewed their presence unfavorably, allegedly due to their perceived lack of capacity for adequate service. For example, journalist Katherine Rodegher lamented in Chicago's *Daily Herald* in 1977,

> Service in Cancún is not as polished as it might be in a resort area like Acapulco. Local people, most of them descendants of the Maya Indians, make up much of the labor force in the tourist area and their training is still a bit rough around the edges. But they are warm, gentle people and they are industrious and friendly toward visitors. Many of them still speak the native Mayan dialect and because the Yucatán jungle has sheltered them from the rest of the world their physical features resemble the stone statues of the ancient Mayans found in the Yucatán's archaeological ruins. The Maya is typically short in stature and he has a small round head, dark eyes and hair.[720]

In this passage, Rodegher describes the Maya population as part of the tourist experience of "authenticity" and the consumption of the "exotic other." She contrasts the "polished" level of service at the familiar Acapulco with the "rough-around-the-edges" service offered by the "native…sheltered" Maya at Cancún. Meanwhile, her description of the

---

[717] Hiernaux-Nicolás, "Cancún Bliss," 136.
[718] Ibid.
[719] Ibid.
[720] Katherine Rodeghier, "The Making of a Resort," *The Daily Herald* (Chicago, Illinois), December 19, 1977, 13.

Maya people as "stone statues of the ancient Mayas" plays into the resort's exploitation of the Maya culture and people as one of its core selling points. This exploitation of the region's Maya identity set Cancún apart from other better-established resorts like Acapulco which were better known for their modern amenities and star-studded guests than their associations with an indigenous identity. In short, the Maya were part of the Cancún "brand" from the beginning, and both native and foreign agents of tourism alike promoted the resort in this way.

Later on, some hotels adapted minimum height requirements as criteria for employment. This practice effectively forced the local Maya population—a group of people known for their notoriously short stature—to the margins of the labor market.[721] Furthermore, employers and government officials regularly screen the workers in the hotel zone through unofficial practices. According to researchers Juan Córdoba y Ordóñez and Ana García de Fuentes,, they employ a "[racist] and classist scheme…[which] questions and forces street vendors and workforce with an undesirable *look* to abandon the area."[722] Thus, agents of tourism constructed the Cancún brand by marketing a version of indigenous identity which they felt would be most palatable to tourist demands. While Maya identity would be a welcome part of the carefully crafted Cancún brand through the presence of pseudo-authentic palapas, pyramid-shaped hotels, glyphs carved into the side of buildings, jungle-like hanging gardens, and planned tours to ruins sites, in the hotel zone the presence of actual Maya people would be heavily regulated. This ensured that tourists would only have exchanges with a version of Maya

---

[721] Vargas Martínez, et. al, "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades," 24.
[722] Juan Córdoba y Ordóñez and Ana García de Fuentes, "Turismo, Globalización y Medio Ambiente en el Caribe Mexicano," *Investigaciones Geográficas, Boletín del Instituto de Geografía,* UNAM, 52 (2003): 124.

culture which spoke to their imagination of it. This confirms that Maya identity, in the context of Cancún's tourism industry, was an intentionally and carefully *constructed* image of "authenticity" designed to draw on *tourists'* imaginings of the "exotic" Mexican "other" in order to attract more capital to the resort.

Los Tres Cancunes: Race, Class, and Socioeconomic Apartheid

Over the years, local *cancunenses,* journalists, and researchers alike have identified the development of "dos Cancúnes," or two Cancúns, which they say are divided by race and class—one for tourists and the other for locals.[723] Meanwhile, others like journalist Fernando Martí have determined that there are three cities in one: one for the tourists, one for the middle class locals who live mainly inside the urban zone of Benito Júarez, and another for the extremely poor inhabitants who live in *colonias,* or shantytowns made up of ramshackle huts, on the outskirts of town.[724] Finally, Elva Esther Vargas Martínez, Marcelino Castillo Nechar, and Felipe Carlos Viesca González have identified five different zones within Cancún: 1) the hotel zone, 2) the urban zone (Benito Júarez), 3) the Júarez Port zone, 4) the communal farming zone, and 5) the Alfredo V. Bonfil zone, which is a residential zone located on the highway stretch between Cancún and the Riviera Maya.[725] While the third proposal may identify the various geographical divisions present within the city, it neglects the palpable socioeconomic, racial, and cultural divides which exist in Cancún. In a city like Cancún, where a double scoop of ice cream in a waffle cone at the hotel zone mall's Häagen-Dazs store cost US $7.50 in 2003—which cost more than in Miami or Manhattan and

---

[723] Cooper, "Behind Globalization's Glitz."
[724] Fernando Martí, *Cancún, fantasía de banqueros: La construcción de una ciudad turística a partir de cero,* Mexico City: UNO, 1985.
[725] Vargas Martínez, et al. "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades," 17.

represented double the local daily minimum wage—this analysis falls flat in the face of the real racial and socioeconomic divisions which exist there.[726] This study favors Martínez, Nechar, and González's interpretation, arguing that there are three different zones in the city, as it offers the most nuanced approach to understanding the complex social history of Cancún.

Transnational enterprises have upheld divisions in Cancún through an employment structure which has bred socioeconomic inequality and a lack of autonomy among the workers. For starters, while the Mexican government may attribute Cancún with being the "main national contributor of jobs related to tourism," most of the jobs provided to locals are unstable, temporary, and low-paid.[727] Some international hotel chains fill the best paid jobs with foreign employees. Meanwhile, during high season, the mostly local hotel workers work long shifts, earn extremely low salaries, and their employment is contingent upon short-term weekly or monthly contracts.[728] This model employment lends itself to an employers' absolute exploitation of the labor pool; if the worker does something perceived as even slightly unfavorable, the employer is not required to renew their contract. The minimum wage for chambermaids and waiters was set at little more than three dollars per day as of 1996; in 2003, the average daily wage in Cancún's hospitality industry was just four dollars.[729]

The lowest-paid workers settled in informal *colonias* on the outskirts of the city. This pattern of development is rooted even in the resort's nascent beginnings. A mere

---

[726] Cooper, "Behind Globalization's Glitz," par. 6.
[727] Vargas Martínez, et. al, "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades," 18; 24.
"Plan Estratégico de Desarrollo Sustenable," Instituto de Planeación de Desarrollo Urbano, Mexico: Municipio de Benito Júarez (2007).
[728] Vargas Martínez, et. al, "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades," 24.
[729] Padgett, "The Battle for the Beach," 58.
Cooper, "Behind Globalization's Glitz."

three years after the start of the project, 6,000 people were already living in irregular campsites.[730] Locals squatted on the borders of town and created their own informal communities without access to municipal services. Informal settlements resulted from a rapid expansion of Cancún's hotel holdings and a sudden influx of jobs, which attracted many locals from the surrounding regions—more than the government had anticipated. In September 1974 Cancún's first hotel opened for business. A year later, Cancún held a total of 1,322 rooms and received 99,500 tourists each year. Alongside the earliest smaller hotels such as Hotel Playa Blanca (now Temptation Blue Bay), Hotel Bojórquez and Hotel Maya Caribe (now Avalon Resorts), large, well-known hotel chains such as Presidente, Camino Real (now Dreams), and Hyatt Cancún Caribe began operations there.[731] In 1976, the construction of hotels expanded even further to include large and small, national and international hotel operations. Between 1975 and 1989 Cancún multiplied its inventory of hotel offerings seven times and its tourists increased tenfold; thus, the total number of tourists received increased from 99,500 to more than one million per year during that same period.[732] The Mexican government grossly underestimated the potential of Cancún's rapid and largely uncontrolled population growth, which contributed to the development of informal *colonias.* The 1980s especially demonstrated enormous expansion. In a period of only two years between 1983 and 1985, the population exploded from 80,000 to more than 120,000.[733]

---

[730] Vargas Martínez, et. al, "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades," 24.
[731] Ibid., 19.
[732] Ibid., 19.
[733] Ibid., 18.
Rafael Ignacio Romero Mayo, "Política Municipal y Desarrollo Urbano de un Modelo Turístico, Cancún: 1975-2002," in *Cancún: Los Avatares de una Marca Turística Global,* ed. Carlos Macías Richard y Raúl Al Pérez Aguilar, (México: Universidad de Quintana Roo-CONACyT, Secretaría de Turismo, 2009).

Cancún, 1970 [734]

Cancún, 1985 [735]

The dynamics of social stratification within Cancún intensified during the 1990s as more hotels adopted "all-inclusive" business models. With the increased presence of Spanish hotel brands infiltrating Cancún's hospitality market, all-inclusive resorts became more common. Spanish companies first adopted the "all-inclusive" resort model and other hotels (including small and independent ones) followed suit in order to remain competitive in the market.[736] The rise of all-inclusive resorts contributed to a widening of the spatial separation of foreign tourists from local inhabitants and between (mostly) foreign-owned large, luxurious resort hotels and small, locally-owned businesses. Fewer tourists ventured out of the hotel zone to spend their tourist dollars at local restaurants, shops, and other businesses as all-inclusive hotels became more commonplace. According one survey, at the turn of the twenty-first century, eighty-four percent of tourists reported staying in only one place—mostly large-scale or five-star beach resorts in Cancún—and most limited their external visits to standardized bus daytrips to Isla Mujeres, Chichén Itzá, or Tulum.[737] The hotels were also geographically concentrated,

[734] Proyecto Cancún, AGN: JLP, INFRATUR, Caja 2934 (1971).
[735] Aclarando, accessed March 28, 2016, https://aclarando.wordpress.com/tag/cancun/page/18/.
[736] Vargas Martínez, et. al, "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades," 19; 24.
Torres, "Cancún's Tourism Development," 87-116.
[737] Torres, "Cancún's Tourism Development," 100; 105.

with seventy-one percent (eighty-nine hotels) being located in hotel zone. The hotel zone also contained ninety percent of the city's entire inventory of hotel rooms.[738]

The spatial concentration of hotels in the hotel-zone, the increase of all-inclusive resorts, and Cancún's unstable and low-paid labor market led to visible inequalities in the landscape of the city itself. In contrast to the luxurious and glitzy international resorts with an ample supply of cascading pools, white sandy beaches and crystal-blue oceanfront property, even the middle-class urban zone seemed rough-and-tumble. The hotel zone's vast influx of capital into the local economy contrasted with the urban zone's comparatively meager earnings, which led to inequalities in municipal services. The city privatized garbage collection in 1993, since 47,000 tons of solid waste had not been collected by the municipal garbage service in Cancún that year. Instead, it had been sent to illegal garbage dumps, which worried researchers and ecological groups. In the new millennium, 329,000 tons of garbage was being collected each year, with a quarter of it produced by the hotel zone.[739] To make matters worse, local inhabitants faced unequal access to the city's water supply. The municipal water system was privatized in the early 1990s and tourist hotels received top priority for access to water. As a result, many locals only had access to running water for three or four hours per day.[740] Even by the start of the new millennium, only half of *cancunenses* had access to a sewer system and their local groundwater had turned toxic from pollution primarily produced by the hospitality industry.[741] As a result of highly porous soil and insufficient drainage systems, more than 11 million cubic meters of sewage water polluted the subsoil water below. As a result,

---

[738] Ibid., 99.
[739] Vargas Martínez, et. al, "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades," 23.
[740] Cooper, "Behind Globalization's Glitz," par. 9.
[741] Ibid.

the groundwater had a high concentration of fecal matter, detergent, and fat in Cancún.[742] Ninety-five percent of the 407 million cubic meters of sewage water each year was being produced by tourist services in the new millennium.[743]

The implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994 only exacerbated the situation. When NAFTA took effect, the resulting increased competition of local businesses with companies from overseas contributed to the collapse of local trades and industries all across Mexico. According to one estimate, in the first nine years of its existence, NAFTA resulted in the loss of more than 24.7 million acres of rich agricultural land in Mexico and pushed at least 15 million peasants into landless poverty.[744] The results took hold in the most impoverished areas of the country, including the Yucatán Peninsula. As a result, within a few short years, local former subsistence farmers living in nearby regions were forced out of the market when they had to compete with cheap American corn prices. Afterward, they flocked to Cancún in desperate search of employment.[745] This sudden influx of workers exacerbated Cancún's housing and development crisis and saturated the labor market. Most local residents were made to turn to incredibly low-paid positions, since international hotel chains traditionally filled the highest-paid positions with foreign employees rather than locals.[746] This led to a massive and sudden flood of mostly jobless residents living in squalor in *colonias* on the outskirts of town. The number of inhabitants continued to climb exponentially as a result. By 2000, the county was experiencing continuous growth at a rate of 6.41%, which exceeded both the national and state average. FONATUR's original

---

[742] Vargas Martínez, et. al, "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades," 23-24.
[743] Ibid., 24.
[744] Katharine Ainger, "Cancún: The Peasants Beyond the Walls," *New Statesman*, September 15 2003, 14.
[745] Cooper, "Behind Globalization's Glitz," par. 9.
[746] Vargas Martínez, et. al, "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades," 24.

Master Plan projected a population of 201,875 inhabitants by the year 2000, but in reality that estimate doubled.[747] By 2000 Cancún's hotel room inventory had increased to 24,610, with hoteliers having constructed hoteliers an additional 7,140 rooms in the span of ten years.[748] Cancún was drawing more than 2.6 million tourists per year, and received twenty-five percent of all foreign tourists traveling to Mexico.[749]

Cancún, 1990[750]

Cancún, 2000s [751]

Thus, it seems that despite the government's attempts to correct its past errors through create carefully laid-out plans, it nevertheless failed in its attempts to prevent overpopulation, uncontrolled growth, and the development of irregular settlements.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, many locals living in *colonias* received electricity only through makeshift piracy systems which consisted of wires and cables bundled together and lifted no more than five feet above the ground by sticks.[752] The rest of the inhabitants relied on candles and oil lanterns for light. Their housing consisted

---

[747] A.E. Fernández de Lara, "Cancún: Las contradicciones socio-ambientales de un desarrollo turístico integralmente planeado: 1970-2000," in *Cancún: Los Avatares de una Marca Turística Global*, ed. Carlos Macías Richard y Raúl Al Pérez Aguilar, México: Universidad de Quintana Roo-CONACyT, Secretaría de Turismo, 2009; Vargas Martínez, et. al, "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades," 18-19.
[748] Vargas Martínez, et. al, "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades," 20.
[749] Ibid., 20; Torres, "Cancún's Tourism Development," 95.
[750] Aclarando, accessed March 28, 2016, https://aclarando.wordpress.com/tag/cancun/page/18/.
[751] Skyscraper City, accessed November 17, 2011, http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=898064.
[752] Cooper, "Behind Globalization's Glitz," par. 11.

mostly of shacks made up of poles tied crudely together. The most fortunate working-class families could afford a "mini-casa" for about US $16,000. These houses contained one main room with a window, a shower stall and a small patio with a front fence made of barbed wire. The entire living space was eleven by fifteen feet.[753]

Many local residents have openly acknowledged the sharp contrast between foreigners and locals—between the striking material excess in the hotel zone and the abject poverty on the outskirts of the urban zone—and have often cited this stark and visible racialized socioeconomic divide in the city as a primary cause of Cancún's extremely high suicide rate in comparison to other metropoles throughout Mexico.[754] According to Mexico's National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Information (*Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Geografía e Informática,* INEGI) the suicide rate in the state of Quintana Roo is almost double the national average. While in Quintana Roo there are 9.2 cases of suicide per 100,000 inhabitants the national average is 4.9 cases per 100,000 inhabitants.[755]

Gender and Tourism in Cancún

In the context of the global tourism market, gender has long been used by hoteliers, transportation administrators, advertising executives, state actors, and other agents of tourism as a means of garnering publicity for the industry. In particular, images and language appealing to travelers' desires to encounter the "exotic" feminine "other" have been common. In addition, a labor hierarchy informed by race and gender exists within the tourism industry. Fewer women hold executive and managerial positions than

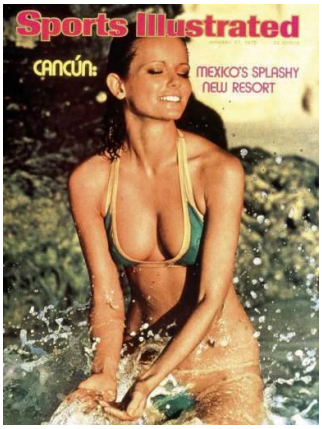
[753] Cooper, "Behind Globalization's Glitz," par. 11-12.
[754] "Quintana Roo es Primer Lugar en Suicidios en México," *Unión Cancún*, September 22, 2015, accessed November 25, 2015, http://www.unioncancun.mx/articulo/2015/09/22/salud/quintana-roo-es-primer-lugar-en-suicidios-en-mexico; Alfredo Flores, interview with author, August 5, 2013.
[755] "Quintana Roo es Primer Lugar en Suicidios en México."

men and they usually obtain occupations with less promise of social mobility. In Cancún, Maya women usually occupy the most menial positions with the lowest chance of upward mobility. Meanwhile, lighter-skinned *mestiza* women are more likely to hold higher-paid positions with more stability. This exemplifies Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of "intersectionality," as Mexican women—and especially Mexican women of Maya descent—experience oppression based on the social constructions of gender and race simultaneously.[756] In the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, women of color suffer under layers of oppression based on their gender and their race. In the context of tourism, Mexican women's identities as foreign, exoticized female "others" are constructed through advertising. In addition, their participation in the hospitality industry as beauty pageant contestants, tourism executives, airline stewardesses, waiters, bartenders, housekeepers, and sex workers also shaped their identities through the tourism labor hierarchy. At the same time, Mexican women have asserted agency by contributing to the construction of hospitality. According to the Ministry of Tourism, one in four tourism workers in 1985 were women.[757] However, that is a conservative estimate, since those numbers undoubtedly left out important female-dominated sectors which are not traditionally included in such assessments. Sex work and beauty pageantry, for example, are traditionally female-dominated fields which have both been important sources of tourism, but they are often excluded from official reports on the tourism industry.

Gender and Its Use in Tourism Advertisements

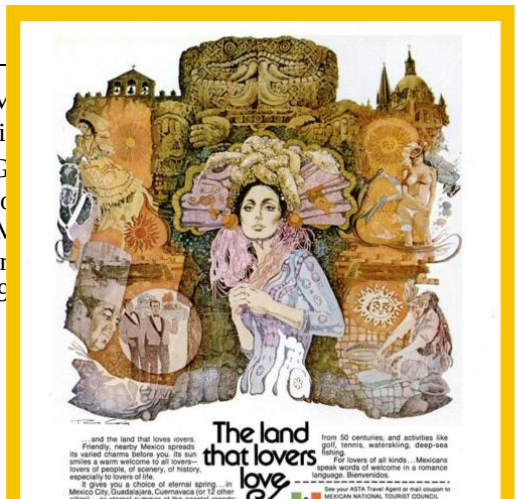
[756] Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins."
[757] Unidad de la Crónica Presidencial, SECTUR, AGN: MDLM, SECTUR, 4 (July 8, 1985), 2.

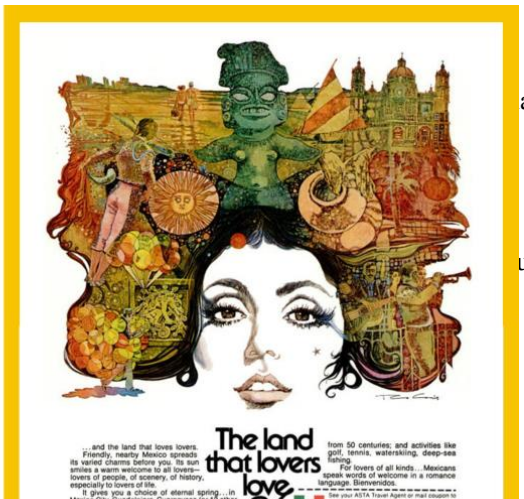
Along with the increased participation of women in tourism, the use of gender in tourism marketing has been an important source of growth for the industry. In Mexican advertisements gender stereotypes have been quite common. In 1988, Mexican advertisements showed slightly more sex role differences than U.S. advertisements.[758] Gendered advertisements aimed to convey messages about proper sex roles. According to advertising analyst Mary C. Gilly, "Advertising is believed to reinforce the notion that [stereotyped sex] roles are 'proper,' 'best,' or 'natural.'"[759] They simultaneously displayed and influenced people's understandings of themselves and others according to gender.



Cheryl Tiegs [760]

"Mexico and Aristos" [761]





758 M a,
Mexi
759 G
760 Co
761 "M
Aclar un-
en-19

"Mexico: The Land that Lovers Love" [762]

In the twentieth-century development of tourism in Cancún, female bodies displayed in advertisements played a key role in drawing tourists to Mexico. In 1975, within months of the resort's formally opening, supermodel Cheryl Tiegs graced the cover of the January swimsuit issue of *Sports Illustrated.* The magazine featured an image of a bikini-clad Tiegs splashing around in crystal blue waters and a headline that read "Cancún: Mexico's Splashy New Resort."[763] This cover undoubtedly caught the eye of many American men and women alike, and they could imagine themselves vacationing and splashing around in Cancún's pristine waters. They may have even fantasized about engaging in a romantic encounter with a beauty like Tiegs, as well. Another 1975 campaign for the Aristos Hotel in Cancún featured a woman in a bikini lingering above a beachfront hotel. The woman is as big as the hotel, and merges into it

[762] "Mexico: The Land that Lovers Love," *New York Magazine*, June 9, 1975.
"Mexico: The Land that Lovers Love," *Texas Monthly*, July 1975.
Aclarando, accessed March 28, 2016, https://aclarando.wordpress.com/category/cancun-por-ano/cancun-en-1975/.
[763] Cover, *Sports Illustrated*, January 1975.

as if having become part of it. The landscape is feminized, the woman symbolizing tourists' colonial and gendered consumption of beautiful, subservient spaces. The Mexican National Tourism Council also ran a campaign in 1975 entitled "Mexico: The Land that Lovers Love."[764] This series of ads displayed a woman with her face framed by a regal and decorative crown. One ad in the series decorated the crown with recognizable symbols of Mexican culture—a mariachi, a bullfighter, a cathedral, and archaeological pieces. The woman morphed into Mexico—she became the culture. A second ad in the same campaign featured the same woman with a crown on her head, surrounded by traditional archaeological structures and a woman crouched down using grinding corn to make homemade tortillas, along with symbols of modern tourism, such as a chef, a woman in a bikini, and a scuba diver. The title "the land that lovers love" along with copy that reads "Mexicans speak words of welcome in a romance language. *Bienvenidos*" promotes a masculinized and romanticized consumption of a feminized Mexico.[765]

[764] "Mexic ove," *New York M* "Mexico: e," *Texas Monthly*, Aclarando , https://aclarando. ı-por-ano/cancun-en-1975/.

[765] "Mexic ove," *New York M* "Mexico: e," *Texas Monthly*, Aclarando , https://aclarando. ı-por-ano/cancun-en-1975/.

"Hotel Cancún Caribe" [766] "The way it was is the way it is" [767]

In 1976, a friendly, white, thin Mexican woman with a mermaid tail promoted the new Hotel Cancún Caribe. Meanwhile, another ad for Cancún read "The way it was, is the way it is." It portrays a Maya statue, then below it is a blond in a bikini who is positioned similarly to the Maya figure above it. Both ads contained female bodies that were bikini-clad, thin, white, and sexualized. They demonstrate the commoditization of female bodies and female sexuality as a tool for commercial gain within the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. Even when the women are Mexican, they most often have light skin and Caucasian features in order to emulate the western ideal of feminine physical beauty.

Beauty Queens and Tourism Promotions

Beauty pageants have long been tied to the tourism industry. They have usually entailed the subjective judgments of ideal feminine beauty based on socially constructed ideas of physical beauty and femininity. The first truly modern beauty contest in which women competed based on a group of judges' perceptions of their physical appearance, is

[766] "Hotel Cancún Caribe," *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* May 1, 1976, HUNAM, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Mexico.
[767] "The way It was is the way it is," *Texas Monthly* 4 No. 8, August 1976, 16.
Aclarando, accessed March 28, 2016, https://aclarando.wordpress.com/category/cancun-por-ano/cancun-en-1975/.

attributed to showman Phineas T. Barnum, who is best known for the popularity of his circus. Barnum held a beauty contest at his "dime museum" and accepted photographic entries. However, the competition never took place—Barnum sold his museum before the contest, pioneered a new model of commercial entertainment with the idea of a beauty contest.[768] Afterward, photographic beauty competitions became quite popular among other business owners who re-produced Barnum's idea. The most notable competition of this period occurred in 1905 at the St. Louis Exposition, or World's Fair, when organizers of the Exposition requested photograph submissions from city newspapers across the country. The contest was so popular that approximately forty thousand photos were submitted from across the United States.[769]

In the beginning of the twentieth century, cultural attitudes about beauty pageants had begun to relax and public displays of women's bodies became more widely acceptable. One of the earliest known beauty pageants held at a tourism resort took place in 1880 at Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.[770] In September of 1921, in an attempt to persuade tourists to stay in Atlantic City past Labor Day, tourism agents hosted the first Miss America Pageant. Organizers publicized the event as displaying contestants who were simultaneously attractive, youthful, and wholesome.[771] Thus, even though the event encompassed the open display of women's bodies for public consumption—an activity which only in the recent past had been reserved nearly exclusively for sleazy peep shows and red light districts—publicists of the Miss America Pageant emphasized the respectability of their pageant participants and cast it as a family affair for all to enjoy.

---

[768] PBS, "People & Events: Origins of the Beauty Pageant," PBS, accessed September 2, 2015, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/missamerica/peopleevents/e_origins.html.
[769] PBS, "People & Events: Origins of the Beauty Pageant."
[770] Ibid.
[771] Ibid.

Atlantic City's first use of the Miss American Pageant as a means of tourism promotion in 1921 signaled the start of a trend which would continue throughout the remainder of the twentieth century and even through the new millennium. Thereafter, beauty pageants emulated the frequent intersections of sex, gender, and the appeal of feminine beauty with commerce and profit.

Pageantry often functioned as a means of promoting and marketing tourism. Female beauty pageants spread throughout the world, and were often closely connected to the hospitality industry. In Mexico, one of the earliest recorded beauty pageants, La India Bonita contest, took place in 1921 as a publicity stunt by Félix Pavilicini, the founder and editor of the prominent publication *El Universal,* to garner more sympathy for Mexico's indigenous communities.[772] *El Universal* first accepted photo submissions and then judges met face-to-face with the finalists of the contest to select the winner, María Bibiana Uribe of Necaxa, Puebla.[773] La India Bonita Contest occurred in the midst of efforts by left-leaning nationalist intellectuals, artists, and commercial interests' urging of the post-revolutionary Mexican state first began to adopt and embrace the nation's indigenous community as a part of its own national identity.[774] In the years since, judges of La India Bonita have selected the most beautiful indigenous and *mestiza* Mexican women among pageant participants. La India Bonita has frequently been conflated in Mexico's popular imagination as the Miss Mexico pageant, but the Miss Mexico contest was in fact a separate whites-only pageant which emerged in 1952.[775]

---

[772] Rick A. López, "The India Bonita Contest of 1921 and the Ethnicization of National Culture," Hispanic American Historical Review 82, (2002): 299.
[773] López, "The India Bonita Contest of 1921," 308.
[774] Ibid., 316.
[775] Ibid., 291.

Through glitz and commerce, beauty contests also normalized female loveliness as something tangible and finite, all the while framing the contests as means of promoting female scholarship and professional development. In Mexico, some of the prizes included cash and employment with a prominent hospitality company. Scholars and members of the public alike have questioned the validity of basing any scholarship contest on physical appearance, especially when such contests have been disproportionately marketed toward light-skinned female participation.

An examination of sponsors, competition venues, and even prizes awarded to pageant winners shows the close connection between hospitality and beauty pageants in twentieth-century Mexico. Beauty queens frequently made "goodwill" tours to neighboring countries to foster neighborly friendship and encourage travel to their home country. In April 1968, Miss Valentina Vales, who was Miss Mexico of 1967 made a tour of the state of Texas to promote tourism to Mexico. Sears Roebuck—which by then was a hallmark of both Mexican and American consumerism—and the National Tourism Council of Mexico sponsored the tour. Socially constructed gender norms informed the separation between active and passive roles in Miss Mexico's 1967 goodwill tour of Texas. While Miss Mexico served as the tour's headliner, hospitality executives (all of whom were male) capitalized on Miss Mexico's aesthetic appeal and passive femininity to promote tourism for the industry's financial gain. Traditional gender norms informed the men's active role in the planning of the trip. Nurvell E. Sorbaugh, president of Sears Roebuck of Mexico, and Robert L Fergus, General Sales Manager of Sears Roebuck in Mexico, met with Miguel Alemán, president of the Tourism Council of Mexico and Professor Octavio Trias Aduna, the Tourism Council's Executive Officer to arrange for

the 1967 tour. Meanwhile, tourism publications privileged the masculine roles over the feminine ones by marginalizing Miss Mexico in its coverage of the story. The April 1, 1968 edition of *Mexico Tourism and Hotel News* featured a picture of Sorbaugh, Fergus, Alemán, and Trias Aduna together, but the photo did not include Miss Valentina Vales, who was presumably the star of the 1967 Miss Mexico tour.[776] For establishment male tourism agents, the passive, willing participation of feminine agents of tourism was necessary for their ability to build up the industry and yet receive all the public exposure and praise for tourism advances.

At the height of Mexico's state-led tourism expansion, Mexican agents of tourism deemed innovative methods of tourism promotions as necessary. In 1974, industry leaders branched out beyond the already popular Miss Mexico pageant and created the first Miss Tourism pageant. The contest was sponsored by Mexico's Ministry of Tourism, Club ETHA, whose members consist of travel agency, hotel, and airline executives, and the TV program *México, Magia y Encuentro* (*Mexico, Magic, and Encounters).*[777] The winners of the Miss Tourism pageant were chosen on the basis of beauty, talent and culture—thus, their physical beauty and cultural appeal to foreign tourists was of upmost importance for the support of Mexican tourism. Attendees of the coronation ceremony included industry leaders such as Raymundo Cano Pereyra, general director of Aeroméxico, Rodolfo Casparius, president of the Mexican Hotel Association, and Victor Romero, president of the Mexican Association of Travel Agencies, among

---

[776] "Miss Mexico 1968 to Promote Tourism," April 1, 1968, *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Mexico.
[777] "Miss Tourism 1974 Goes to Work," June 1, 1975, *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Mexico.
"Mazatlán Beauty Crowned Miss Tourism 1974-75," March 1,1975. *Mexico Travel and Hotel News,* HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Mexico.

others.[778] In 1974, Miss María Teresa Bastida became the first Miss Tourism and her primary duties centered on tourism promotions. For example, following her coronation, Miss Bastida took a trip to Houston and several other Texas cities as the guest of the Texas International Airlines to assist in airlines promotions.[779]

Hospitality giants in Mexico also often provided the rewards for pageant winners. Delia Servín Nieto, the contestant for Sinaloa, became Miss Mexico in 1975. Upon her selection as Miss Mexico, she received a job with Mexicana Airlines for a period of one year, for which she received a salary of $1,000 per month.[780] Mexicana was one of the principal sponsors of the Miss Mexico 1975 pageant and the competition itself served as a platform to garner more national and international attention for hospitality and tourism in Mexico.[781]

While their roles may have been predetermined as feminine and passive by establishment tourism agents, some pageant participants expressed serious interest in pursuing a career in hospitality and even described the industry in terms of patriotism and nationalism. Miss Carla Reguera, who was crowned Miss Mexico 1976, declared her interest in working in tourism. As Miss Mexico, she performed modeling, film, and television work. She received numerous offers to work as an actress in Mexico and Hollywood, but she stated, "I really would like to go into public relations. If I could bring more tourists to Mexico I would really feel that I was doing something for my

---

[778] "Mazatlán Beauty Crowned Miss Tourism 1974-75."
[779] Ibid.
[780] "Mexicana Airlines' Executives Honored by Mexico City Hoteliers," June 1, 1975, *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, 1975, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Mexico, 4.
[781] "Mexicana Airlines' Executives Honored by Mexico City Hoteliers."

country."[782] This could reflect the intimate ties between the pageant industry and hospitality. Also, since the prize for the contest winner was a year of employment in hospitality, perhaps pageant participants commonly held aspirations to begin careers in tourism, which was their reason for participating in the first place. In addition, her statement reveals the nationalist rhetoric common in 1970s tourism promotions—Miss Mexico 1976's statement demonstrates the potency of the Echeverría administration's efforts to define tourism in relationship to patriotism and Mexican national identity.

State agents of tourism through the Latin America Directorate, a government subsidiary under the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the state-owned Televisa as well as other leaders in the national tourism industry, created the *Señorita LatinoAmérica* (Miss Latin America) contest in 1980.[783] Mexican agents of tourism created the beauty competition with the primary purpose of bolstering the national tourism industry. Each year, judges selected the winner based on the tenets of beauty, culture, and Latin American sisterhood. Miss Latin America acted as an "ambassador of friendship" by traveling to countries throughout the world. The beauty queen then promoted travel to Mexico through press conferences, television shows, and interviews with presidents and other important public figures.[784] In 1982, some of her ventures included a trip to Madrid, Spain for the International Tourism Festival, a visit to Paris, France for World Tourism Week, and appearances at several other beauty pageants including Miss Tourism of the Americas (Salinas, Ecuador), Miss Tourism Sonora (Culiacán, Sonora), Miss Tourism Mexico State (Toluca, México), and Miss Yucatán

---

[782] "'I Would Like to Work in Tourism,' Says Carla (Miss Mexico 76)," December 1, 1976, *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, HUNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Mexico.
[783] Programa de Operación para 1982 de la dirección general para LatinoAmérica, AGN: JLP, 2874, (1982), 14.
[784] Programa de Operación para 1982.

(Mérida, Yucatán). She also made appearances at the Spring Festival in San José, Costa Rica, the International Spring Art Festival in San Luis Potosí, and the Caribbean Music Festival in Cancún. Finally, Miss Latin America 1982 made a goodwill tour throughout Latin America, during which she made stops in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Uruguay, Paraguay, Venezuela, Ecuador, Surinam, and Peru.[785] The Miss Latin America 1982 promotional pictures were taken in Cancún, which at the time was gaining significant status as Mexico's new leading tourism resort.[786] Cancún even hosted a series of pageants every year, including Miss Cancún and Miss Travel Agent.[787] In short, beauty pageants were a ubiquitous part of tourism promotions, and women's active participation in them was vital to the resorts' expansion and success.

Perhaps most famously, Cancún hosted the Miss Universe pageant in 1989 in order to ensure the recovery of Cancún's tourism industry in the aftermath of Hurricane Gilbert. The federal Mexican government lobbied heavily for the opportunity to host the international event after Cancún was ravaged by Hurricane Gilbert in September of 1988.[788] Throughout the televised event, several spots featured information about the "exotic" cultural wonders awaiting potential travelers to Mexico.[789] In turn, Mexican entrepreneurs marketed tourism by capitalizing on gender and the social appeal of beauty pageants on a global scale. In this way, women played a central role in the development of tourism in Cancún and elsewhere in Mexico—their bodies, confined by socially constructed ideas of "ideal beauty" attracted attention to the developing tourism industry

---

[785] Ibid., 16.
[786] Ibid., 15.
[787] *La Voz Quintanarroense.*
[788] Irving Ernesto Martínez Colli, interview with author, July 31, 2013.
[789] "Recordando: Concurso Miss Universo 1989 en Cancún," Aclarando, March 30, 2010, accessed November 25, 2015, https://aclarando.wordpress.com/2010/03/30/recordando-concurso-miss-universo-1989-en-cancun/.

throughout Mexico. In 1989, this tactic proved to be particularly instrumental for the recovery of Cancún in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

Women's Work in Tourism

In general, women have been well-represented in the formal tourism industry on a global scale in comparison to other industries. It has proven to be an important generator of employment opportunities for women, especially in the Global South.[790] According to UN Women, tourism offers women almost double the economic opportunities than any other sector.[791] Even still, women working in the global tourism sector continue to be more likely than men to be working at the clerical level, are less likely to reach professional-level tourism employment, and earn less on average than men do.[792] Women earn approximately ten to fifteen percent less than their male counterparts around the globe.[793] As a region, Latin America reports a higher percentage of female hotel and restaurant employees (58.5 percent) than the Caribbean (55.4 percent), Africa (47 percent), Oceania (46.8 percent), or Asia (35.4 percent).[794] In addition, the region boasted the second-highest percentage of women in professional positions among the aforementioned regions at 36.6 percent, the second highest percentage of women clerks at 62.7 percent, and the highest percentage of female service workers at 65.5 percent.[795] Latin America also has the highest proportion of women employers in tourism. In

---

[790] ONU Mujeres, "El Turismo Es Motor para La Igualdad de Género y El Empoderamiento de Las Mujeres," ONU Mujeres, 11 marzo 2011, accessed November 18, 2015, http://www.unwomen.org/es/news/stories/2011/3/tourism-a-vehicle-for-gender-equality-and-women-s-empowerment.
[791] ONU Mujeres, "El Turismo Es Motor para La Igualdad de Género y El Empoderamiento de Las Mujeres."
[792] World Tourism Organization and UN Women, "Global Report on Women in Tourism," World Tourism Organization and UN Women, (2011): ii, accessed November 18, 2015, http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/Headquarters/Media/Stories/en/folletoglobarlreportpdf.pdf.
[793] World Tourism Organization and UN Women, "Global Report on Women in Tourism," ii.
[794] Ibid.
[795] Ibid.," iii.

Panama and Nicaragua, for example, more than seventy percent of tourism employers are women.[796] Despite the progression of women in tourism, Latin American women still have low representation in tourism leadership.[797]

The Mexican tourism market mirrors the trends in the Latin American region. While tourism has been an important source of employment for Mexican women, they are still outnumbered at the leadership level and they still earn lower salaries than their male colleagues. However, while they have generally been underrepresented at the administrative level, some Mexican women have risen to occupy important executive positions in the tourism industry. For example, Irene Buchanan served as the Director of Public Relations for Mexico's Secretary of Tourism in the 1970s. In 1975, she was inducted as President of the Female Executives of Tourism Enterprises Association.[798] Later, in 1980, Dr. Rosa Luz Alegría became the first woman to hold a cabinet-level position when she was inducted as the new Secretary of Tourism.[799] Meanwhile, in a statement delivered in1985, Mexico's Secretary of Tourism Antonio Enríquez Savignac noted the growing importance of women in Mexico's tourism sector. According to Enríquez Savignac, women made up thirty percent of the government workers in the Mexican Secretary of Tourism.[800] While Enríquez Savignac acknowledged that the majority of the women in the Secretary of Tourism were young (between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four), he also noted that "almost 100" of them were in supervisory

---

[796] Ibid., iii.
[797] Ibid., v.
[798] "Mazatlán Beauty Crowned Miss Tourism 1974-75."
[799] "Tourism in Mexico: Present and Future," *New York Times*, September 16, 1980, accessed November 6, 2015, ProQuest.
[800] Unidad de la Crónica Presidencial, AGN: MDLM, SECTUR, 4 (July 8, 1985), 2.

positions.[801] However, he failed to mention what percentage of the female workers those 100 female supervisors represented and how they compared to the proportion of male supervisors in the Secretary of Tourism. Instead, he praised the Secretary and President Miguel de La Madrid for their interest in the improvement of women's status in society, saying that the numbers reflected "a renewed and full integration of women's development and their participation, without discrimination, in the country's economic and political activities."[802]

Women's increased participation in the tourism sector parallels trends in Mexico's economy as a whole. Between 1970 and 2002, women's participation in the Mexican labor market more than doubled from 17.6 percent to 35.9 percent. In urban areas, nearly forty percent of women participated in the workforce in 2002.[803] Women also experienced improvements in their overall education during this time period. INEGI reported that the percentage of women over the age of fifteen who had not received any formal educational instruction had decreased from thirty-five percent in 1970 to 11.5 percent in 2000. In addition, the number of women who had not completed their basic education decreased from 57.6 percent in 1970 to 42.8 percent in 2000. Meanwhile, the percentage of women who completed their basic education increased from 2.5 percent in 1970 to 18.3 percent in 2000. In addition, illiteracy among women declined from 29.5 percent in 1970 to 11.3 percent in 2000. Women in Mexico also pursued higher education at increased levels. While in 1970, only 4.9 percent of women pursued post-secondary education, 26.4 percent did so in 2000. Despite their increased presence in the

---

[801] Unidad de la Crónica Presidencial, 3.
[802] Ibid., 4.
[803] U.S. Embassy in Mexico, "Status of Women on the Rise in Mexico, but Challenges Persist," July 6, 2006, accessed November 25, 2015, http://www.cod.edu/people/faculty/yearman/juarez/documents/Mexico_009688_30Dec2004.pdf.

workforce and improved education, women in Mexico continued to receive an average of twenty-five percent lower wages than men for equal work, even by the year 2000.[804] In addition, Dr. Maria Luisa Molina of the National Institute of Women (*Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres,* INMUJERES) argued that the improvements in women's education did not result in better jobs due to the continued culture of sexism in the workplace.[805]

Within the tourism industry as with other sectors, the labor hierarchy is informed by both patriarchy and white supremacy. Thus, just as women earn lower wages than men on average and occupy fewer prestigious positions, darker-skinned, indigenous women tend to earn lower wages and obtain positions with less possibility of social mobility than their lighter-skinned counterparts. Therefore, light-skinned Mexican women more frequently participate in the tourism labor market as models for advertisements, beauty queens, industry executives, flight attendants, and even waitresses. In comparison, dark-skinned indigenous women more commonly work as chambermaids and laundresses.

Cancún's own labor market reflects a gendered and racialized labor hierarchy. According to Castellanos' findings, thirty-five percent of migrants from Kuchmil, a rural Maya village in the Yucatán Peninsula, held entry-level positions (steward, bus boy, dishwasher, janitor) in 2001. Meanwhile, twenty-four percent worked in mid-level service positions (head waiter, bartender, chef, bilingual receptionist), and eighteen percent were professionals (accountant, head chef, electrician). Of these migrants, three-fourths worked for a hotel. In comparison, only twenty-five percent of the female

---

[804] U.S. Embassy in Mexico, "Status of Women on the Rise in Mexico, but Challenges Persist."
[805] Ibid.

migrants worked as maids in hotels and fifty percent worked in domestic service.[806] These patterns demonstrate that women usually occupy the lowest-paid positions within the labor hierarchy (domestic servants, maids, laundresses) and have limited mobility to higher-paid positions. Meanwhile, men hold positions with access to more social mobility (janitors, dishwashers, stewards, assistant bartenders; with experience, a steward cam become head waiter and a dishwasher can become head chef).[807]

In Cancún, there are some dynamics related to class and culture which confine Maya women to lower-paid domestic labor positions. For example, M. Bianet Castellanos reported that Maya women's limited educational backgrounds constricted their employment opportunities in the hotels.[808] INEGI reported in 2006 that half of indigenous women in Mexico over the age of fifteen did not know how to read and write and one in five women only knew how to speak their native language. Also, an estimated 9 million indigenous people lived in extreme poverty in Mexico in 2006.[809] Their class status alone has profoundly limited their educational and employment opportunities. In addition, Castellanos' study revealed that cultural stigmas often limited women's willingness to seek paid domestic work in the hotels, since such employment often signaled sexual promiscuity to the Maya community. Apparently, "the constant exposure to male tourists and the lack of supervision in hotel work…made it inappropriate for single women."[810] Furthemore, while some hotels actively forced Maya workers out of their labor pools through height requirements, the industry favors Maya for some

---

[806] M. Bianet Castellanos, "Adolescent Migration to Cancún: Reconfiguring Maya Households and Gender Relations in Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 28, no. 3 (Sept. 2007): 3.
[807] Castellanos, "Adolescent Migration to Cancún," 3.
[808] Ibid.,5.
[809] U.S. Embassy in Mexico, "Status of Women on the Rise in Mexico, but Challenges Persist."
[810] Castellanos, "Adolescent Migration to Cancún," 5-7.

positions in the industry, particularly the most subservient, lowest-paid positions with the lowest chance of mobility. This further highlights the gendered and racialized nature of the labor hierarchy, as the two categories of identity intersect. According to Castellanos,

> Hotel work is…feminized because of its emphasis on 'care work'…Within the context of the tourist industry, the submissive, exotic, racialized body—which is feminized by virtue of the work being performed, regardless of the fact that both men and women are employed within this industry—serves as the universal trope by which production is organized and worker subjectivities are constituted. In the context of Cancún, the Maya worker represents this ideal body. Hotel employers actively sought out employees who were of Maya descent because, as one supervisor informed me, they were considered to be muy trabajadores (hard workers) and less antagonistic—that is, less likely to question authority—than workers from other regions of Mexico.[811]

The idea that Maya workers are more subservient than *mestizo* workers is both gendered and racialized. Just as patriarchy dictates submission among feminine (or feminized) beings, white supremacy similarly demands obedience among non-whites. Within the capitalist system, racialized and feminized bodies hold less monetary value than white masculine bodies. In Cancún, the devaluation of feminized bodies plays out in the labor market as well as other ways: alongside Ciudad Júarez, Cancún has one of the highest numbers of female homicide victims in the entire country.[812] Thus, the devaluation of feminized bodies has taken on both economic and literal meanings.

Sex Tourism in Cancún

The pervasive sexualization of female bodies in patriarchy offers the tourism industry an additional means of capital gain. Like many international tourism industries, Cancún has developed a substantial sex tourism industry. This has resulted from travelers' association of tourism with the commoditization of all sorts of pleasure. In

---

[811] Ibid., 3.
[812] U.S. Embassy in Mexico, "Status of Women on the Rise in Mexico, but Challenges Persist."

popular tourism sites, seemingly everything pleasurable becomes commercialized, including carnal enjoyment. Bob McKercher and Thomas G. Bauer assert that the possibility of sexual encounters at a tourism resort often plays an important role in tourists' decisions to travel.[813] Some scholars have differentiated between "romantic tourism," "erotic tourism," and "sex tourism." According to Violante Martínez Quintana, "romantic tourism" is practiced by monogamous couples, tourists with other tourists, or tourists with residents; the sex is voluntary and can be both therapeutic and healthy for the participants. Sex is not the primary purpose of the trip, but it may be an additional benefit to the pleasurable value of the trip.[814] Meanwhile, "erotic tourism" is travel in which the primary purpose of the trip is to participate in sex, but the participants do not pay for sex. Single homosexuals, heterosexuals, or couples may go to swingers clubs and even hotels to copulate freely and voluntarily with various partners. Finally, "sex tourism" is travel in which the tourist pays for sex. Copulation is often the primary purpose of the trip and the sex workers may or may not be willing participants in the sexual encounters.[815] Clients commonly pursue sex tourism in countries where prostitution is legal or the enforcement of prostitution laws is lenient.[816] In Mexico, the legalization of prostitution, the lack of enforcement of laws against child prostitution, and even political elites' investments in prostitution (including child pornography and child prostitution) has facilitated the growth of the commercial sex industry.

---

[813] Bob McKercher and Thomas G. Bauer, "Conceptual Framework of the Nexus between Tourism, Romance and Sex," in *Sex and Tourism: Journeys of Romance, Love and Lust,* eds. Thomas G. Bauer and Bob McKercher (New York: Haworth Hospitality Press, 2003), 3-18.
[814] Violante Martínez Quintana, *Ocio y Turismo en la Sociedad Actual: Los Viajes, el Tiempo Libre y el Entrenamiento en el Mundo Globalizado,* (Madrid: McGraw Hill, 2006).
[815] Martínez Quintana, *Ocio y Turismo en la Sociedad Actual.*
[816] Erika Wright, "How Poverty Contributes to Sex Tourism," *Borgen Magazine,* May 7, 2015, accessed November 25, 2015, http://www.borgenmagazine.com/poverty-contributes-sex-tourism/.

Some scholars like economist Carmen Reinhart have defined sex tourism as a "new form of colonization." In line with this theory, the Global South is forced to play the feminine role of servitude and be penetrated by money, against her will. Meanwhile, the Global North adopts the masculine role and only seeks to satisfy himself.[817] This theory offers a valid lens of analysis since American tourists are the biggest consumers of sex tourism outside of their borders.[818] However, the theory is also rather simplistic and does not account for all participants in the commercial sex trade. Most importantly, it discounts the fair number of sex workers who are willing participants in the industry. These workers often view the trade as a reliable and lucrative source of income. Second, it ignores the fact that many sex tourists are locals—not all of them come from the "First World." Nevertheless, as a whole, the theory presents a way to view sex tourism (and tourism in general) through the lens of colonialism. It portrays the globalized economic system as an inherently unequal structure in which feminized, racialized bodies remain subservient to white, masculinized bodies, and accommodate their consumption of pleasure, goods, and capital on a global scale. This also supports feminist writer Gloria Anzaldúa's assertion that places where members of the Global South and the Global North meet often expose the inherent inequalities in our global economic system. In *Borderlands/La Frontera,* Anzaldúa discusses the U.S.-Mexican borderlands as such a place by saying:

> The U.S-Mexican border es *una herida abierta* [(an open wound)] where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country — a border culture. Borders are set up to define the places

[817] "Turismo Sexual: Una Industria que Victimiza a Millones de Personas," *Sin Embargo,* August 1, 2016, accessed November 25, 2015, http://www.sinembargo.mx/01-08-2015/1432729.
[818] "Turismo Sexual: Una Industria que Victimiza a Millones de Personas."

> that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them.* A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition.[819]

Even though Cancún is not located on the U.S.-Mexico border, it represents a physical and cultural borderland between the U.S. and Mexico. Like the U.S.-Mexico border, Cancún is a place where people and cultures meet, and it also distinguishes the Mexican racialized "others" from white tourists. The subservience of Mexican hosts to (overwhelmingly) foreign guests in tourism underlines the locals' racialized and feminized status. Thus, a close observation of Cancún and its tourism industry highlights the economic, gendered, and racial inequalities in the global economic system.

Across the nation, Cancún is well-known for the size and stamina of its commercial sex industry. As of 2003, there were reportedly 4,000 prostitutes officially registered and working in the city of Cancún.[820] However, this number does not reflect the prostitutes who are not officially registered with the city as sex workers, including many street prostitutes and underage sex workers. According to one estimate, approximately forty-eight percent of prostitutes work in the street, thirty-eight percent work in bars and clubs, and fourteen percent work in brothels.[821] According to one source, Mexico's Ministry of Health stated that as much as forty-two percent of women living in Cancún work as prostitutes or have worked as prostitutes at one time.[822] An online Sex Guide reports that sex services in Cancún's state-regulated adult spas may

---

[819] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* (Aunt Lute Books, 1987), 3.
[820] Cooper, "Behind Globalization's Glitz."
[821] Wiki Sex Guide, "Cancún."
[822] Sex Societies, "Sex and Prostitution in Cancún," Sex Societies, accessed November 23, 2015, http://sexsocieties.com/index.php?title=Cancun.
Wiki Sex Guide, "Cancún," Wiki Sex Guide, accessed November 23, 2015, http://es.wikisexguide.com/wiki/Canc%C3%BAn.

cost around US $350, while sex with street prostitutes may cost US $20.[823] Taxi drivers function as important go-betweens for the brothels. In exchange for commission for their marketing services, they hand out pamphlets to tourists for 24-hour massage parlors and "adult spas."[824]

Even within the sex industry, a racialized labor hierarchy exists in Mexico. According to Arun Kumar Acharya's study of Mexico City prostitutes, sixty-five percent of the women interviewed for the study were *mestiza* and the rest were indigenous. In the commercial sex trade, light-skinned women are preferred by clients over darker-skinned women. According to testimony from one pimp in Acharya's study, "clients do not want to have sex with a dark-skinned girl, they do not prefer indigenous women, though I can buy an indigenous woman for a cheaper price than a *mestiza,* but on her my (economic) gain is very marginal."[825] The racialized structure of the commercial sex industry mirrors the organization of the tourism industry and the larger global economic system in which non-white bodies hold less monetary value than their white counterparts.

While prostitution in Cancún and across the country is legal and regulated by the state, forced prostitution, child prostitution, and child pornography are still widespread. Journalist and human rights activist Lydia Cacho substantially documented Cancún's child pornography and child prostitution ring in *Los demonios del Edén (Demons of*

---

[823] Sex Societies, "Sex and Prostitution in Cancún."
[824] Chris Hawley, "Darkness beyond Cancún's Beaches: Mexico's Model Resort City Hides an Undercurrent of Crime and Poverty," Republic Mexico City Bureau, June 12, 2005, accessed November 23, 2015, https://www.ecu.edu/cs-admin/news/inthenews/archives/2005/12/061206AZrepublic.cfm. Sex Societies, "Sex and Prostitution in Cancún."
[825] Arun Kumar Acharya, "Gender Violence and Sexual Behaviors of Trafficked Women in Mexico," (Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, 2009), 9.

Eden).[826] Cacho also revealed that local Cancún hotel owner Jean Succar Kuri, high-ranking politicians Emilio Gamboa Patrón and Miguel Ángel Yunes were involved in the trafficking of minors for commercial sex. In addition, she accused Puebla businessman Kamel Nacif Borge of protecting Succar Kuri.[827] Teresa Ulloa Ziáurriz, President of Regional Coalition Against Trafficking of Women and Children in Latin America and Caribbean stated that nearly 500,000 prostitutes worked in Mexico in 2010, out of which seventy-five percent entered the trade against their will at the age of twelve.[828] According to Ulloa Ziáurriz, ninety-nine percent of the prostitutes in Mexico at the time had a pimp and seventy-eight percent of them were illiterate.[829] Meanwhile, a study by Arun Kumar Acharya and Adriana Salas Stevanato revealed that every year nearly 10,000 young girl and women in Mexico are trafficked to different cities like Mexico City, Cancún, Acapulco, Ciudad Juarez, and Monterrey—all of which are major tourism cities—for the purpose of sexual exploitation.[830] All of this evidence suggests that sex tourism is a booming industry in Cancún and throughout Mexico. Also, while legalization and regulation may suggest that most of the sex workers participate willingly in the trade, the data strongly refutes this idea.

Conclusion

The study of advertisements, development plans, and beauty pageants reveals the role of gender and race in the creation of Cancún and its rise to international prominence.

---

[826] Lydia Cacho, *Los Demonios del Edén: El Poder que Protege a la Pornografía Infantil,* (Debolsillo: 2004).
[827] Cacho, *Los Demonios del Edén.*
[828] Carolina Velásquez, "Son Explotadas en la Prostitución alrededor de 450 mil Mujeres," *CIMAC,* August 1, 2010, accessed November 25, 2015, http://www.cimacnoticias.com.mx/node/43400.
[829] Velásquez, "Son Explotadas en La Prostitución."
[830] Arun Kumar Acharya y Adriana Salas Stevanato, "Violencia y Tráfico de Mujeres en México: Una Perspectiva de Género," *Estudios Feministas* 13, no.3 (2005).

Upon closer examination of these mediums, it becomes apparent that gender and race played a key role in gaining support for Mexico's newest rising star of tourism. The use of the "exotic" racialized "other," the presentation of female bodies in print ads and beauty pageants, the creation of racial socioeconomic apartheid in the city, the insertion of Maya identity into the city's landscape, as well as the marginalization of Maya people in the local employment market all served a vital role in creating Cancún as the prominent international tourism destination that it is today. Within the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, market demands necessitated the exploitation of race and gender for profitable gain.

While agents of tourism exploited Maya identity in shaping and selling Cancún, they also inserted elements of American culture into the resort's landscape and identity. As the tourism market became more saturated by the 1980s, tourism marketers and investors adopted a high-volume, low-cost model of tourism which appealed primarily to American middle-class tourists. As a result, brand recognition and affordability became more important than it had been in the past. This led to a vast increase in the number of recognizable American franchises, such as Hard Rock Café and McDonald's. In addition, Señor Frog's, a well-known Mexican-owned franchise known for its American-style standardized business and branding practices, emerged as well. As a result, some critics openly condemned Cancún for its apparent lack of "Mexican" identity. They argued that globalization and free market forces had led to a lack of "authentic" Mexican identity in the city. What's more, they argued, the project had not lived up to its promises of secure and well-paid sources of employment for local inhabitants. Cancún's

expansion had drawn global praise for its successes, but its disappointments were attracting attention, as well.

Chapter 5: The Construction of a "No-Place:" Cancún as a Cultural Borderland

While constructing Cancún, developers inserted a combination of Maya, Mexican, and American cultural elements into the city's landscape and identity. In doing so, they created a transnational, in-between space in which cultural symbols and identities collide. It is a cultural borderland—a place where cultural norms and values, traditions, people, and identities (but not geographical borders) intersect. Journalist Marc Cooper described Cancún accordingly as a "place that floats suspended in its own unique physical, psychological and commercial space—a sort of globologoland."[831] Meanwhile, scholars Rebecca Maria Torres and Janet D. Momsen defined it as "a 'hybrid space' in which elements of Mexican, American, and artificial Maya culture have been reconstituted for tourist consumption."[832] As a result of the strong presence of western *gringo* (white American) influence on the construction of the tourism space in Cancún, some locals have come to refer to the city as "Gringolandia."[833] While Cancún is in Mexico, the city is not immediately or easily recognizable as Mexican. Marc Cooper asserted that "finding a small, family-run Mexican *taqueria* or *panaderia*—a taco stand or a traditional bakery—is much easier in downtown Los Angeles or Chicago than it is in Cancún."[834] Most of the restaurants, bars, hotels, clubs, and other places of businesses are identifiably western—and most often American—brands. Tourists can easily find familiar franchises to patronize, including Pizza Hut, McDonald's, Subway, KFC, TGI Friday's, Outback,

---

[831] Marc Cooper, "Behind Globalization's Glitz," *The Nation,* September 4, 2003.
[832] Rebecca Torres and Janet Henshall Momsen, "Gringolandia: Cancún and the American Tourist," in Nicholas Dagen Bloom, ed. *Adventures Into Mexico: American Tourism Beyond the Border*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006, 314.
[833] Torres and Momsen, "Gringolandia," 314.
[834] Cooper, "Behind Globalization's Glitz."

Hardrock Café, and Rainforest Café.[835] Shopping centers also abound in the Hotel zone, therefore highlighting the importance of consumerism—a primarily western cultural value—in the international tourist experience.

Tourism planners originally intended Cancún to be an exclusive tourism resort tailored to global elites. Like Acapulco of the 1950s and 1960s, it was intended for Hollywood jetsetters, world leaders, and other wealthy individuals. However, by the time Cancún was being developed in the 1970s, the international tourism industry was already undergoing a profound transformation in the age of mass tourism. The expansive growth of the global middle class after World War II created a new market for international tourism and the Jet Age of the 1960s accelerated international travel and ushered in an era of increasingly affordable air travel. In addition, by the 1980s, the global tourism industry was increasingly turning toward a high-volume, low-cost approach to tourism development.[836] Cancún's planners and investors embraced this model which gave rise to the resort's vast and fast-tracked expansion during this period.

The expansion of high-volume, low-cost mass tourism occurred as globalization and neoliberalism were taking hold. As a result of the embrace of neoliberalism and the intensification of a globalized economic system, western capital spread rapidly around the globe in the 1980s and beyond, and so did western cultural influence. Neoliberalism dictated the new rules of the game as nation states removed barriers to trade and investment in search of cheaper labor sources and higher profit margins. While supporters of neoliberalism point to its positive effect on overall economic growth, others

---

[835] Ibid.

[836] Elva Esther Vargas Martínez, Marcelino Castillo Nechar, and Felipe Carlos Viesca González, "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades: Cancún's Creation, Peak and Agony," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 3, no. 8 (April 2013): 19.

contend that it has also led to wider gaps in income distribution in countries all over the world. For example, David E. Lorey states, "In general, businesses that benefited from freer trade were those that were already competitive, that is industries that were operating with great efficiency and were active in the global marketplace."[837] In addition, many American and other western brands dominated the global market as a result of these policies, and western cultural norms followed suit. As a result, Cancún and its identity as an "Americanized" "globoloboland," or "Gringolandia," represents a microcosm of the modern and global intersections between capitalism and culture in the age of globalization.

Some of the businesses in Cancún, like Señor Frog's, are Mexican-owned chains, but their business models make them easily mistaken for American franchises. Señor Frog's is a restaurant chain with locations in prominent tourism resort cities, mostly in Mexico and the Caribbean. It promotes itself as an entertainment-centered restaurant by hosting contests, promoting games, and encouraging dancing in addition to serving food and alcohol. The popular chain conjures up foreigners' associations with Mexican culture through Spanish words (such as *señor* and *fiesta*), Mexican-inspired cuisine, and images relating to Mexico (like sombreros). However, the chain has been tailored to western styles of business through the standardization of products and services and a firm emphasis on brand recognition. American tourists can consume Mexican "authenticity" through familiar cultural and economic means.[838] Therefore, the tourism experience is familiar enough to offer comfort, and yet foreign enough to induce excitement. Tourists

---

[837] David E. Lorey, *The U.S.-Mexican Border in the Twentieth Century: A History of Economic and Social Transformation,* Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999, 174.
[838] For a more in-depth and theoretical discussion of "authenticity," see Chapter 4.

can also purchase Mexican "authenticity" in Cancún's open-air markets in the hotel zone through recognizable symbols of Mexican identity, such as sombreros, serapes, pieces of pottery, and Mexican kitsch souvenirs. Thus, material culture outlines a constructed Mexican identity, defined by recognizable symbols of mainstream Mexican culture. Meanwhile, Maya identity permeates the city through architectural design, street names, and mass-produced Maya-inspired consumer goods. As already discussed in Chapter 4, planners marginalized the elements of that same Maya identity which they felt might be less palatable to tourists, namely through land expropriation and discriminatory hiring practices.

The transnational element of Cancún's identity extends beyond its physical landscape to the way it has been marketed to tourists. Tourism ads have often reflected consumerist attitudes toward tourism and also alleged the superiority of western standards over others. In addition, they have also contributed to the construction of both Mexican and Maya identities as dark, "exotic," and subservient to their foreign guests. Finally, the Mexican government has continuously launched national campaigns to control the proliferation of Mexico's "backward" image abroad. As part of the Global South, Mexico has struggled to "keep up appearances" among westerners in order to continue attracting foreign capital to its international tourism resorts. The Mexican state has attempted to counteract international coverage of natural disasters, kidnappings, eruptions of violence, and abject poverty. The state's containment of its national image abroad has played a central role in its continuous attraction of foreign tourists and their tourism dollars to the hospitality industry. Thus, advertisements, public relations campaigns, and the local tourism space reflect international tourists' desires for

standardization, brand recognition, western cultural values, western-style amenities, and public safety, with only a slight and palatable touch of local "authenticity."

While some Mexicans have openly embraced Cancún's transnational, westernized identity and view it as a necessary element to the attraction of foreign tourist dollars, others have viewed it more critically. As Mexico's premiere international tourism resort, Cancún has frequently been a source of national debate in relation to mass tourism and the balance between its merits and drawbacks. Some nationals have viewed it as a spring of progress and economic development while others have identified it as a source of environmental damage as well as growing social and economic inequality. Cancún is also the site of the World Tourism Organization's headquarters, which has also contributed to its strong associations with globalization and the proliferation of mass global tourism. As the twentieth century came to a close, some Mexicans became increasingly concerned about the state's promotion of neoliberalism and globalization, as well as the influence of western capital and culture under the leadership of PRI presidents Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) and later Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000).

Cancún: A "Frontier" City

As recently settled residents of a newly constructed space both on a local and a state level, *cancunenses* negotiated Cancún's local identity as well as its transnational identity. According to the Secretary of Tourism, approximately one-third of *cancunenses* are Maya migrants.[839] The local culture in Cancún is still in its infancy as it continues to meld together the various cultural identities which derive from its inhabitants who

[839] Matilde Córdoba Azcárate, "Tourism Development, Architectures of Escape and the Passive Beloved in Contemporary Yucatán," in *Moral Encounters in Tourism (Current Developments in the Geographies of Leisure and Tourism),* edited by Mary Mostafanezhad and Kevin Hannam, (Ashgate: 2014), 61; Secretaria de Turismo México, "Compendio estadístido del turismo en México," Secretaria del Turismo (SECTUR), Mexico, 2010.

continue to move from foreign countries and various parts of Mexico to Cancún in search of employment.

The local economy has depended almost entirely on the tourism market, as eighty percent of Cancún residents earn income through tourism.[840] This may explain why some Mexicans have criticized Cancún as not being "Mexican" enough and too "Americanized" or "westernized." The nickname "Gringolandia" demonstrates local criticism of the overwhelming influence of foreign tourists—mostly American *gringos*—on the physical space and local culture.[841] From the beginning, planners and developers created Cancún as a tourism resort. Its construction is unique from other tourism resort locations throughout Mexico. Cancún is unlike the national capital Mexico City or Acapulco, which both existed in colonial Mexico as important cities and later developed into tourism meccas. From its birth, Cancún, its development, and its survival relied almost entirely on the tourism market. Thus, the city developed primarily in relationship to what tourists—rather than locals—want and need, especially in the hotel zone.

An understanding of how the historical context surrounding Cancún's foundation differs profoundly from the development of other tourism cities offers a valuable lens through which to view historical changes within the tourism industry in Mexico in the twentieth century. For starters, it demonstrates the marked shift toward more extensive, centralized state-led tourism planning that occurred in the 1970s. It also explains the strong influence of foreign capital in Mexico, as the state began to increasingly target foreign hotels and restaurant chains in order to attract more foreign tourists (and tourism

---

[840] Córdoba Azcárate, "Tourism Development," 61; Secretaria de Turismo México, "Compendio estadístido del turismo en México."
[841] Torres and Momsen, "Gringolandia," 314.

dollars) to their tropical beaches. Finally, it contextualizes the overwhelming feeling among both Mexicans and Americans alike that Cancún is more "Americanized" and "less Mexican" than other important cities in Mexico—even other resort cities. Cancún developed as a "frontier" city in the 1970s. In comparison to its counterparts, it is a young city, and it is still developing its own unique identity as a "melting pot" of both Mexican and foreign identities.[842] As it expanded, not only did foreigners and Mexican nationals meet, but Mexicans from all over the country came in pursuit of employment and exciting new opportunities. As one local asserted in *The Tennessean* newspaper in 1988, "[In Cancún] there is…a feeling of living on the frontier, in a town with no structured society…Everyone who lives there, the Americans, French, Germans and even the Mexicans, come from somewhere else….Cancún attracts idealists striving to create a better life, along with gold diggers hustling to make an easy, overnight fortune."[843] There were some Mexicans who allegedly struck it rich in the beginning. Rumors circulated that some entrepreneurs arrived with practically nothing and after developing a successful restaurant or store, became millionaires in a matter of a few years.[844] The mere possibility of such opportunities attracted thousands of workers from various regions throughout the country.

Alfredo Flores, a local musician, was born in Mexico City, but moved to Cancún in 1985 at the age of seven. His mother worked for Mexico's Social Security Administration and his father worked for a clothing store. The family relocated to the burgeoning city in the aftermath of Mexico City's devastating earthquake which took

---

[842] "Cancún Life is No Beach," *The Tennessean* (Nashville, Tennessee), accessed February 25, 2016, http://www.newspapers.com/image/112954972.
[843] "Cancún Life is No Beach."
[844] "Cancún Life is No Beach."

place on September 19, 1985.[845] In describing his own experience moving to Cancún, he said that he felt like an outsider and that the local children, knowing he was a city slicker from Mexico City, were "very aggressive" with him.[846] He stated that the meeting of diverse cultural backgrounds among Mexicans themselves caused conflict. In addition, since the city is defined by constant migration of people moving in and out of the city, Cancún has still not developed a unified local identity. Many of the workers are Maya from the surrounding area and return home during the slow season. As Matilde Córdoba Azcárate describes, "Workers establish an instrumental relation to the area, regarding their labor at the service economy as a source of a complementary seasonal income to the traditional agricultural system in their home communities where their social networks are still firmly established."[847] As a result, locals have come to identify it as a "come and go city" (*ciudad de passo),* and many inhabitants experience "rootlessness" (*desarraigo).*[848] In that same vein, Flores stated, "The local identity…[is] not attached…People come, stay two years, [and] they leave."[849]

For locals, in the first decade or so of the city's development, living in the "frontier city" often meant going without luxuries and sometimes even basic necessities. Flores stated that in the beginning, people had a difficult time finding basic hygiene products, like deodorant. At the time when he first moved there with his family in the mid-1980s, there was only one supermarket, so if they ran out of something, they had to wait for the next shipment.[850] Similarly, in 1988 one local stated that "favorite items are

---

[845] Alfredo Flores, interview with author, August 5, 2013.
[846] Alfredo Flores.
[847] Córdoba Azcárate, "Tourism Development," 63.
[848] Ibid.
[849] Alfredo Flores.
[850] Ibid.

always scarce, machines constantly break down and parts are often irreplaceable…my parents now use their broken, imported dishwasher as a shelf and own four cars to guarantee one will stay in working condition."[851]

The scarcity of products and services led to ingenuity, as evidenced by this family's ownership of four cars and the use of a broken dishwasher as a shelf. In addition, the lack of competition in the resort's initial years of development offered locals the opportunity to launch successful businesses before the market became overcrowded. However, the city developed much more quickly than anyone had originally anticipated. The rate of population growth for the county surpassed the average rate of growth for both the state of Quintana Roo and the nation.[852] The rapid pace of the city's growth and the subsequent intensification of competition may explain the open hostility toward Alfredo Flores during his initial move to Cancún. The Cancún "locals" who originated from nearby cities such as Cozumel, Valladolid, and Playa del Carmen, may have viewed his family and others from external regions as opportunist "outsiders." The lack of a unified local identity among fellow *cancunenses*, combined with the overwhelming influence of American tourist dollars and business interests, gave rise to the public perception that American cultural and commercial interests, rather than local or national culture, primarily defined Cancún's identity. Thus, its identity as a "frontier" city is determined by the meeting of cultures, national identities, local identities, commerce, and capital interests. It is indeed a cultural borderland, as its inhabitants have navigated the young city and attempted to develop their own local identity.

---

[851] "Cancún Life is No Beach."

[852] Vargas Martínez, et al., "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades," 19; A.E. Fernández de Lara, "Cancún: Las contradicciones socio-ambientales de un desarrollo turístico integralmente planeado: 1970-2000," in *Cancún: Los Avatares de una Marca Turística Global,* ed. Carlos Macías Richard y Raúl Al Pérez Aguilar, México: Universidad de Quintana Roo-CONACyT, Secretaría de Turismo, 2009.

American Business and Cancún's Cultural Identity

A common element contributing to Cancún's "Americanized" or transnational identity has been the domination of the hospitality industry by multinational enterprises (MNEs) or transnational corporations (TNCs).[853] MNEs usually run and owned by western companies (many American companies), established hotels in foreign countries all over the world throughout the course of the twentieth century. For the most part, hotel chains are a post-World War II phenomenon.[854] While some hospitality enterprises like Hilton and Inter-Continental were early arrivals, setting up business in Mexico as early as the 1940s, others were slow to follow suit.[855] International hotel chains first heavily penetrated Mexico's tourism market in the 1960s, when according to the Secretary of Tourism, "the national inventory was considered inadequate according to the standards demanded by international travelers."[856] The influence of international hotel chains expanded as tourists called for familiarity and high standards of hospitality. According to the Secretary of Tourism, in 1972, forty of the biggest international hotel chains represented approximately ten percent of all of the hotel rooms in the world. By 1996, two hundred of the most important chains in the world were associated with thirty-four

---

[853] The difference between multinational and transnational corporations is subtle. Multinational companies have investments in other countries, have a centrally-based headquarters in a base location, and they adapt their products and service to each individual local market. Meanwhile, transnational companies are essentially borderless. Theyhave investments in foreign operations and they grant decision-making and marketing powers to each individual foreign market. They do not consider any particular country as their base headquarters, while multinational corporations do have a parent country and a centralized decision-making process.

[854] Michael J. Clancy,"Mexican Tourism: Export Growth and Structural Change Since 1970," *Latin American Research Review* 36, No. 1 (2001): accessed October 10, 2011, www.jstor.org/stable/2692077," 138.

[855] Clancy, "Mexican Tourism," 139; James D. Cockcroft, *Mexico: Class Formation, Capital Accummulation, and the State*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983, 152; Andreas Schédler, "El capital extranjero en México: El caso de la hotelería," *Investigación Económica* 184 (1988): 138.

[856] Secretaria de Turismo, "Estudio de gran visión del turismo en México: perspectiva 2020," Centro de Estudios Superiores de Turismo, accessed March 9, 2016, http://sistemanacionaldecapacitacion-turismo.stps.gob.mx/sncst/pdf/6_estudio_gran_vision_del_turismo_en_mexico_perspectiva_2020.pdf, 49.

percent of all hotel rooms around the globe. The top twenty-five chains owned seventy-four percent of that percentage.[857] Furthermore, in 1997, the top ten hospitality firms in the world controlled 2.7 million hotel rooms. The thirty biggest international hotel chains reigned from the most powerful developed countries in the world.[858]

Cancún's own tourism industry reproduced global patterns of franchise participation. According to one source, by 2000, approximately fifty percent of Cancún hotels had a franchise agreement, and fifty percent of those franchises were foreign-affiliated. In addition, high-end hotels more commonly connected to franchise agreements, with ninety-three percent of all Gran Turismo (GT) and seventy-two percent of all five-star Cancún hotels participating in such arrangements.[859] As with other major tourism resort centers in Mexico, the Cancún market also reflected substantial domestic ownership. For example, a 1997 survey of sixty Cancún hotels (approximately half of all hotels in Cancún) revealed that approximately eighty-seven percent of them were Mexican-owned.[860] Even these numbers could be misleading, however, considering that many of the Mexican-owned hospitality conglomerates held partnerships with foreign hotel chains by the 1990s.[861] Thus, even the hotels with substantial domestic holdings were likely tied to international hospitality enterprises.

In some ways, the domination of international hotel chains was inevitable in Cancún. The original designers of the city had intended it to be a resort which would

---

[857] Secretaria de Turismo, "Estudio de gran vision del turismo en México," 59.
[858] Clancy, "Mexican Tourism," 138; "Special Report: *Hotels'* 325," *Hotels* 32, no. 7 (July 1998): 48-68.
[859] Gran Turismo (GT) is the highest class of luxury hotel in Mexico. Torres and Momsen, "Gringolandia," 324; Rebecca Torres, "Linkages between Tourism and Agriculture in Mexico," *Annals of Tourism Research* 30, no. 3 (2003): 546-566.
[860] Torres and Momsen, "Gringolandia," 323-324.
[861] A more in-depth and nuanced analysis of the complex relationships between Mexican owners and foreign-affiliated hotel chains in the 1990s follows in the section below.

primarily rely on the international tourism market. In 1975, about seventy-two percent of tourists in Cancún were Mexican nationals and around twenty-seven percent of tourists were foreigners. By the early 1990s, the ratio had nearly reversed. In 1991, Mexican nationals comprised approximately twenty-five percent of the tourists in Cancún while foreigners represented almost seventy-five percent of Cancún's tourist market.[862] The city's designers had planned it that way and pushed for more international hotel brands to join the country's newest development project in order to attract the international tourists they desired. They initially predicted that 899,000 of an estimated 1,059,000 annual visitors to Cancún by 1984 would be foreigners. This would represent about eighty-five percent of the resort's total number of annual visitors.[863] The actual numbers were not far off from the original predictions: approximately seventy percent of Cancún's 714,000 annual visitors in 1984 were foreign, and ninety-one percent of those foreign tourists were American.[864]

Mexican state tourism developers recognized the importance of brand recognition in hospitality as early as the 1950s, even before proposing Cancún as a new project of interest.[865] Since an overwhelming majority of tourists who travelled to Cancún came from the U.S., the tourism market demanded western standards of service, amenities, and even culture. Brand recognition and comfort was incredibly important to American tourism consumers, especially in hospitality. As some scholars have already noted, a hotel room is "an experience good," so it cannot be thoroughly examined for quality prior

---

[862] Clancy, "Mexican Tourism," 135.
[863] Daniel Hiernaux Nicolás, "Mitos y realidades del milagro turístico 'Cancún'," in *Teoría y praxis del espacio turístico,* ed. Daniel Hiernaux Nicolás, (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco: 1989), 112.
[864] Daniel Hiernaux Nicolás, "Mitos y realidades del milagro turístico 'Cancún'," 114.
[865] "Tourism Growth Bolsters Mexico."

to its purchase.[866] Therefore, customers assume an extra risk in purchasing the product and brand recognition becomes even more important and less negotiable for consumers than in other forms of consumption. As Michael Clancy summarizes, "Put simply, mass tourists tend to favor hotel names they know.[867] Since most foreign tourists came from the U.S., it was important for tourists to be able to easily access computer reservation systems, toll-free numbers, and travel agencies.[868] In addition, a U.S.-based toll-free number cut down on the cost of making an international call to a foreign hotel, and the operator was guaranteed to speak English. Thus, the hotels' affiliation with American brands facilitated the process of making hotel reservations and attracting tourists from the U.S. to Mexico.

The domination of Cancún by international hotel brands was consistent with the trends in the emerging global tourism market of the 1970s. The amenities, comfort, and quality of service associated with western hotel brands proved to be incredibly important to countries—especially countries in the Global South looking to attract westerners—in their pursuit of tourism revenue. As John H. Dunning and Matthew McQueen explain,

> Fundamentally international class hotels provide a high quality service to customers who are not able to inspect the 'product' before purchase and where knowledge of the product is only obtained after the product is purchased. They are, therefore, 'experience goods' rather than 'search goods' (whose attributes can be examined and compared with the advertised claims of the supplier). In these circumstances a trademark of guaranteed quality provides a powerful competitive advantage on a firm, particularly where customers are purchasing the service in an unfamiliar environment…In most developing countries where these characteristics

[866] John H. Dunning and Matthew McQueen, "Multinational Corporations in the International Hotel Industry," *Annals of Tourism Research* 9 (1982): 83; Stephen F. Witt, Michael Z. Brooke, and Peter J. Buckley, *The Management of International Tourism,* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1991), 61.
[867] Clancy, "Mexican Tourism," 138.
[868] Ibid., 140.

> are less likely to be present, such hotels play a much more significant role.[869]

As a result, as Cancún was being built, the international hospitality industry had already become dominated by MNEs all around the globe, and American brands led the industry. In Mexico and Central America even as early as the 1960s, the most dominant foreign-affiliated brands already included prominent American-owned companies like Hilton International, Western International Hotels, Sheraton hotels, and Intercontinental (affiliated with Pan American Airways).[870] Globally, approximately fifty percent of all transnational-affiliated hotels around the world were American companies in 1978. The leading hospitality brands around the globe by then included Holiday Inn, Inter-Continental, Hilton International, Sheraton Hotels, Travelodge (International), Ramada Inna, Hyatt International, and Western International.[871] Meanwhile, approximately thirty percent hailed from the United Kingdom and France, and the remaining hotels were associated with transnational corporations from seventeen other countries.[872] Forty-seven percent of the transnational corporation-associated hotels in 1978 were located in the Global South.[873]

The influence of American culture and capital on Cancún became apparent in other ways, as well. Especially in the hotel zone, dollars, instead of pesos, became the preferred currency. In addition, English—not Spanish—became the common language of

---

[869] Dunning and McQueen, "Multinational Corporations," 83.
[870] Jules B. Farber, "The Build-Up in Mexico: Nation Plans for 1968 Olympics by Pushing Construction of New Hotels and Improving Other Tourist Facilities," *The New York Times,* March 6, 1966, accessed February 1, 2016, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1966/03/06/129235602.html?pageNumber=533. Paul Kennedy, "Selling Central America," *The New York Times,* November 22, 1959, accessed February 1, 2016, https://timesmachine.nytimes/timesmachine/1959/11/22/8930355html?pageNumber=493.
[871] Dunning and McQueen, "Multinational Corporations," 71-72.
[872] Ibid., 71.
[873] Ibid., 74.

exchange between local residents and tourists. Also, internationally recognized U.S. brands of restaurants such as McDonald's, Chili's, TGI Friday's, Burger King, Hard Rock Café, among others came to govern the space. Shopping also became a part of the tourism experience and galvanized the influence of American consumerism in the industry. As a result, city officials directed the construction of several western-style shopping malls which contain globally recognizable store brands including Oakley, Liverpool, and Cartier. These emerged in the hotel zone alongside more traditional Mexican open-air markets, or *tianguis*. With market demands and consumer appeal in mind, a dual approach to tourism development demanded the insertion of both western and local culture into the space. These consumer-led and market-driven principles guided tourism agents in their construction of a lucrative touristic space in Cancún.

Foreign Brands, Native Owners

Cancún has traditionally been dominated by international hotel brands, but the overwhelming and visible presence of foreign companies is misleading. It may be logical to assume that since the hotel zone has been dominated by foreign brands, then most of the hotels have been exclusively owned by foreigners as well. While foreign capital has certainly played a significant role in the development of Cancún and other resorts in Mexico, the nation's hospitality industry is still overwhelmingly owned by Mexicans. Mexican hotel brands led the industry by the end of the twentieth century, even after an influx of foreign capital interests in Mexico's economy with the spread of neoliberalism and globalization in the 1980s and 1990s. In addition, many Mexicans have acted as private investors in hospitality, including prominent politicians like Miguel Alemán, Luis

Echeverría, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and others.[874] Miguel Alemán, who is often recognized as Mexico's "father of tourism" and played an instrumental role in the development of Acapulco, invested heavily in the Acapulco's hospitality holdings. For example, he held a majority interest in the Acapulco Hilton Hotel when it was built in 1962.[875] Meanwhile, Luis Echeverría and Carlos Salinas de Gortari allegedly hold substantial investments in the Cancún Corridor.[876]

Government limits on foreign investments certainly contributed to Mexicans' majority ownership in the sector. However, by the 1960s multinational hotel companies also began to favor management, leasing, or franchise contracts over equity participation arrangements, and this contributed to the domination of direct Mexican investment over foreign capital in the sector.[877] Such arrangements were advantageous to the chains because they required no investment in operating costs and simultaneously allowed them to gain control over assets.[878] Thus, by 1975, approximately sixty-one percent of hospitality MNEs were affiliated with hotels around the globe through management contracts rather than equity agreements.[879] In particular, U.S., French, and Japanese chains working with countries in the Global South favored non-equity forms of participation, since they posed fewer risks to the MNEs.[880] As a result of the growing preference for non-equity contracts, by the mid-1980s, several international hotel chains, including Hyatt and Best Western, owned no hotels. Instead, they maintained

---

[874] Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancun Bliss," in *The Tourist City,* edited by Dennis Judd and Susan Fainstein, 124-139, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999.
[875] Paul P. Kennedy, "New Hotel Boon to Acapulco Tourism," *The New York Times,* April 15, 1962.
[876] Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancún Bliss."
[877] Dunning and McQueen, "Multinational Corporations," 80.
[878] Stephen G. Britton, *Tourism, Dependency, and Development: A Mode of Analysis,* Development Studies Center Occasional Paper no. 23 (Canberra: Australian National University, 1981).
[879] Dunning and McQueen, "Multinational Corporations," 80.
[880] Ibid.," 81.

associations with the owners through leasing and management contracts. In addition, Ramada Inn, Holiday Inn, and Howard Johnson owned less than fifteen percent of the hotels associated with their brand.[881]

The exact makeup of the Mexican nationals investing in hotel properties in the 1970s is difficult to determine because they came from a variety of backgrounds. Some Mexican investors were prominent national capitalists looking to diversify their investment portfolios, but most were professionals and small business owners. In addition, investors rarely owned more than one or two properties during this period of time.[882] One SECTUR official estimated that more than ninety percent of all hotel investment was national at the time of Cancún's founding.[883] As the state withdrew and privatized much of its holdings in the hospitality in the 1980s and 1990s, it was replaced by some of the major Mexican industrial and financial groups who aggressively expanded into the hospitality sector during this time.[884] Business conglomerates including ICA, Cemex, Gutsa, and Sidek, telecommunications giant Carso (the parent company of Telmex), and the national banks Banamex and Bancomer all moved into the hospitality sector during this period.[885] Besides Holiday Inn and Fiesta Americana, Grupo Posadas teamed up with Situr, Sheraton, and Continental Plaza, as well. Meanwhile, Carso invested in Calinda Quality Inn, Banamex and ICA partnered with Radisson, ICA allied

---

[881] Clancy, "Mexican Tourism," 139; United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, *Transnational Corporations, Services, and the Uruguay Round,* New York: United Nations, 1990.
[882] Clancy, "Mexican Tourism," 140; Interview by Michael Clancy with Daniel Hiernaux, July 23, 1992, Mexico City.
[883] Clancy, "Mexican Tourism," 140; Interview by Michael Clancy with a SECTUR employee, July 2, 1992, Mexico City.
[884] Clancy, "Mexican Tourism," 141.
[885] Ibid., 143.

with Sheraton, Xabre invested Westin, Banamex in Inter-Continental, Bancomer and Hilton in Conrad Hotels, and Cemex in Marriott.[886]

Shortly after these alliances formed, however, some of them parted ways in the early 1990s. With the peso crisis of 1992 came severe financial difficulties for many of the corporate partners in question. As a result, Banamex cut ties with Inter-Continental, ICA, and Radisson. Situr parted ways with Holiday Inn and then acquired some of the Radisson properties that Banamex had cast off. Shortly after that, however, Radisson split from Situr. Bancomer and Conrad Hilton also separated in 1992.[887] According to one source, Hyatt had affiliations with seven different associates distributed among its seven properties in Mexico in 1991.[888]

Despite all of the change in partnerships in the 1990s, by the close of the century Mexican hospitality was still overwhelmingly dominated by Mexicans. In 1996 three of the five leading hotel chains in Mexico were nationally owned.[889] Nevertheless, there was an evident shift from a mix of small ownerships and notable capitalist investors in the 1970s to big corporate conglomerate affiliations by 2000. In addition, recognizable international hotel firms were more visible in Mexico than in the past, particularly U.S. hospitality brands, and Mexican-owned hotel conglomerates often held partnerships with foreign-affiliated international hospitality brands. Thus, even if hotels were owned by Mexicans, they were also often affiliated with international franchises. Furthermore, as the state privatized its hospitality holdings in the 1980s, it continued to act as a planner and lender to new tourism projects, and most of funding for the newest hotel rooms being

---

[886] Ibid.
[887] Ibid., 144.
[888] Joel Russell, "A Worldwide Brand Name: The International Marketing of Hyatt Hotels," *Business Mexico* 3, no. 10 (October 1993): 12-14.
[889] Clancy, "Mexican Tourism," 144; "Special Report: Partnerships the Passion: Latin America," 44-54.

built went to the top-tier hotel chains. Between 1984 and 1991, the number of hotel rooms in Mexico increased by thirty-two percent, but rooms in the top three categories of hotels grew by sixty-seven percent.[890] In Cancún and other emerging sun-and-sand planned resort spaces, a strong presence of top-tier international hospitality brands aligned with state and city tourism developers' original plans to primarily target the international tourism market.

Foreign Hotel Chains, Western Standards, and the Psychology of the "Gringo"

Nationwide, Mexican state officials continued to push for intensive state-led tourism planning in the 1980s and called for constant government effort toward improving tourism amenities and facilities and promoting the industry. The state made efforts to attract more investment and accelerate hotel construction through the creation of tax breaks and other financial incentives. For example, under the 1980 Tourism Incentives Decree, the Mexican Ministry of Tourism offered tax incentives in the form of credits or accelerated depreciation on fixed assets to hoteliers in order to encourage more investment in the industry.[891] The government created tax incentives in order to alleviate a national shortage of hotel rooms. Despite the vast expansion of the hotel industry in the 1970s, hotels in Mexico were still not able to keep up with the increasing demand for rooms. With many hotels regularly operating at between eighty and 100 percent capacity, facilities were feeling the squeeze. According to one *New York Times* journalist's analysis, "only the lack of available airline tickets saved [the hotels] from

---

[890] Clancy, "Mexican Tourism," 146; Secretaria de Turismo, "Programa Nacional de Modernización del Turismo, 1991-1994," Mexico City: Poder Ejecutivo Federal, 1991; Secretaria de Turismo, "Estadísticas básicas de la actividad turística," Mexico City: SECTUR (1992), 315.

[891] "Tourism in Mexico: Present and Future," *New York Times*, September 16, 1980, accessed November 6, 2015, ProQuest.

severe overcrowding."[892] The Ministry of Tourism's National Tourism Plan called for the construction of 172,000 new hotel rooms between 1978 and 1985, for a total of 420,000 rooms. The state projected that this action would lead to the creation of 1.2 million new jobs in hotels and construction work for an industry total of 2 million jobs in 1985. According to estimates, this would also result in an increase in foreign exchange earnings from $1.1 billion in 1978 to $3.5 billion in 1985, which was equal to thirty-three percent of Mexico's total exports.[893]

The state also implemented more robust and comprehensive training programs in order to improve tourists' experiences in Mexico. Part of tourism's "new look" of the 1980s included the enhancement of the services offered by hotel and other travel personnel. These new training programs specifically targeted the American tourist market, since they included crash courses in English and classes related to the psychology of the "gringo."[894] These new programs highlighted the intensity of American influence on Mexican tourism. The state also promoted new nationalist campaigns aimed at Mexican nationals emphasizing the importance of tourism to the economy and the Mexican people.[895]

In his 1981 State of the Nation address, President José López Portillo (1976-1982) justified continued government spending in the industry, saying, "Tourism…demands efficient and competitive services. It is not provided as a precious gift by Mother Nature, culture or history. It requires effort. This is why we have repeatedly called for

---

[892] "Tourism in Mexico," *New York Times.*
[893] "Mexico Drawing Foreign Hotels," *New York Times.*
[894] "Mexican Tourism: Changes Ahead," *New York Times,* September 22, 1981, accessed November 11, 2015, ProQuest.
[895] Ibid.

improvement in the facilities and services we offer both domestic and foreign tourists."[896] In this way, he called on Mexican nationals to support more government investment in tourism facilities. In addition, López Portillo made clear that the future of Mexican tourism depended on the government's constant attention to the industry. He asserted that the industry could not rely solely on the nation's cultural, historical, or natural attractions to entice tourists.

Dr. Rosa Luz Alegría, Mexico's Secretary of Tourism (1980-1982), argued that tourism infrastructure would be more important in the long run than developing oil fields, which was Mexico's top source of GDP. Secretary Alegría stated plainly in this light in 1981, "Tourism is a renewable resource. Oil is not."[897] State officials continued to push for further state investment in tourism with good reason: according to one estimate, the money foreigners spent in the country in 1980 multiplied four times in the Mexican economy.[898] Therefore the government continued to see tourism as a vital and renewable source of income. It became even more important in light of the economic difficulties anchored in the oil industry during this period. Oil prices skyrocketed worldwide in the late 1970s. Mexico's net exports dropped as a result of the high oil prices, and the dependability of the nation's oil reserves as a primary source of national income came into question.[899] The 1982 debt crisis further devastated Mexico's economy, especially for the poorest sector of the population. The crisis led to a decline of seven percent in

---

[896] "Mexican Tourism: Changes Ahead."
[897] Ibid.
[898] "Tourism in Mexico," *New York Times.*
[899] "The Mexican 1982 Debt Crisis," Rabobank, September 19, 2013, accessed February 15, 2016, https://economics.rabobank.com/publications/2013/september/the-mexican-1982-debt-crisis/#.

real wage values per year, on average, between 1983 and 1988.[900] It also contributed to greater stratification of wealth distribution: between 1984 and 1989, the share of income accumulated by the wealthiest ten percent of Mexico's population grew by fifteen percent.[901] As it overshadowed Acapulco by the mid-1980s and rose to international prominence, tourism planners viewed Cancún in particular as especially important to the national economy. One journalist asserted in 1988, "In Mexico, where poverty and unemployment are becoming increasingly severe, Cancún, with its dollar economy, is often described as a last safety valve."[902] Cancún's seemingly overnight success offered a stark and promising contrast to the economic turmoil of Mexico's 1982 debt crisis and faltering oil industry.

Part of the subsequent build-up of the tourism industry in the 1980s relied heavily on the increased attraction of foreign hotel chains on a national level. Despite the increased commitment of American brands in previous decades, as of 1980, across the nation foreign hotels were still outnumbered by domestic brands, at least among the nation's four-star hotels. Nationwide, less than twenty percent of Mexico's first-class hotel rooms were managed by foreign hotel chains.[903] In the hopes that "major hotel chains [would] become more active in both 'selling' Mexico and in opening up new hotels," FONATUR pushed hard for more foreign investment in Mexico's tourism industry and more affiliation with foreign-owned hotel chains.[904] Rodolfo Casparius, head of Mexico's state-owned Nacional Hotelera chain, reflected on the importance of

---

[900] Nora Lustig, "The 1982 Debt Crisis, Chiapas, NAFTA, and Mexico's Poor," *Challenge* 38, no. 2 (March 1995): 46.
[901] Lustig, "The 1982 Debt Crisis," 46.
[902] "Cancún Life Is No Beach," *The Tennessean* (Nashville, Tennessee), February 10, 1988, accessed February 25, 2016, https://www.newspapers.com/image/112954972.
[903] Alan Riding, "Mexico Drawing Foreign Hotels," *New York Times*, May 6, 1980.
[904] Riding, "Mexico Drawing Foreign Hotels."

foreign hotel chains accordingly, stating in 1980, "Mexico's tourist industry is at last taking off. Demand is now far ahead of supply in terms of rooms and resorts. We have to grow as fast as we can and the foreign chains can help us."[905] In addition, according to reporter Alan Riding, a reporter for the *New York Times*, the foreign-owned hotels were "needed because they [gave] status to new resorts with their name and provide[d] the hotels with a worldwide promotion and sales network."[906] Upon Mexico's call for more foreign capital investment in its tourism industry in 1980, the most enthusiastic hospitality chains included American-owned franchises such as Western International (Westin), Sheraton, Hyatt, Holiday Inns, Quality Inns, and Hilton International. The French-owned Club Méditerranée also expanded its holdings in Mexico at that time.[907] The government preferred foreign chains to import capital and build their own chains. However, most chose to hold management contracts instead, since such agreements guaranteed sizeable profits with little to no risk on their end.[908]

Why Go to Mexico? Tourism Marketing Strategies

American tourists had long dominated Mexico's international tourism market by the time Cancún was developing, and tourism leaders acknowledged the importance of understanding "the psychology of the gringo" in its tourism promotions. Ads sometimes capitalized on American consumer culture and depicted travel itself as a good to be consumed. They took various approaches in marketing Mexico to American consumers, and over time their methods shifted to reflect changing demographics among tourism consumers. The industry became dominated by more middle-class American tourists as

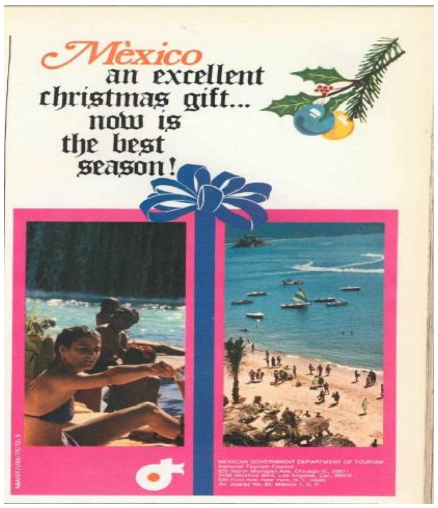
---

[905] Ibid.
[906] Ibid.
[907] Ibid.
[908] Ibid.

air travel became less expensive and as more hotels switched to low-cost, high-volume business models in the 1980s. Mexico also underwent a series of peso devaluations and debt crises, which drove down the peso-to-dollar parity, making Mexico an incredibly affordable option for international travelers. Thus, affordability became a primary selling point in Mexican tourism advertisements during this period.

Some of the marketing strategies used by the state and private tourism promoters mimicked advertisements from earlier eras. Like tourism promoters of the early twentieth century, advertisers continued to promote Mexico as a close, friendly, and sunny place. The convenience of its proximity, as well as the warmth of Mexico's beaches and its people persisted as a common selling point to tourists. In addition, promoters continued to capitalize on racialized contrasts between Mexican natives and the light-skinned foreign visitors in their advertisements. As in the past, advertisements continued to portray happy, dark natives in traditional clothing alongside bikini-clad, light-skinned foreign tourists relaxing in the sand. The racialized depictions in advertisements of dominant foreign white tourists exemplify bell hooks' concept of an imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, in which western whites dominate a socially constructed hierarchy which is fundamentally defined by capitalism.[909]

[909] bell hooks, "Understanding Patriarchy," in *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love,* bell hooks, Atri Books: 2004, 17.



"Mexico, an Excellent Christmas Gift" [910]

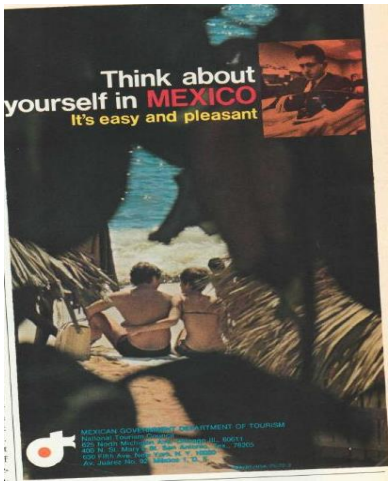
"Nacional Hotelera Packages the Best of Mexico" [911]

In promoting Mexico abroad, state tourism planners recognized foreign tourists as consumers and important generators of national economic growth. In attempts to tap into the "psychology of the gringo," state tourism planners spoke to American cultural patterns of consumption. For the American middle class, that primarily meant affordability and brand recognition. However, more broadly, tapping into American consumer culture also compelled the state's portrayal of tourism as a consumer good. At the height of state-led tourism in Mexico, state tourism promoters framed travel as a consumer good in a series of advertisements. For example, in the November 1972 issue of *Travel*, an advertisement created by Mexico's Tourism Department showed travel to Mexico in the form of a wrapped Christmas present. The copy reads, "Mexico, An Excellent Christmas Gift…Now is the Best Season!"[912] In this advertisement, Mexico itself became a good to be packaged, sold, and consumed by American tourists.

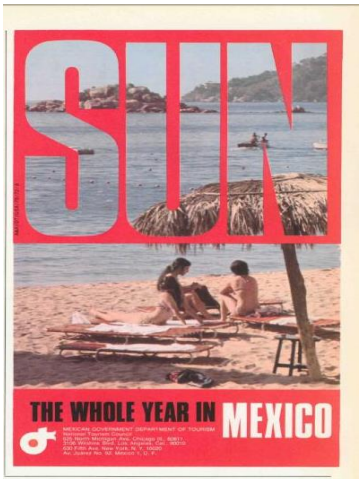
---

[910] "Mexico: An Excellent Christmas Gift, Now is the Best Season," *Travel*, November 1972, 27.
[911] "Nacional Hotelera Packages the Best of Mexico," *Independent Press-Telegram* (Long Beach, CA), September 26, 1976.
[912] "Mexico: An Excellent Christmas Gift, Now is the Best Season."

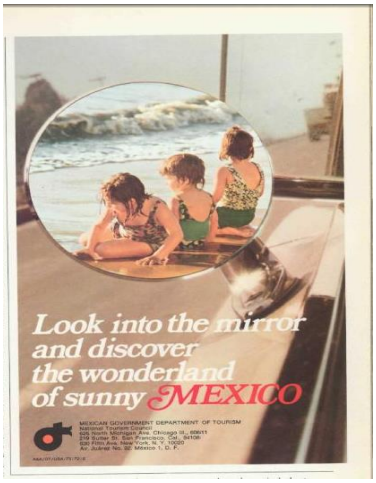
Similarly, a Nacional Hotelera advertisement from September of 1976 reads "Nacional Hotelera Packages the Best of Mexico," and contains a picture of a gift-wrapped package.[913] Both advertisements exemplify travel's connection to consumer culture, and each one promotes the consumption of Mexico itself as a consumer good. The concept of travel being presented as a consumer good demonstrates the strong connection between marketing, travel, and American consumer culture, as well as Mexican state promoters' attempts to tap into American cultural patterns in order to sell tourism.



"Think About Yourself in Mexico" [914]



"Sun: The Whole Year in Mexico" [915]



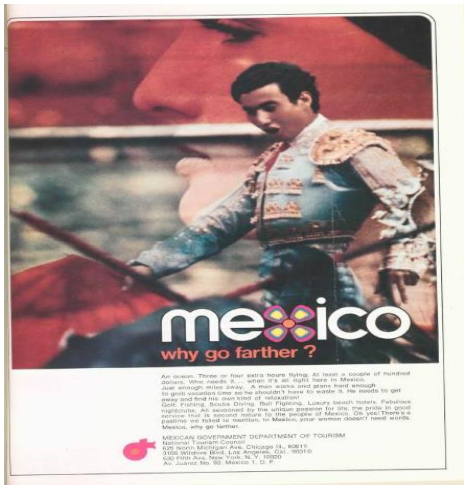
"Look into the Mirror…"[916]

In the 1970s, upon the inauguration of FONATUR and Mexico's tourism development program, the Mexican Tourism Council produced advertisements and published them in *Travel* magazine as well as other publications. The advertisements all feature images of American tourists as light-skinned, fit people. The images play into a stereotyped, race-based image of the prominent "American ideal" as it is presented in American media. In addition, the advertisements use phrases such as, "Look into the

---

[913] "Nacional Hotelera Packages the Best of Mexico."
[914] *Travel,* May 1972, 27.
[915] *Travel,* October 1972, 23.
[916] *Travel,* September 1972, 27.

mirror…" and "Think about yourself in Mexico." These phrases suggest that FONATUR was not only thinking of how *they* conceived of the American image, but also of how Americans thought of themselves. As with the Americans' images of the Latin American "other," the Mexicans' images of the American "other" were heavily based on race. These images contributed to the construction of race-based identities for Mexicans and Americans alike.



"Mexico: Why Go Farther?"[917]

In the age of air travel, Mexico was reachable by plane in no more than five or six hours from any point in the U.S. or Canada.[918] Ads highlighted the close proximity of Mexico to the U.S. as a result. Similarly to ads from the early twentieth century, some even alluded to it as an attractive alternative to Europe. For example, in the December 1973 issue of *Travel*, an ad placed by FONATUR showed a hyper-macho image of a matador with the copy reading, "Mexico: Why Go Farther?" This ad also highlighted Mexico's Spanish heritage, since bull fighting is traditionally associated with Spain. Its reference

[917] "Mexico: Why Go Farther?" *Travel*, December 1973, 83.
[918] "The Many Worlds of Mexico," *New York Times*, June 6, 1982, accessed July 23, 2012 from ProQuest.

to Mexico's Spanish roots capitalized on western European cultural appeal to an American audience. It even suggested that Mexico was the next best thing to going to Spain when it stated, "An ocean. Three or four extra hours of flying. At least a couple of hundred dollars. Who needs it…when it's all right here in Mexico."[919] At the same time, the bullfighter in the image has *mestizo* features, with dark hair and a dark complexion. He offers an obvious contrast to the light-skinned foreign tourists featured in the earlier advertisements.

Not only was Mexico a lot closer to the U.S. than Europe, but it was also a lot cheaper to travel there. The cost of travel to Mexico became even more affordable for American tourists as Mexico weathered a series of peso devaluations and debt crises in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. As Michael Clancy states, "international tourism to Mexico tends to flourish during periods of developmental setbacks, such as the debt and peso crises. Each produced a strong dollar and stimulated demand."[920] Between 1970 and 1987, while international tourists experienced a steady and sizeable decrease in the cost of their travel to Mexico, Mexicans experienced an increase of 300 percent in international travel costs.[921] This had a two-fold effect on Mexico's tourism industry: it attracted more international tourists and kept more Mexican nationals at home. As a result, there was an increase in overall tourism expenditures and the industry received a positive net balance from receipts.[922] Between 1970 and 1987, the real dollar value of

---

[919] "Mexico: Why Go Farther?"
[920] Clancy, "Mexican Tourism," 145.
[921] Mary Fish and Jean D. Gibbons, "Mexico's Devaluations and Changes in Net Foreign Exchange Receipts from Tourism," *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 10, No. 1 (1991): 77.
[922] Fish and Gibbons, "Mexico's Devaluations and Changes in Net Foreign Exchange Receipts from Tourism."

foreign tourist expenditures in Mexico increased by 1224.6 percent while domestic tourist receipts increased by only 69.5 percent.[923]

In the mid-1970s, after having two decades of stability in their exchange rate, Mexico underwent a peso devaluation as a means of contending with its financial crisis. Between 1954 and 1976, the rate had stayed at a rate of 12.5 pesos to each dollar.[924] In September of 1976, however, Treasury Minister Mario Ramón Beteta announced that the peso would float freely and its value would fluctuate according to supply and demand. Within one week, the peso's value had sunk to twenty pesos to the dollar.[925] The devaluation occurred as a result of a huge trade deficit ($3.7 billion in 1975), a high rate of inflation (fifteen percent per year), and massive foreign debt ($13 billion). Tourism administrators also sought the devaluation since their business had declined by four percent in 1975, mostly because the cost of travel to Mexico had increased in recent years. As a result, Mexico City had become as expensive for Americans as many European cities.[926] President Luis Echeverría Alvarez expressed his hopes for the positive effects of the peso devaluation. He directly referenced his hopes for a boost in tourism, saying, "In the end, there will be more jobs, more production, more exports and more tourism."[927]

Mexico's agents of tourism hoped that the peso devaluation would help tourism, and it did, although not instantly due to rising political tensions between the U.S. and Mexico. On November 10, 1975, Mexico had been one of seventy-two nations which

---

[923] Ibid., 78.
[924] "Mexico: Down Goes the Peso," *Time*, September 13, 1976, accessed November 11, 2011, www.time.com/time/subscriber/printout/0,8816,914587,00.html.
[925] "Mexico: Down Goes the Peso."
[926] Ibid.
[927] Ibid.

equated Zionism with racism—a measure which angered a fair number of Jewish American tourists. In the aftermath of the incident, Jewish Americans made between 30,000 and 50,000 cancellations of their travel plans to Mexico in 1975 and 1976.[928] In addition to rising prices, this contributed to the four-percent slump in Mexico's tourism earnings in 1976. This also combined with incidents of bad publicity related to banditry and drug trafficking to deter tourists from entering Mexico's borders.[929] Newspapers commonly reported instances of muggings and carjacking in resort areas. *The Times* of San Mateo, California described "Mexican criminals haunting resort areas and major highways."[930]

The Jewish-American boycott of Mexican tourism proved to be short-lived. In May of 1977, the B'nai Brith Jewish Brotherhood and Mexican tourism agents agreed to coordinate tourism packages between the U.S. and Mexico. The accord resulted from the presidential conference between presidents Jimmy Carter and José López Portillo.[931] This measure effectively assuaged political tensions related to the UN Zionism debacle, and Mexican tourism agents hoped the industry would make a full recovery as a result. Since in 1977 Mexico relied on tourism for one-fourth of its foreign exchange, Americans represented nearly ninety percent of its foreign tourists, and Mexico relied on the U.S. for seventy-five percent of its export trade, keeping its primary source of

---

[928] "Jewish Tourists Cancelling Trips to Mexico Over UN Zionism Vote," *The Amarillo Globe-Times* (Amarillo, Texas), December 10, 1975, accessed November 13, 2015, http://www.newspapers.com/image/30208153; "To the Editor," *Las Cruces Sun-News* (Las Cruces, New Mexico), January 29, 1976, accessed November 13, 2015, https://www.newspapers.com/image/35293953.
[929] "Bad Press Hurts Mexico's Tourism," *The Daily Journal* (Fergus Falls, Minnesota), March 9, 1977, accessed November 13, 2015, https://www.newspapers.com/image/33894000.
[930] "Mexican Government to Aid Tourists," *The Times* (San Mateo, California), March 7, 1977, accessed https://www.newspapers.com/image/51703183.
[931] "Mexico Moves to Facilitate Tourism," *Redlands Daily Facts* (Redlands, California), accessed November 13, 2015, https://www.newspapers.com/image/15144334.

customers happy was imperative to maintain growth in the industry and, more broadly, in the national economy.[932]

The peso devaluation did cause the cost of travel to Mexico to decrease, but not as dramatically as some hoteliers had hoped. Within a few weeks of Beteta's announcement that Mexico would float its currency, the price of an American Express charter tour which ran from New York to Cancún dropped from between US $339 and US $429 to between US $299 and US $399.[933] This amounted to a decrease of between seven and eleven percent. By the start of 1977, conditions had still not improved for tourism—the American Automobile Association reported that 2,900 fewer cars and 8,600 fewer passengers crossed the bridge into Mexico during January and February than during the same period in 1976.[934] Furthermore, the devaluation seemed to have had the opposite of its desired effect, since many tourism-related enterprises were going out of business. In May 1977, Mexico City travel agent Gregorio Varela Franyutti reported that an estimated $600 million had been lost by Mexico's tourism industry since the government floated the peso on September 1, 1976. As a result, dozens of travel agencies had gone out of business in less than a year.[935]

By early 1978, the Bank of Mexico reported that Mexico's tourism industry was showing signs of recovery: tourists had funneled $32.7 million into Mexico's treasury in

---

[932] "To the Editor," *Las Cruces Sun-News;* "Mexico Approves Special CB Channels," *The Argus* (Fremont, California), October 8, 1977, accessed November 13, 2015, https://www.newspapers.com/image/38041178.
[933] "Notes: Controversy over Giveaway Plans," *The New York Times,* November 14, 1976.
[934] "Mexico Tourism Down," *Plano Daily Star-Courier* (Plano, Texas), March 22, 1977, accessed November 13, 2015, https://www.newspapers.com/image/56148071.
[935] "Peso Floating Hurts Tourism," Associated Press, May 4, 1977, accessed November 13, 2015, https://www.newspapers.com/image/79932840.

the previous year (1977), which represented an increase of $280,000 from 1976.[936] The boost proved to be short-lived, however: in 1981 the Ministry of Tourism announced that Mexico had attracted 3.8 percent fewer foreign tourists from the previous year. This was equivalent to a decline of 165,000 tourists, or a loss of approximately $60 to $75 million in sales of food, lodging, handicrafts, services, jewelry, silver, and other products made in Mexico.[937]

In February 1982, the value of Mexico's peso dropped from thirty-five pesos per dollar to seventy pesos per dollar. However, the gains in Americans' power abroad were not enough to attract more American tourists. The first half of 1982 showed a drop of 6.5 percent from the previous year and ten percent from 1980. Experts attributed the drop to the global recession as well as news reports that Mexico was a country "on the verge of a revolution." This impression arose from continuous reports of drug-related violence and the country's economic troubles.[938] Even through all the tourism industry slumps, hospitality professionals remained optimistic and speculated that business would pick up as travelers became more aware of their increased buying power abroad. In this light, Tourism Minister Rosa Luz Alegría stated in 1982: "It will get better; we have a strong year ahead of us."[939] Meanwhile, Juan San Ramón Ortiz, the government tourism delegate of Acapulco, stated, "Americans plan their vacations one year in advance; they are the most organized travelers in the world."[940]

---

[936] "Tourism is Up," *Associated Press*, February 23, 1978, accessed November 13, 2015, https://www.newspapers.com/image/50061498.
[937] "Mexican Tourism: Changes Ahead."
[938] Lydia Chavez, "A Decline in Mexico tourism," *New York Times*, October 13, 1982.
[939] Chavez, "A Decline in Mexico Tourism."
[940] Ibid.

Indeed, business did increase dramatically in the following months. Manhattan Asti Mexico Tours reported an increase of 400 percent in 1983 over the previous year.[941] One tourism industry executive deemed Mexico, in light of the country's economic crisis and subsequent peso devaluation, the "travel bargain of the century."[942] American Express was offering a seven-night stay package in economy-class hotels in Acapulco or Cancún for ninety-nine dollars, not including the cost of airfare. A room at the El Mirador Acapulco cost thirty-eight dollars in 1983; it sank to just sixteen dollars in 1984.[943] Meanwhile, a hotel room in Mexico City cost only seven dollars per night, breakfast cost seventy cents per person, a three-course lunch near the Palacio de Bellas Artes cost two dollars per person, a movie ticket cost sixty-five cents, and a cab ride across downtown cost one dollar.[944] As tourists caught wind of Mexico's incredible value—especially in comparison to the alternatives—Mexico drew a record 4.7 million visitors in 1983.[945]

International tourists flocked to Mexico as prices for travel to Europe became increasingly expensive. The first two decades of post-war years had aided Americans' ability to travel to Europe at a low cost relative to earlier eras. However, the late 1960s and 1970s ushered in a new era as foreign economies strengthened and the dollar weakened, which caused prices for European travel to skyrocket.[946] This made nearby

---

[941] Michael Demarest and David Hessekiel, "Living: Mexico's Peso Paradise," *Time*, February 21, 1983, accessed November 11, 2011, http://www.time.com/time/subscriber/printout/0,8816,925916,00.html.
[942] Demarest and Hessekiel, "Living: Mexico's Peso Paradise."
[943] John Greenwalk, Leonora Dodsworth, and John Wright, "All the World's a Bargain," *Time*, July 30, 1984, accessed November 11, 2011, http://www.time.com/time/subscriber/printout/0,8816,926724,00.html.
[944] Demarest and Hessekiel, "Living: Mexico's Peso Paradise"; Greenwalk, Dodsworth, and Wright, "All the World's a Bargain."
[945] William Stockton, "Mexico Pushes Tourism Anew," *New York Times*, April 27, 1986, accessed November 11, 2011, ProQuest.
[946] Greenwalk, Dodsworth, and Wright, "All the World's a Bargain."

Mexico, especially with its decreasing peso parity, increasingly attractive, especially for middle-class American tourists. Several studies revealed how Mexico measured up to its competition in terms of value during this period. In 1977, CICATUR released a study which compared the buying power of the tourist dollar in twenty cities around the world. According to this study, tourist services in Mexico were among the least expensive.[947] Later, a 1981 survey revealed that a three-day, two-night stay anywhere in Mexico was about half of that in London or Paris, and well below the average cost for a comparable stay in New York, Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro, Copenhagen, Hong Kong, or Madrid. The survey included the cost of hotels, meals, drinks, and taxis.[948]

It became increasingly apparent to both foreign and national agents of Mexico's tourism industry that affordability should be an important selling point for travel to Mexico. This became especially obvious in the 1980s with the onset of the peso devaluation, the global recession, and the overgrowth of Mexico's tourism industry. By then, the national tourism industry was overgrown and hotels faced intense competition. Therefore, they began to offer more vacation packages for middle-class Americans. This contributed to a loss of exclusivity within Cancún's resorts, but it posed a significant tradeoff: hoteliers realized that they could turn a larger profit by attracting tourists with a low-cost, high-volume business model.[949]

In light of the nation's economic crisis and the tumbling price of oil, the importance of tourism to the national economy also became more apparent than ever, especially as the oil market faltered. In 1986, when the price of crude oil plummeted from

---

[947] "Mexico Moves to Facilitate Tourism."
[948] "Mexican Tourism: Changes Ahead."
[949] Vargas Martínez, et. al, "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades," 19; Torres, "Cancún's Tourism Development," 87-116.

twenty-five dollars per barrel to just eleven dollars per barrel in a matter of four months, President Miguel de la Madrid launched a campaign to revitalize the nation's tourism industry. For example, he pushed for an easing of rules for international air charter operations, a lowering of excessive barriers at the border which made it difficult to bring in equipment for trade shows and conventions, and increased services and protections for highway travelers. In response to these measures, Roberto Zapata, the owner of a chain of hotels in Mexico stated, "What the President has done was badly needed. At last it gives full recognition to the value that tourism has to the country's economy."[950] In that same vein, the new Minister of Tourism Antonio Enríquez Savignac stated, "When I am asked if tourism can replace oil, my answer is no. But tourism can contribute much more than at present if it is developed properly."[951]

In the 1980s, middle-class tourists found the price of travel to Mexico exceedingly attractive. On June 1, 1980, John Cornelius Shea of Rockville Centre, Long Island wrote to the editor of the *New York Times*, praising the low cost of travel from New York to Cancún, saying,

> In regard to the article on travel to Mayaland, a month ago I returned from Mérida, having used a little publicized air fare on Aeromexico *(sic).* If one travels on a Tuesday or Wednesday, the round-trip fare New York to Mexico City is just $195 when combined with minimum land arrangements. Another Mexican stop (such as Mérida) can be added for just $30 and any Mexican city after that costs just $15. Thus, a New York-Mexico City-Mérida-Cancún flight (and return to New York) costs just $240 ($195 plus $30, plus $15). Add on Cozumel and it would cost just $255.[952]

---

[950] Stockton, "Mexico Pushes Tourism Anew."
[951] Ibid.
[952] John Cornelius Shea, "Letters to the Editor," *New York Times*, June 1, 1980.

The state capitalized on its low-cost tourism model and began selling Mexico as the most affordable option. This marketing strategy aligned with the low-cost, high-volume mass tourism model which proliferated in Mexico in the 1980s. The Secretary of Tourism distributed tourism ads in 1981 with titles like "Getting Away from It All, Without Spending it All," and "The Vacation of a Lifetime You Can Afford Right Now."[953] The next year, in 1982, one ad run in the *New York Times* called Mexico "One of the world's great travel bargains."[954] By 1987, promoters were still highlighting the affordability of travel to Mexico for foreign tourists, saying, "This summer in Mexico, live it up while the prices are down."[955]

The trend of selling Mexico as an inexpensive and yet luxurious vacation destination continued through the 1990s. A 1991 ad for Stouffer Presidente Hotels and Resorts read, "Discover affordable luxury in Mexico."[956] Meanwhile, an ad reading "Mexico: America's Best Vacation Value" in the *New York Times* in 1992 compared the cost of staying in luxury hotels in Europe and the U.S. with the cost of those in various cities throughout Mexico. In order to illustrate the affordability of extravagance in Mexico, the ad compared the cost of a double room for one night at the Plaza Hotel in New York City ($250), the Dorchester Hotel in London ($348), the Hotel de Crillon in Paris ($560) with the cost of a similar stay at the Camino Real in Cancún ($120), the

---

[953] "The Vacation of a Lifetime You Can Afford Right Now," *New York Times*, February 28, 1982, November 22, 2011, ProQuest; "Getting Away from It All, without Spending It All," *New York Times*, December 6, 1981, November 22, 2011, ProQuest.
[954] "The Many Worlds of Mexico."
[955] "This Summer in Mexico, Live it Up While the Prices Are Down," *New York Times*, June 28, 1987.
[956] "Discover Affordable Luxury in Mexico," *New York Times*, October 27, 1991.

Nikko Chapultepec in Mexico City ($135), the Hyatt Continental in Acapulco ($75), and the Krystal Vallarta ($80).[957]

In 1995, the value of the peso declined yet again by forty percent in less than a month.[958] While a 200-peso meal for two at Lorenzillo's in Cancún would have cost an American tourist fifty-nine dollars in December of 1994 cost thirty-six dollars in January of 1995.[959] Meanwhile, tourists could receive a thirty-five percent discount by paying in pesos rather than dollars.[960] As a result, according to Mexican tourism officials, bookings had already increased by eighteen percent within a month of the 1995 peso devaluation.[961]

Tourism ads also recycled long-standing ways of marketing Mexico as a "warm," "sunny," and "friendly" country. Some advertisements frequently combined the relatively new strategy of highlighting the affordability of travel to Mexico with older methods of capitalizing on the "warmth" of Mexico. For example, one advertisement from 1982 stated, "With its traditional hospitality and friendliness, Mexico offers a warm welcome—and those low, low prices that make a visit South of the Border more fun and more rewarding than ever!"[962] Meanwhile, another ad from 1982 stated that Mexico offered "a sun-warmed spree guaranteed to melt winter from your mind."[963]

Other ads beckoned back to earlier times by contrasting Mexican modernity with its antiquity. In 1982, one ad stated, "Handicrafts and native artisanry in a myriad of

---

[957] "Mexico: America's Best Vacation Value," *New York Times,* November 8, 1992.
[958] Anthony DePalma, "Finding the Bargains Amid the Peso's Decline," *New York Times,* January 15, 1995.
[959] DePalma, "Finding the Bargins Amid the Peso's Decline."
[960] Sylvia Nasar, "Stretching Your Money in Mexico," *New York Times,* February 19, 1995, accessed November 11, http://www.nytimes.com/1995/02/19/travel/stretching-your-money-in-mexico.html.
[961] Nasar, "Stretching Your Money in Mexico."
[962] "The Many Worlds of Mexico."
[963] "The Vacation of a Lifetime You Can Afford Right Now."

articles is distinctive and desirable, but the most sophisticated goods are an important part of the shopping scene, too."[964] In addition, while acknowledging Mexico's capacity for modernity and "high-tech engineering," ads still overwhelmingly highlighted its antiquity by simultaneously referring to it as "Old Mexico."[965] This fulfilled tourists' desires to seek out both modern comfort and the "exotic" appeal of the Mexican "other."

Tourism, Narco Politics, and Public Safety

Unlike other industries, tourism is considerably vulnerable to the public perception of a nation's overall image as well as its reputation for safety. As a result, FONATUR and other Mexican state agents launched public relations campaigns in the aftermath of seemingly continuous public relations crises resulting from natural disasters, drug-related violence, and even international terrorist attacks. Consequently, the state became increasingly invested in promoting public safety, especially for tourists, as the nation navigated incidents of drug-related violence which had begun to frighten off tourists. In 1976, Mexico's federal government had waged an anti-drug campaign throughout the country, an effort to eradicate the planting, harvesting, production, use, and distribution of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, opium, and other illicit drugs. These efforts were grounded in Mexico's attempts to clean up its image for foreign tourists, but this particular campaign ultimately backfired. Customs officials began carrying out the anti-drug campaign so fervently that they interrogated and subsequently scared away foreign tourists traveling via Mexican highways. Conditions for foreign tourists became so severe that the Mexican Hotel and Motel Association addressed the issue in their

[964] "The Many Worlds of Mexico."
[965] Ibid.

working seminars and annual conventions, and made a formal complaint to the federal government.[966]

The government also promoted more government surveillance of national highways in order to ensure public safety. Free "Green Angel" car patrols provided roadside assistance on the highways—this service was greatly expanded during the 1970s and 1980s, since a substantial number of foreign visitors were still arriving by car. According to estimates by the Mexican government, more than half of American tourists were still arriving by car or recreational vehicle in 1977.[967] Furthermore, in March of 1977 the American Automobile Association (AAA) President J.B. Creal made an ominous warning to President José López Portillo and expressed his concerns about violence and crime in Mexico. He cautioned the president that Mexico's steady supply of American tourists would most likely "dry up" unless the government made attempts to eradicate crime, especially in areas most often frequented by tourists.[968] Thus, in May of 1977, motivated by a temporary slump in tourism to Mexico as well as J.B. Creal's warning, the government approved a five-point program designed to improve safety standards and facilitate growth in the industry. The Mexican government promoted a program including the simplification of procedures for entering Mexico, allowing tourists to obtain their tourist cards from any accredited tourist agency. Second, the state eliminated routine customs inspections at airports, thereby decreasing the time tourists had to wait to enter the country. The state also improved vigilance and tourist safety

---

[966] "Anti-Drug Campaign Causes Problems to Tourists Along Highway 15." 1 June 1976, *Mexico Travel and Hotel News*, 20.
[967] "Mexico Approves Special CB Channels," *The Argus*, October 8, 1977, accessed November 13, 2015, https://www.newspapers.com/image/38041178.
[968] "Mexican Government to Aid Tourists," *The Times* (San Mateo, California), March 9, 1977, accessed November 13, 2015, https://www.newspapers.com/image/51703183.

through an increase of "Green Angels'" presence on major highways. Also, the state installed a special telephone line with tourist information in five languages. Finally, the government offered an improvement of tourism services through the training of special personnel as well as the assisting of tourists in instances of complaint or abuse through the Consumers' Protection Office.[969] In 1988, the Secretary of Tourism (SECTUR) established fifteen different camps sites along the highways leading out of Mexico City during the Easter holiday. The sites offered mechanic assistance and distributed information about tourism destinations. In addition, SECTUR increased the "Green Angels" services on highways throughout the country.[970] Furthermore, the Army, the Red Cross, and the SCT (*Secretaría de Comunicaciónes y Transportación,* Secretariat of Communications and Transportation) set up a national network to assist the millions of national tourists who would travel during the Easter holiday in order to minimize the danger of accidents and to protect travelers from possible robbery attempts.[971]

Poverty levels often contributed to general anxieties about Mexico's national image abroad, but also to issues surrounding public safety. In the wake of the Latin American debt crisis of 1982, the entire Latin American region faced one of its worst economic disasters since the 1930s.[972] The U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) announced that the value of Latin American exports fell by fifteen percent in 1986.[973] In the midst of severe economic decline, Mexico reported the spread of poverty among millions of Mexicans.[974] At the end of 1987, inflation was 180 percent.

---

[969] "Mexico Moves to Facilitate Tourism"; "Mexico Approves Special CB Channels."
[970] *Excelsior,* March 8, 1988, A5, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[971] *Excelsior,* March 8, 1988, Estados, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[972] *Excelsior,* January 18, 1987, A1, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[973] *Excelsior,* January 13, 1987, F2, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[974] *Excelsior,* January 2, 1987, A4, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

The average value of Mexican citizens' "net" salary declined by sixty-four percent between 1982 and 1987.[975] Economic advisors and union leaders alike warned that if economic conditions did not improve, it could lead to civil unrest. In Zacatecas, CTM (*Confederación de Trabajadores de México,* Confederation of Mexican Workers) Economic Advisor Arturo Romo Gutierrez stated that the decline in the buying power among workers could "endanger political instability."[976] Likewise, the National Unions Federation Secretary General Samuel Ruiz Mora warned that social destabilization could arise from the rapid spread of poverty.[977] Meanwhile, CNC (*Confederáción Nacional Campesina,* National Farmers' Confederation) leader Hector Hugo Olivares Ventura warned ominously, "The ghost of hunger must not reach the countryside, because then a social movement would occur."[978] As Mexico had learned from the decline in travel to Cuba in the aftermath of its revolution, civil unrest resulting from lack of economic stability could devastate tourism.

Tourism among Mexicans was already in decline as a result of growing national economic instability: in 1986, the number of Mexicans traveling abroad decreased by eleven percent in comparison to previous years.[979] Within the realm of national tourism, a study by the University of Guadalajara's Tourism Department indicated that poor coordination between tourism organizations as well as the loss of buying power led to a decline in middle-class Mexican tourism. The authors of the study recommended that the state continue to push social tourism and make tourism more accessible to the general

---

[975] *Excelsior,* January 19, 1988, A5, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[976] *Excelsior,* January 25, 1987, A4, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[977] *Excelsior,* January 2, 1987, A4, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[978] *Excelsior,* January 20, 1988, A4, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[979] *Excelsior,* January 16, 1987, B1, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

population in order to salvage national tourism among Mexican citizens.[980] The following year, Secretary of Tourism Antonio Enriquez Savignac announced that the state would offer more social tourism programs designed to make tourism in especially high-cost resorts, such as Cancún, more accessible to Mexican nationals during the summer 1988 season.[981]

Industry leaders also worried that a worsening recession in the U.S. could negatively affect tourism in Mexico. For example, president of Cancún's Hotel and Motel Association Abelardo Vara Rivera said that since Cancún was still a very young city, it was still very sensitive to tourism's seasonal fluctuations. He also expressed anxiety over the impact of the U.S. recession on Cancún's economic stability.[982] His intuition proved to be correct, at least in the short-term: Cancún's hotel occupancy declined by seventy percent as a result of dips in the New York Stock Exchange in 1987. As a result, U.S. commercial banks had their worst year in 1987 since the Great Depression, with 184 bankruptcies and an eighty percent decrease in earnings. Citicorp lost $1.14 billion in 1987 as a result of Brazil's declaration of a moratorium on its foreign debt to private banks.[983] An overall increase in hotel and tourist service rates also made a negative impact on tourism in Cancún.[984]

In the 1980s tourism leaders continued to highlight issues with public safety and the maintenance of an overall clean national image as some of their top priorities for bolstering the industry. Mexico had one of the best reputations for public safety among

---

[980] *Excelsior*, January 26, 1987, E2, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[981] *Excelsior*, February 5, 1988, A21, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[982] *Excelsior*, January 17, 1987, 2, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[983] *Excelsior*, January 20, 1988, F2, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[984] *Excelsior*, January 28, 1988, 1, BLAC, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; *Excelsior*, March 3, 1988, A2, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

nations in the Global South, and yet, tourism industry leaders continued to push for a cleaner and safer image on the international stage. For example, in 1987, President of the Mexican Travel Agents Association Armando Bojórques Patrón stated that foreigners were not safe, day or night, in places like Tepito, Garibaldi, and some other areas of downtown Mexico City.[985] The state also pushed clean-up campaigns in order to improve the attractiveness of the resorts all over the country.[986] In 1987, mayor of Acapulco Israel Sobernis Nogueda said streets would be repaired and the port city would be cleaned up. In addition, Sobernis Nogueda announced that street selling would be stopped by providing the vendors a designated market place to sell their wares.[987] The U.S. Consul General Irwin Rubenstein stated that "U.S. tourism has decreased in Michoacán and the rest of the nation due to insecurity and lack of adequate tourist services. States such as Michoacán and Jalisco are known for production and processing of marihuana."[988] Cancún was still a young resort city, and so its image was not in dire need of attention; while Cancún boasted a year-round occupancy rate of eighty-two percent in 1987, Acapulco struggled to compete at an occupancy rate of sixty percent.[989] Cancún's image as the shiny new resort, in comparison to Acapulco's growing reputation as a city in crisis, contributed to its rise.

In spite of state and industry leaders' anxieties about the effects of public safety, widespread poverty and Mexico's national image on tourism, the industry continued to expand overall. In 1987, the Mexican Minister of Tourism Antonio Enriquez Savignac

---

[985] *Excelsior*, January 3, 1987, A 19, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[986] "Mexican Tourism: Changes Ahead."
[987] *Excelsior*, January 3, 1987, A19, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[988] *Excelsior*, February 20, 1988, Estados 1, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[989] *Excelsior*, January 13, 1987, 1, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; *Excelsior*, January 12, 1987, 1, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

stated that the tourism industry had grown by ten percent and generated a positive trade balance of 1.13 billion dollars.[990] In 1988, SECTUR Operations Manager Alejandro Morones Ochoa reported that a record five million foreign tourists had visited Mexico during the previous year and spent US $2.2 billion.[991] The Mexican Caribbean still ranked third overall in places to visit in 1988.[992] By then, Mexico was second only to Canada in countries to tour in the western hemisphere.[993]

Putting Mexico in a Bottle: Sombreros, Tacos, and Señor Frog's

By the 1980s, the global mass tourism industry had expanded considerably and middle-class westerners were traveling abroad more than ever before. International travel was no longer an industry reserved primarily for the rich and famous. Advertisements for travel to Mexico reflected these changes over time, as they began to emphasize its affordability and value more frequently along with other selling points. This contrasted with travel advertisements from the early twentieth century which had promoted luxury, comfort, and cultural experiences more commonly over affordability. Also, the influx of middle-class tourists—mostly from the U.S.—changed the entire shape of Mexico's tourism industry. Cancún itself had been originally conceived as an exclusive resort reserved for the rich and famous. Within the first five or ten years of its development, however, it became clear that the resort was expanding rapidly and its character was changing to appeal to a broader base of tourists. In the 1980s, investors were building much larger hotels. In addition, more classic American fast-food brands, casual dining chains, big box stores, and department stores established locations in the hotel zone. This

[990] *Excelsior*, January 16, 1987, B1, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[991] *Excelsior*, January 6, 1988, 1, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[992] *Excelsior*, January 28, 1988, 1, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; *Excelsior*, January 29, A5, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[993] *Excelsior*, January 29, 1988, A5, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

happened in other Mexican resort cities, as well. Advertisements for Cancún and other places in Mexico highlighted familiar fast food and casual dining brands and cultural experiences packaged for mass tourism consumption. These would have been more attractive to middle-class tourists who favored affordability and familiarity, in comparison to the high-class tourists' preference for luxury and exclusivity. As one ad for travel to Mexico stated in 1982, "Mexican food isn't all tacos and beans…The country has over 90,000 restaurants, ranging from the most sumptuous international gourmet cuisine to familiar fast-food establishments with hamburgers and fried chicken."[994] Advertisements demonstrated variety, which reflected the change in the types of tourists targeted by the industry. Agents of tourism no longer focused on attracting the wealthiest sector of society with the most expensive tastes in food, accommodations, and cultural attractions. Variety, familiarity, and affordability became increasingly important as a result. Cancún in particular was known for accommodating American tourists' tastes and gained a reputation for being more "Americanized" than other resorts. The Caribbean marketed itself as more culturally "authentic" in comparison. For example, while pizzas and Big Macs dominated the cuisine offerings at major resorts like Cancún, the Bahamas offered "conches freshly extracted by local fisherman, then tossed with sweet peppers and lemon."[995] In addition, Jamaica publicized reggae music and its "laidback" cultural atmosphere while Cancún became known for its raging spring break parties dominated by American college students.[996]

---

[994] "The Many Worlds of Mexico."
[995] Monique P. Yazigi, "The Off-Shore Spring Break System," *New York Times,* March 23, 1997, accessed March 28, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/1997/03/23/style/the-off-shore-spring-break-system.html.
[996] Corey Kilgannon, "Margaritas at 10 A.M.: City Kids on Break Pick New Party Spots," *New York Times,* March 28, 1999, CY4.

Some Mexican franchises promoting business models tailored to American middle-class tourists flourished as a result of the changes in international clientele. Grupo Anderson's, the parent company of Señor Frog's, was founded in 1963 and claims to be "Mexico's largest… restaurant company."[997] With its headquarters based in Cancún, Grupo Anderson's heads up one of Mexico's best-known and most successful restaurant conglomerates. Nearly all of its restaurants are located in well-known international tourism resort cities, so its business model primarily caters to international western tourists. Its most recognizable franchises are Señor Frog's and Carlos n' Charlie's. By 2004, Señor Frog's stores made up fifty percent of sales for Grupo Anderson, but it also headed up seven other concepts including El Tumbaburros, El Shrimp Bucket, Mama Roma, Come 'n Eat, So Good, Squid Roe, and Glazz.[998] Carlos n' Charlie's, the group's first widely successful chain with American tourists, first became popular in Acapulco in the 1970s. At peak popularity, American tourists waited in line for hours to get in to the restaurant.[999]

The original Señor Frog's was founded in Mazatlán in 1969, where the company purportedly first introduced reggae music and karaoke to Mexico. It opened its Cancún location twenty years later in 1989 under the direction of David Krouham, who is now the CEO of Grupo Anderson's. He converted one of the group's struggling restaurants into a Señor Frog's. He received approval for the conversion from the group's original founder, Carlos Anderson, but Anderson did not grant him money for the project.

---

[997] "Press Kit," Señor Frog's, 2005, accessed February 17, 2016, https://web.archive.org/web/20060518204208/http://www.senorfrogs.com/news/senorfrog%27sPresskit.pdf
[998] "Press Kit," Señor Frog's; Maya Norris, "Toeing the Party Line," *Chain Leader*, October 2005, accessed February 17, 2016, https://web.archive.org/web/20060915050054/http://www.senorfrogs.com/news/chain_leader_10_5.pdf.
[999] Kerry A. Dolan, "Fiesta Central," *Forbes*, September 19, 2005, accessed February 17, 2016, https://web.archive.org/web/20060518204135/http://www.senorfrogs.com/news/forbes.pdf.

Krouham borrowed $100,000 from the Corona beer maker Grupo Modelo and converted the restaurant by adding a karaoke system, a Jamaican reggae band, and an emcee.[1000] The chain first introduced its take-home "yard glass"—16-in-tall glasses that hold almost a quart of beer—at the opening of its Cancún store.[1001] The restaurant invented the yard glass and it became so popular that restaurants and festivals created imitated versions of it all around the world. The launch of the Cancún location was wildly successful. It became a Cancún landmark and contributed to the company's expansion to other locations, primarily in international tourism resorts. By 2004, there were fourteen Señor Frog's locations throughout Mexico and the Western Caribbean. Restaurant sales were doing quite well. The average dinner check in 2004 for the chain was US $33—in comparison with an average of US $22 per check for one of its closest competitors, Hard Rock Café.[1002] The Mexico and Caribbean locations averaged sales of 2.5 drinks per person, or an average of $14 per check for alcohol alone.[1003] Meanwhile, it garnered an operating income (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) of US $21 million on system-wide corporate sales of US $94 million.[1004]

Señor Frog's is known for its culturally ambiguous atmosphere, which may partially explain its popularity with American tourists. It offers hints of Mexican culture through modified Mexican items on the menu, but its identity as a Mexican restaurant chain is not easily recognizable. In describing its menu items, Señor Frog's stated in its 2005 press kit that its restaurants "serve a variety of items with unique hints of Mexican authenticity, such as the Beef Chapata, a Mexican version of a Philly Cheese Steak; the

---

[1000] Dolan, "Fiesta Central."
[1001] "Press Kit," Señor Frog's; Dolan, "Fiesta Central."
[1002] Dolan, "Fiesta Central."
[1003] Señor Frog's Restaurant.
[1004] "Press Kit," Señor Frog's; Dolan, "Fiesta Central."

Aqua Tacos, lettuce wraps filled with a cactus chicken salad and topped with tomatillo sauce and guacamole; and the Molcajete, a cactus mixture topped with thin slices [of] beef and chicken, served in a steaming hot lava rock."[1005] In this way, the use of a familiar American dish, the "Philly Cheese Steak," to describe the restaurant's Beef Chapata, exemplifies the chain's attempts to blend the familiar with the foreign in order to appeal to American middle-class tourists. Jorge Hinojosa, Grupo Anderson's director of development, described Señor Frog's food accordingly as "casual and approachable…with an authentic Mexican twist."[1006] Furthermore, the interior design of Señor Frog's restaurants is culturally ambiguous with Caribbean or tropical undertones. According to journalist Maya Norris reporting for *Chain Leader* magazine in 2005, "The tropical décor enhances the carefree attitude with thatched materials, bamboo, wood, and a palette of orange, yellow, red and green."[1007] In its menu items as well as its interior design, Señor Frog's blends hints of Mexican cultural cues with a culturally ambiguous tropical atmosphere in order to appeal to tourists' search of the foreign "other," while simultaneously downplaying the chain's Mexican identity.

Señor Frog's is also well-known for its "anything goes" atmosphere. The chain's bikini thong bar stools augment its wild party environment.[1008] Drink names include sexually suggestive titles such as "Pimp Frog's," "Big Watermelons," and "Frogs [sic] Legs."[1009] In addition, it has been known to have waterslides in the restaurants and host party activities ranging from the perhaps wild but inoffensive—including conga lines,

---

[1005] "Press Kit," Señor Frog's.
[1006] Norris, "Toeing the Party Line."
[1007] Ibid.
[1008] Dolan, "Fiesta Central."
[1009] Alexander Nazaryan, "And This Little Froggy Had a Frozen Margarita," *Newsweek*, September 25, 2015, accessed February 17, 2016, www.newsweek.com/2015/09/25/times-square-senor-frogs-371463.html.

and mud wrestling—to the salacious, like wet t-shirt contests and Shake Your Booty dance contests.[1010] Its theme parties have also included a pajama party where guests had pillow fights and swam in a beer-filled pool.[1011] While the tour guide website Cancún Care states that the Cancún location is suitable for children and families during daylight hours, it says "once the evening descends…it becomes quite rowdy especially during Spring and Summer break."[1012] Furthermore, it states, "Señor Frog contests include the infamous Cancún wet t-shirt contest plus various other risqué games. Beware, ladies, of participating in some of the games as partial nudity may well be encouraged and on occasion may occur without consent (such as having carbon dioxide blow up short skirts."[1013] Thus, the atmosphere at Señor Frog's—"anything goes"—may at times bleed into non-consensual indecent exposure, particularly for female guests.

Señor Frog's success is closely tied to its location in an international tourism resort. Historically, tourists seeking amusement in unfamiliar environments will often partake in activities they might not normally do at home. Similarly to the famous catchphrase "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas," some journalists and tourists began to refer to events at Señor Frog's in a similar way, saying "What Happens in Señor Frog's, Stays in Señor Frog's."[1014] As the CEO of the franchise David Krouham, explained, "You to go Señor Frog's when you're on vacation, if you want to get crazy

---

[1010] "Press Kit," Señor Frog's; Dolan, "Fiesta Central"; Norris, "Toeing the Party Line"; Lena Hansen, "Todo Puede Pasar en Señor Frog's," *El Nuevo Herald,* January 27, 2005, 19D, accessed November 11, 2011, http://ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/login?url=http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=805536621&sid=7&Fmt=3&clientld=86&RQT=309&VName=PQD.
[1011] Norris, "Toeing the Party Line."
[1012] "Señor Frog's Cancún, Mexico," Cancún Care, accessed February 17, 2016, http://www.cancuncare.com/Cancun_Nightlife/senor_frogs.htm.
[1013] "Señor Frog's Cancún, Mexico," Cancún Care.
[1014] Hansen, "Todo Puede Pasar en Señor Frog's."

and nobody knows you."[1015] Furthermore, Jorge Hinojosa, the vice president of development for Grupo Anderson's, stated, "Señor Frog's is not just a restaurant or a bar. It's a full entertainment idea and concept. People are entertained from the minute they walk in to the minute they walk out. Everything about our place is all about sense of humor, and it's all about being unpredictable"[1016] Thus, Señor Frog's success is at least partially due to their identity as an "entertainment concept" restaurant that operates nearly exclusively in international tourism resort cities like Acapulco, Cancún, Cozumel, Nassau, Key West, and even Las Vegas. Furthermore, its success in Cancún is also tied to the rise in the number of American college students traveling there for spring break. The Cancún location opened in 1989, only a few years after Fort Lauderdale began its decline from being the top spring break destination, and just as Cancún was becoming more popular with spring breakers. The chain's party atmosphere overlapped well with foreign tourists' search for entertainment with an element of risk, scandal, and excitement. As an affordable "entertainment concept" restaurant in a foreign country with a drinking age of eighteen, it was particularly attractive to young college students on spring break. As one journalist asserted, "Señor Frog's…makes…sense abroad, where the American traveler needs a refuge from confusing local customs. It also makes sense in countries where teenagers can drink."[1017]

Sex, Sun and Shots on 'Planet Cancún': The Rise of Spring Break Culture

Within a decade after Cancún's initial opening, spring break emerged as a promising new tourism market for the resort. Ads offering prices for spring break

---

[1015] Dolan, "Fiesta Central."
[1016] Señor Frog's Restaurant, December 6, 2005, accessed February 17, 2016, https://web.archive.org/web/20060521120720/http://www.senorfrogs.com/new/dec-6-05.htm; Norris, "Toeing the Party Line."
[1017] Nazaryan, "And This Little Froggy Had a Frozen Margarita."

packages to Cancún began to appear in U.S. newspapers by 1980, but most students still preferred to travel within the continental U.S.—most commonly to Florida. By the late 1990s, however, Cancún had become the most popular international spring break location for U.S. college students. Kirk Riley, president of hotspringbreaks.com asserted that in the last few years leading up to the new millennium, "Cancún [had] become IT."[1018] Cancún also gained a particularly salacious reputation for, as one journalist described it, the hotel zone's "mind-blowing ritual of sex, sun and shots" during spring break season.[1019] Jason Riebe, a college student from John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio stated accordingly, "Oh-my-God. You pound beer all day, every day. You go to the club and dance. You have a different girl in your bed, every night. This is its own planet. Planet Cancún."[1020] Public displays of nudity, public intoxication, wet t-shirt contexts, all-you-can-drink booze cruises, striptease "naughty girl" contests, and frequent sexual activity with a different partner every night were all common parts of spring break culture. While many Americans and Mexicans alike found the spring break scene unseemly, the rise of spring break culture in Cancún was of key importance to the city's growing international prominence. Televised spring break specials on MTV and E! contributed to its mounting global reputation as one of the most recognizable and most popular vacation destinations for American tourists.

The tradition of college students taking a trip during spring break vacation began decades before Cancún was even conceived as a tourism resort. Fort Lauderdale, Florida was originally the most popular spring break location among U.S. college students

---

[1018] Associated Press, "Cancún Sees Fewer Spring Break Parties," *The Augusta Chronicle* (Augusta, Georgia), March 9, 2002, accessed November 11, 2011, http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/lnacui2api/PrintDoc.co?jobHandl.
[1019] Associated Press, "Cancún Sees Fewer Spring Break Parties."
[1020] Associated Press, "Cancún Sees Fewer Spring Break Parties."

beginning in the 1930s when Sam Ingram, a swimming coach from Colgate University, took his team there in 1936 to train at the first Olympic-sized swimming pool in Florida.[1021] College swimmers continued to flock to Fort Lauderdale for the forum into the 1960s, and by then alcohol had become a prominent part of the spring break experience.[1022] Over time, it earned the nickname "Fort Liquordale" due to the city's intimate and well-known associations with the emerging spring break culture of booze, sun, and sex.[1023]

By the 1980s, city officials and residents grew weary of the problems with property damage, public displays of intoxication, and indecent exposure that resulted from spring breakers' annual pilgrimage to the spring break mecca. The city passed hotel and beach ordinances against public consumption of alcohol.[1024] Thereafter, U.S. college students sought out alternative locations to spend their spring break vacations. The number of students visiting Fort Lauderdale for spring break declined from 370,000 in 1985 to 200,000 in 1987.[1025] Within two years of Fort Lauderdale's increased regulations passed in 1985, travel agencies were already reporting a spike in the number of students interested in traveling to Cancún for spring break. As a result, journalists and travel

---

[1021] Lauren Bohn, "A Brief History of Spring Break," *Time,* March 30, 2009, accessed February 24, 2016, http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1888317,00.html.
[1022] "Beer and the Beach," *Time,* April 1959; Bohn, "A Brief History of Spring Break."
[1023] Bohn, "A Brief History of Spring Break."
[1024] Betsy Wade, "Spring Break, and the Beach Beckons," *New York Times,* March 14, 1993, XX3; Edwin McDowell, "Cancún Tells Its Spring-Break Visitors to Behave Themselves," *New York Times,* March 11, 1996, A15.
[1025] Clay Thorp, "Students Get Set for Spring Break," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina), January 15, 1988, accessed February 25, 2016, https://www.newspapers.com/image/67876405.

agents began predicting that Cancún would soon replace Fort Lauderdale as the hottest spring break destination.[1026]

By 1993, Cancún, Mexico was already the top foreign resort location for spring breakers, followed by Negril, Jamaica.[1027] Its popularity continued to grow and greatly overshadowed other national resorts as *the* premiere spring break location. While Cancún attracted approximately 103,000 students during its spring break season in 2000, Acapulco captured only 15,000 in comparison.[1028] Meanwhile, Daytona Beach, Florida—the top spring break destination in the U.S.—attracted between 200,000 and 300,000 spring breakers per year in the 1990s.[1029] By 2001, Cancún was reported to be the most popular spring break location among both foreign and domestic locations for the first time ever.[1030] Kirk Riley, president of the national Student Adventure Travel agency in Dallas City, Illinois, stated accordingly, "It's 10-to-1 more popular than any of our other spring break destinations."[1031] Spring break season yielded extra traffic for local hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and other businesses in Cancún. Before the spring break season, Cancún maintained an average hotel occupancy rate of eighty percent. During spring break, which lasted between February 24 and April 14 each year, hotels were occupied at between ninety and ninety-five percent.[1032]

[1026] Scott A. Zamost, "Fort Lauderdale Flunks Spring Break; Cancún Moves Up," *The Des Moines Register* (Des Moines, Iowa), March 8, 1987, accessed February 25, 2016, http://www.newspapers.com/image/129433343.
[1027] Betsy Wade, "Spring Break's Shifting Sands," *New York Times*, January 28, 2001, TR4.
[1028] Wade, "Spring Break's Shifting Sands."
[1029] "Spring Break," *New York Times*, March 24, 1996, SM21; Wade, "Spring Break's Shifting Sands."
[1030] "Drink All Day, Drink All Night," *The Salina Journal* (Salina, Kansas), March 11, 2001, accessed February 15, 2016, https://www.newspapers.com/image/212474.
[1031] "Drink All Day, Drink All Night."
[1032] Ibid.

One of the most attractive features of going to Mexico for undergraduate college students was that Mexico's legal drinking age of eighteen was significantly lower than the U.S. requirement of age twenty-one. In addition, it was relatively close by—due to modern jet-powered air travel, Mexico was reachable within no more than five or six hours from any point in the U.S. or Canada in the 1980s.[1033] In addition, the cost of travel was low. In 1980, spring break packages for a five-night stay at a beachfront hotel cost between $392 and $442 per person, including airfare and sightseeing tours.[1034] In the 1990s travel agents frequently offered air-hotel packages and "deeply discounted" student and youth airfare, which accommodated college students on tight budgets.[1035] As a result, by the mid-1990s, a week in Cancún still only cost a student between $399 and $650.[1036] In comparison, a similar trip to the Bahamas started at $299.[1037]

While these prices were relatively cheap for international travel, the low cost of travel was not Cancún's only appeal. As Travel Adviser Mark Wolov pointed out, "Students could go to Europe for as cheap as the Caribbean…but most of them want a beach with a lot of girls or guys and alcohol."[1038] By the 1990s and leading up to the new millennium, Cancún had established itself as a world-renowned spring break location. Much like Havana before the revolution, it also had gained a reputation as a sexualized and Americanized paradise on foreign land, and its salacious spring break season was one of the major attractions for young travelers. As one article from the Associated Press

---

[1033] "The Many Worlds of Mexico."
[1034] "Cancún Spring Break in Mexico," *Irving Daily News* (Irving, Texas), January 16, 1980, accessed February 25, 2016, https://www.newspapers.com/image/49917008.
[1035] Betsy Wade, "Spring Break, and the Beach Beckons," *New York Times*, March 14, 1993, XX3.
[1036] Betsy Wade, "Spring Flings: Buyer, Beware," *New York Times*, February 12, 1995, XX4; Kilgannon, "Margaritas at 10 A.M."
[1037] "Spring Break," *New York Times*, March 24, 1996, SM21.
[1038] Kilgannon, "Margaritas at 10 A.M."

asserted in 2000, "…Cancún…[is] a resort that has steadily grown into a world capital of the mid-March binge of sea, sand, spirits and sex that is a rite of passage for American college students."[1039]

Spring breakers from the U.S. frequently found comfort in Cancún's Americanized atmosphere which was "simultaneously exotic and as American as apple pie."[1040] Kirk Riley, president of the national Student Adventure Travel agency in Dallas City, Illinois, explained in 2001, "It's a taste of home with a Caribbean flair. The Americanization of Cancún has turned some people off, but some parents are reassured to know that there are such things as McDonald's, True Value and Walmart here."[1041] American restaurant chains dominated the hotel zone and discount coupons issued to students along with their package travel deals heavily favored American chain restaurants, including Subway, Pizza Hut, and Kentucky Fried Chicken.[1042]

Despite Cancún's reputation as an Americanized space, for some Americans—spring breakers in particular—it was still not quite "American" enough. Mike Samperi, a college student from Rochester, New York, complained that the hotel staff didn't possess adequate command of the English language, saying, "I don't understand why they don't all speak English."[1043] Despite the overwhelming presence of American restaurant chains in the hotel zone, some spring breakers expressed disappointment with the Mexican food they tried. Virginia Tech student Zeb Bowden stated, "I like Taco Bell better," after

---

[1039] Associated Press, "Cancún, Mexico, Becomes Hottest Destination for Spring Break."
[1040] "Drink All Day, Drink All Night."
[1041] Ibid.
[1042] Adams, "Cancún Almost Perfect for Spring Break—Except It's In Mexico, Sort of."
[1043] Lisa J. Adams, "Cancún Almost Perfect for Spring Break—Except It's In Mexico, Sort of," *Associated Press*, March 13, 2001, accessed November 11, 2011, http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/lnacui2api/delivery/PringDoc.do?jobHandl

trying burritos and tacos from local vendors.[1044] Likewise, Niki Gross from Michigan State stated, "Their beans are nasty here."[1045] Fellow Michigan State student Steve Walenczak agreed, saying, "If there was just a Cancún in the United States, it would be perfect."[1046] Thus, American tourists drove forward the demand for more familiar American restaurants, hotels, amenities, and standards of service.

Meanwhile, other tourists on spring break expressed disappointment with the Americanization of Cancún and desired a higher level of Mexican "authenticity" and cultural exchange. For example, Brook Silcox, a student from East Tennessee State lamented, "You lose the culture here. I think whenever you plan to go to a foreign country, it's a big deal. This isn't."[1047] Meanwhile, West Virginia University student Amir Redakhorshad stated plainly, "If I'm going to Mexico, I'd like it to be more Mexican."[1048] The American disdain for the perceived lack of "authentic" Mexican culture extended beyond spring breakers and seeped into general public discourse about the new resort. In 2000, journalist Niko Price described the Cancún restaurant scene with detectable cynicism, stating, "Beyond the McDonald's, beyond the Houlihan's, beyond the Papa John's Pizza, the Outback Steakhouse and the Subway sandwiches, Cancún has a restaurant that serves Mexican food. It's called Planet Hollywood, and if you look hard on the menu, among the hamburgers and barbecued ribs there's a listing for 'Sizzling Fajitas.'"[1049]

[1044] Adams, "Cancún Almost Perfect for Spring Break—Except It's In Mexico, Sort of."
[1045] Ibid.
[1046] Ibid.
[1047] Ibid.
[1048] Niko Price, "Cancún Spring Break: Everything an American Could Want—Except Mexico," *Associated Press,* March 27, 2000, accessed November 11, 2011,
[1049] Price, "Cancún Spring Break: Everything an American Could Want—Except Mexico."

Some Mexican nationals agreed with the American tourists' assessments. Even as early as 1984—less than a decade after the resort's initial opening—some locals viewed Cancún as an extension of the U.S. in Mexico. Journalist Rick Sylvain interviewed José Velasco, a Mexican national who rented mopeds from a shack called Franky's. He described his encounter with Velasco thusly: "'See for yourself,' said José Velasco, pointing to the sweep of Hyatts, Westins and Sheratons stuck in the Mexican sand, 'This is America, it's not Mexico."[1050] Cancún's identity as an American city in Mexico only intensified over time as the resort continued to rely primarily on a U.S. tourism market and more American-owned businesses, restaurants, and hotel chains entered the hotel zone. When speaking about Cancún's "Americanized" identity in 2000, Miko Chavez, a Mexico City native organizing volleyball games and distributing ping pong paddles at the Melia Cancún Hotel, stated, "I see this as the fifty-first state."[1051]

Media Matters: MTV and Spring Break in Cancún

Cancún's perceived reputation as an "unsophisticated" and especially "wild" spring break location may relate to its increased presence in spring break "reality" programs which were televised on cable networks beginning in the mid-1990s, such as MTV's *Spring Break* and *Spring Break Revisited*.[1052] By the new millennium, MTV's March television schedule was filled with spring break-themed programming, including shows like *MTV Spring Break Temptations, Cancún, Cancún Court,* and *I'm a Spring*

[1050] Rick Sylvain, "Cancún: Playground Facing the Caribbean Looks More Like Miami Than Mexico," *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix, Arizona), January 29, 1984, accessed February 25, 2016, https://www.newspapers.com/image/122327477.
[1051] Price, "Cancún Spring Break: Everything an American Could Want—Except Mexico."
[1052] "Friday Evening," *New York Times,* March 28, 1999, TV46; Wade, "Spring Break's Shifting Sands."

Break Lawyer.[1053] E! Entertainment also hosted television specials which often featured Cancún as the primary spring break location.[1054] The influence of increased television coverage of spring break in Cancún, Panama City, Florida, South Padre Island, Texas, and other locations was undeniable. For example, Panama City, experienced its first major boom in 1994-1995 during spring break season and began to challenge Daytona Beach as the nation's leading spring break location after being featured on MTV.[1055]

While promoters of resort locations were excited by the additional publicity on television, they also viewed it as a liability for other tourism markets. As executive director of South Padre Island, Texas' visitors bureau Don Quandt stated, "Our market is diverse…If you get to be a big spring break destination, it's not hard to have people assume you have nothing but students year-round."[1056] At the same time, however, Quandt explained that the spring break market had important potential for tourism both in the present and in the future. In this same vein, he stated that the students who had a good time in South Padre Island on spring break would be "tomorrow's honeymooners."[1057] The spring break market had emerged as a new important sector of tourism, especially for the best-known locations like Panama City, Daytona Beach, South Padre Island, and the most popular international spring break destination, Cancún. MTV had an undeniable influence on the increased popularity of these locations by the close of the twentieth century. In addition, the rise of spring break culture in the 1990s and its

---

[1053] "Saturday," *New York Times*, March 18, 2001, TE55; "Highlights," *New York Times*, March 24, 2001, B18; "Tuesday," *New York Times*, December 30, 2001, TE22.
[1054] Associated Press, "Cancún Sees Fewer Spring Break Parties."
[1055] Wade, "Spring Break's Shifting Sands."
[1056] Ibid.
[1057] Ibid.

proliferation through television made an impact on Cancún's mounting identity as a sexualized and "Americanized" vacation spot.

Globalization, Neoliberalism, and Tourism

Investment in tourism—especially through private investment—represented a key part of Mexico's overall strategy in its attempts to overcome its economic struggles in the 1970s and 1980s. By 1988, the Mexican government's debt payments represented seventy percent of public spending.[1058] Thus, the state could no longer afford to invest in the development of its own tourism resorts, and under President Salinas de Gortari, the state turned to private investment.[1059] With their national economy consistently plagued by inflation and economic uncertainty, some Mexican nationals migrated to the U.S. in search of stability and better employment opportunities. For example, *Excelsior* reported in 1988 that 2,000 teachers from Puebla migrated to the U.S. in search of better incomes.[1060]

Under President Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) and later Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), the state turned to international banking institutions, privatization, and the opening of Mexico's market to more foreign investment to bail Mexico out of debt. Some nationals spoke in favor of this approach. For example, General Secretary of SNTH (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores del Hogar,* National Union for Home Workers) stated in 1988, "Foreign products have not overrun Mexico's market. If anything has been lacking, it has been quality. Opening Mexico's doors to foreign trade will be good because it will oblige national citizens to enter a competitive market and

---

[1058] Brook Larmer, "New Leader Pins Hopes on Tourism," *The Christian Science Monitor,* January 18, 1989, 6.
[1059] Larmer, "New Leader Pins Hopes on Tourism."
[1060] *Excelsior,* January 26, 1988, 1, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

therefore better their products."[1061] However, others were skeptical about the wisdom of such strategies. For example, Latin American Center for Monetary Studies General Director Jorge González stated that Latin American leaders, in the interest of "national defense," should avoid the "recolonization" that occurs while trading the debt for national productivity.[1062] Speaking directly to the tourism industry's opening up to private investment, Mexican national Adolfo Aguilar stated, "It creates a feeling that there is a class colonizing the country. With the amount of money they hope to invest, they'll inevitably step all over people."[1063]

Especially under President Salinas de Gortari, privatization intensified. Within a month of his inauguration, in January of 1989, Salinas de Gortari announced his plans to encourage private investors to pump as much as US $10 billion into Mexican tourist resorts throughout the course of his *sexenio.*[1064] It aimed to attract investment not only in the hotels and tourism centers, but in the resorts' public works projects like roads, drainage, and water systems. This move would spark the "largest tourism investment in the world—ever."[1065] According to Ezequiel Padilla, the chief of promotion and development for Mexico's Tourism Ministry, stated at the time, "No other foreign exchange earner—not even oil—has the dynamism or potential of tourism. We can grow very fast without spending too much money."[1066] Even during the darkest of economic times for Mexico, the tourism sector had demonstrated impressive growth. Its share of the gross national product increased from three percent in 1982 to seven percent in

---

[1061] *Excelsior*, January 27, 1988, A35, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[1062] *Excelsior*, January 21, 1987, A1, BLAC: University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
[1063] Larmer, "New Leader Pins Hopes on Tourism."
[1064] Ibid.
[1065] Ibid.
[1066] Ibid.

1987.[1067] In addition, British developer Kenneth Prysor Jones estimated that tourism in Mexico created 40,000 new jobs in 1987 and supported approximately eleven percent of the overall national population.[1068]

Some capitalists argued that a neoliberal approach to tourism—the embrace of privatization and the loosening of regulations—would further improve Mexico's tourism industry. They argued that despite the impressive speed and enormity of its progress in the previous fifty years, Mexican tourism still had not lived up to its full potential. For example, Mexico attracted fewer than 6 million tourists in 1988, compared to the 44 million who visited Spain in the same year.[1069] They blamed heavy restrictions on foreign investment for the lack of adequate growth. Critics often cited the restriction on foreign ownership of coastal land as well as the forty-nine-percent limit on foreign investment which had been in place since the 1970s under President Echeverría. For example, according to Don Koll, a California real estate developer with a few investments in Mexico, "You've got all these Mickey Mouse rules. That's why Mexico has only 5 or 6 million tourists instead of 30 or 40 million. If they streamlined their rules like the rest of the world, they would have an explosion of tourist developments."[1070] Mexican venture capitalist Antonio Gutiérrez Corgina agreed, stating, "We've always wanted to invest in Mexico but had encountered restrictive laws and governmental attitudes."[1071] However, others cited investors' lack of confidence in Mexico's stability as the main problem. Padilla stated, "The laws don't have to be changed, just mental

---

[1067] Ibid.
[1068] Ibid.
[1069] Ibid.
[1070] Ibid.
[1071] Ibid.

attitudes. Investors are now convinced that Salinas is serious that Mexico will open up to foreign investment. He inspires a lot of confidence."[1072]

Some Mexican nationals had high praise for Salinas de Gortari and his efforts to improve Mexico's financial status and improve its image abroad. Alejandro Bustamante, president of the National Maquiladora Council, stated in 1990, "Salinas has fought corruption, been instrumental in the war against drugs, opened the markets, deregulated commerce and transportation and privatized a lot of government companies. He has created a new image of Mexico for other countries…and has pushed a new way of thinking into the Mexicans. In the short run, it's going to help for the rebound of the country."[1073] Many felt that Salinas de Gortari brought more stability to Mexico—or at least the appearance of it—than the country had experienced in decades, which helped to attract business investors. For instance, under Salinas de Gortari's leadership, Mexico maintained an image of order despite the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas and subsequent bombings in Mexico City and Acapulco in 1994. In that regard, Fred Blazer, a Toronto-based business adviser with the consulting firm Ernst and Young, stated, "In business, perception is often reality. Even though the uprising has been violent, there is no reason to expect it to be widespread or long-lasting."[1074] In the travel industry, an industry especially susceptible to public perception of a country's reputation for safety and stability, this was particularly important. Salinas de Gortari was able to maintain the appearance of order in the midst of popular uprisings, and foreign tourists continued to

---

[1072] Ibid.
[1073] Anne Middleton, "In Overcoming Political and Money Woes, Mexico Projects 'New Image,'" *San Diego Business Journal*, January 1, 1990, accessed March 4, 2016, http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/printviewfile?accountid=7107.
[1074] John DeMont, "Business as Usual," *Maclean's,* January 24, 1994, accessed March 4, 2016, http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/printviewfile?accountid=7107.

travel to Mexico for their vacations in impressive numbers. "No one seems to be panicking," explained Boyce Mac Dougald, senior vice president of Toronto-based P. Lawson Travel. Martha Reynolds, director of marketing for Maritime Marlin Travel agreed, saying, "I know of very few cancellations. If anything the bad weather has encouraged more travelers to think about Mexico."[1075]

It appeared that Salinas de Gortari's tactics worked to attract more foreign investment. In 1993 alone, foreign investors flooded Mexico with more than $10 billion in investments according to the Commerce Ministry undersecretary. About half of that went into the Mexican stock exchange.[1076] In 1993, as NAFTA was gaining the support it needed to pass the Mexican Congress, Salinas de Gortari's administration also proposed an additional foreign investment bill designed to further open the market, particularly in the tourism and airline sectors. Under the proposed changes, foreigners would be allowed to directly invest in industrial, commercial, hotel and timeshare developments as property owners, even along the coastline and borders.[1077] The prior restrictions on foreign landholding were a common point of contention between the Mexican government and small landholders, particularly those from the U.S. According to a senior government official, "Many U.S. banks will not grant financing if you are not the title-holder of the land."[1078]

In addition, the bill proposed to open Mexico's air transportation sector up to twenty-five percent direct foreign investment for the first time ever. Also, secondary petrochemicals would be open to one hundred percent foreign investment (as opposed to

---

[1075] DeMont, "Business as Usual."
[1076] Dianne Solis, "Mexico's Salinas to Extend Reforms after NAFTA Victory," *Wall Street Journal,* November 26, 1993, A6.
[1077] Solis, "Mexico's Salinas to Extend Reforms after NAFTA Victory."
[1078] Ibid.

the prior cap of forty percent foreign investment). Finally, mining would open up to one hundred percent direct foreign investment, whereas in the past laws allowed one hundred percent foreign investment but foreigners were required to invest through bank trusts for restricted periods of time.[1079] It would effectively repeal Mexico's 1973 Law to Promote Mexican Investment and Regulate Foreign Investment.[1080] Also, in 1993, the Inter-American Development Bank granted FONATUR a US $150 million loan for tourism development projects in Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Guerrero, and Baja California. However, the IDB specified that in exchange for the loan, FONATUR had to open up its development project to competitive international bidding when the value of goods to be procured US $250,000 or the value of construction exceeded US $5 million.[1081]

Before the peso devaluation in December 1994, tourism was the country's third largest industry, generating about $6.5 billion in 1994 and employing 2.8 million people. After the devaluation, the dollar's value doubled in Mexico. 1.3 million people visited Mexico between January and February of 1995, which was an increase of 100,000 during the same period of the previous year. Approximately eighty-two percent of those tourists came from the U.S.[1082] Meanwhile, with their currency devalued, Mexican nationals stayed at home. Their trips abroad represented a total spending of US $124.5 million during the first two months of 1995—a decline from US $263.3 million from the same two months the previous year. Domestic tourism spending among Mexican nationals

---

[1079] Ibid.
[1080] Ibid.
[1081] Tamar Diana Wilson, "Economic and Social Impacts of Tourism in Mexico," *Latin American Perspectives* 35, 37 (2008): accessed November 11, 2011, http://lap.sagepub.com/content/35/3/37, 39.
[1082] Shasta Darlington, "SECTUR Sets Sites on Survival," *Business Mexico*, June 1995, accessed March 4, 2016, http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/printviewfile?accountid=7107.

remained relatively steady at $778.7 million in 1995 compared to US $725.2 million in 1994.[1083]

Amid the peso devaluation, Marriott pledged to double the number of Marriotts in Mexico from five to ten between 1996 and 2001. Even after the peso devaluation, tourism remained one of Mexico's strongest industries; it still ranked third in foreign-exchange revenues after oil and manufacturing.[1084] Mexico added approximately 3,200 hotels in 1995.[1085] A Mexican-based hotel management group, Grupo Posadas, constructed thirty percent of the new rooms and attracted an investment of US $200 million from the Morgan Stanley Real Estate Fund.[1086] Some estimates suggest that in 1992, due to its associations with the two most prominent U.S.-based hotel chains in Mexico—Holiday Inn and Fiesta Americana—Grupo Posadas was associated with between twenty-five and fifty percent of all of all of the four- and five-star hotels in Mexico.[1087] In the 1990s, it opened hotels in Venezuela, Texas, and California, therefore becoming the largest hospitality firm not only in Mexico, but in the entire Latin American region.[1088]

Mexico's tourism industry was doing well compared to other industries. Even so, amid peso devaluations, government budget cuts, and the increasing trend toward privatization in the 1990s, the Ministry of Tourism was under threat of abolishment. In March of 1994, Mexico's Congressional Finance Commission recommended eliminating

---

[1083] Darlington, "SECTUR Sets Sites on Survival."
[1084] Amanda A. Austin, "Mexico's Tourism Boom Ends Peso-Crash Gloom," *Hotel & Motel Management,* July 3, 1996, 10.
[1085] Austin, "Mexico's Tourism Boom Ends Peso-Crash Gloom."
[1086] Ibid.
[1087] Clancy, "Mexican Tourism," 142; Patricia Alisau, "Grupo Posadas Corners the Hotel Market," *Business Mexico* 2, no. 6 (June 1992): 12-14.
[1088] Clancy, "Mexican Tourism," 142; "Special Report: Partnerships the Passion: Latin America," *Hotels* 30, no. 9 (July 1996): 44-54.

SECTUR as a part of an overall ten-percent budget cut.[1089] SECTUR's supporters argued that the savings would not be enough to justify entirely eradicating the institute; SECTUR's administrative costs represented only .24 percent of the entire federal budget for 1994. President Ernesto Zedillo offered his support to SECTUR and the Minister of Tourism Silvia Hernández.[1090] Still, others expressed serious doubts about its ability to survive: while in 1994, SECTUR launched a series of television spots and print advertisements in the U.S., in 1995, SECTUR was only able to afford to disseminate two print advertisements.[1091] Ultimately, Zedillo managed to salvage SECTUR in the midst of the budget cuts. In 1995 he signed the Alliance for Tourism with the private sector, and vowed to convert tourism into a source of national income more important than oil.[1092]

In fulfillment of Zedillo's promise, tourism income ultimately exceeded income from oil in 1998. It contributed $8 billion of foreign exchange compared to $7.6 billion in crude oil sales.[1093] Tourism took its place as the second-largest foreign exchange earner for Mexico, behind manufacturing.[1094] Between 1994 and 2000, foreign arrivals remained steady at around 20 million visitors per year to Mexico.[1095] Growth was only slight for international tourism to Mexico at an average of 1.9 percent per year throughout the entire 1990s, which was well below the average global rate of growth for

---

[1089] Darlington, "SECTUR Sets Sites on Survival."
[1090] Ibid.
[1091] Ibid.
[1092] Diego Cevallos, "Economy-Mexico: Tourism Income Exceeds Oil for First Time," *IPS-Inter Press Service*, September 17, 1998, accessed March 4, 2016, http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/lnacui2api/delivery/PrintWorking.do?delFmt=QDS_EF_HTML&zipDelivery=false&estPage=2&docRange=Current+Document+%281%29&hideSource=false&fromCa..
[1093] Cevallos, "Economy-Mexico: Tourism Income Exceeds Oil for First Time."
[1094] Ibid.
[1095] The World Bank, "International Tourism, Number of Arrivals, Mexico," The World Bank, accessed March 16, 2016, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL?page=3.

international tourism.[1096] International tourism remained stable even amid travel warnings issued by the Mexican government and several foreign embassies, including in the U.S. as well as countries in Europe and Asia, to their fellow nationals, of the possible dangers of visiting Mexico. After the escalation of Zapatista resistance to the state in 1994, Mexico came to be "considered one of the most dangerous locations on the American continent, on par with Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela."[1097] Mexico's ability to continue to attract foreign travelers despite international travel warnings during this period demonstrates the strength of the tourism industry in Mexico. Its attractions apparently outweighed the possible dangers for foreign tourists and tourism remained incredibly important for Mexico as a result.

Even though the overall average growth for international tourism in Mexico did not keep up with global trends during the 1990s, expenditures by foreign tourists in Mexico grew at an average rate of five percent per year throughout the decade. This was close to the global average of six percent per year according to the World Tourism Organization's estimates. By 2000, tourism earnings represented seventy-eight percent of all revenue from foreign visitors.[1098] By the close of the twentieth century, one in every ten Mexicans' employment was somehow linked to the tourism industry.[1099] In addition, Mexico ranked as the thirteenth most popular country to visit in the world according to

---

[1096] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "National Tourism Policy Review of Mexico," October 2001, accessed March 16, 2016, http://www.oecd.org/mexico/33650486.pdf, 1.
[1097] Cevallos, "Economy-Mexico: Tourism Income Exceeds Oil for First Time."
[1098] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "National Tourism Policy Review of Mexico," 1-2.
[1099] Cevallos, "Economy-Mexico: Tourism Income Exceeds Oil for First Time."

the International Tourism Alliance.[1100] Argentina represented Mexico's closest competitor in Latin America, which was in twenty-seventh place worldwide.[1101] In the 1990s, Cancún's tourism industry mimicked larger national trends. Overall, the industry was buttressed by the increasing embrace of neoliberalism and a larger concentration of capital investment among large corporate conglomerates. In Cancún, all-inclusive resorts became more common and with that, came a more intense absorption of capital power by multi-national corporations. While pre-planned travel packages were certainly advantageous for foreign tourists and agents in the hospitality industry, there was a drawback to their increase in popularity for small, local business owners in various travel resort locations. In Cancún, local inhabitants frequently cite the rise of all-inclusive hotels in the "hotel zone" as the cause of the decline of its downtown area since the 1990s.[1102] Prior to the increase in all-inclusive hotels, tourists tended to venture out and explore with higher frequency, which caused an influx of capital into local businesses. By the 1990s, however, as all-inclusive resorts became more common and more popular in the hotel zone, small, locally-owned businesses in Cancún's urban zone began to decline.

The business model of all-inclusive resorts is designed to funnel a higher percentage of tourist dollars into the hotels themselves as well as their other large corporate business partnerships within the hospitality industry—many of which were foreign-owned corporations. This led to a higher frequency of inequality in the general distribution of wealth and a decline in locally owned small businesses. The increased

---

[1100] Ibid.
[1101] Ibid.
[1102] Alfredo Flores.

popularity of all-inclusive hotel resorts of particularly favored the well-being and economic prosperity of foreign-owned corporations over locally owned small businesses. As a result, this re-created former patterns of western imperialism. This supports one common criticism of the structure of the international tourism industry in the Global South, which contends that since transnational corporations tend to gain primary ownership control of the hotels, restaurants, car rental businesses, and other tourism-related businesses, they also reap the majority of the profits and rewards.[1103] Others argue through industrial organizational theory that structural organization of international industries is often reproduced on a micro level.[1104] As Michael Clancy explains, "technology, capital requirements, and marketing or managerial expertise may each produce competitive advantages or entry barriers that reproduce global patterns of ownership and control locally."[1105] In this way, Cancún represents a microcosm of larger global patterns of capitalism in the era of globalization.

Conclusion

Cancún developed as cultural borderland as it rose to international prominence as a premiere tourism destination in an era of intensifying patterns of globalization. With its original design grounded in the attraction of foreign tourists, its emergence as a resort with a profoundly transnational identity was not entirely surprising. Tourism planners embraced a business model and marketing strategies which would capture the most

---

[1103] Britton, *Tourism, Dependency, and Development;* John Lea, *Tourism and Development in the Third World,* London: Routledge, 1988.
[1104] Richard E. Caves, "Industrial Organization," in *Economic Analysis and the Multinational Enterprise,* edited by John H. Dunning, 115-46, New York: Praeger, 1974; Richard S. Newfarmer, "International Industrial Organization and Development: A Survey," in *Profits, Progress, and Poverty: Case Studies of International Industries in Latin America,* edited by Richard S. Newfarmer, 13-61, Notre Dame, Ind.:University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.
[1105] Clancy, "Mexican Tourism," 138.

foreign tourists. Thus, they established relationships with recognizable foreign—and mostly American—hotel chains as well as restaurants and stores. They also shaped Cancún's identity as profoundly "Americanized" by capitalizing on American preferences for familiarity by using dollars, teaching English to hotel staff, teaching hospitality workers to understand "the psychology of the gringo," and connecting with American consumer culture in advertisements. Cancún's own rising identity as a young "frontier" city, still loosely defined and profoundly influenced by local patterns of detachment, also gave rise to the profound influence of American capital and culture there.

Other rising demographical changes among American tourists, such as the increasing presence of spring breakers and middle class tourists, also defined Cancún's emerging transnational identity. Local businesses' promotions of "all-you-can-drink" booze cruises and "Naughty Girl" dance contests demonstrate the city's embrace of spring break culture. Meanwhile, advertisements' marketing of Mexico as an affordable vacation destination, demonstrates the rise of middle class international tourism.

The state's control of Mexico's national image abroad was also central to the nation's attraction of to foreign tourists. The state's handling of drug trafficking, natural disasters and episodes of violence and kidnapping offer a valuable lens through which to view Mexico's national tourism development and international relations, particularly with the U.S. Mexico's control of its national image abroad was especially important in an industry which is susceptible to international perceptions of safety. The state's advertisements of Mexico as a sunny, warm, and friendly place also bolstered its mission to ease international sensitivities to national crises and promote a positive image abroad.

Finally, in the age of globalization and neoliberalism, especially under the leadership of president Salinas de Gortari, Mexican tourism opened itself up to privatization and strengthened the concentration of capital investment among large corporate conglomerates. Despite affiliations with both Mexican and multi-national corporations, the hospitality industry remained defined primarily by the brands recognized by international tourists, Mexican nationals, and local inhabitants as "American." This also profoundly influenced Cancún's identity as a predominantly "Americanized" tourism destination.

Conclusion

Selling Mexico shows how Cancún, formerly a small Maya fishing community, became Mexico's top international tourism destination attracting millions of tourists each year within a span of only thirty years. Its rapid development played a significant role in the regional domination of Mexico's tourism industry. Mexico had emerged as an early frontrunner for tourism arrivals in Latin America in the mid-twentieth century and many regional countries followed its example, beginning their own state-led tourism projects in the decades that followed. In the new millennium, Mexico was still leading the region in international tourism arrivals. It generated thirty-two percent of all entries into the region. Meanwhile, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, and Argentina combined attracted only twenty-five percent of all tourist entrances to the region.[1106] Thus, by the close of the twentieth century, Mexico had galvanized its status as a pioneer of tourism in Latin America and a leading nation of tourism development in the entire Global South. Mexico's success is largely owed to Cancún, the country's leading state-planned tourist resort. *Selling Mexico* illuminates the important part that Cancún played in bolstering the rapid and expansive development of Mexico's international tourism industry in the twentieth century. It also explores Cancún's starring role in the evolution of Mexico's sun-and-sand tourism from an industry built on exclusive resorts for the rich and famous at mid-century to a business based on all-inclusive middle-class resorts by the end of the century. This differs from other studies of tourism which predominantly focus on

---

[1106] Carmen Altés, "Turismo y desarrollo en México: Nota Sectorial," Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, Octubre 2008, accessed March 7, 2016, ictur.sectur.gob.mx/pdf/estudioseinvestacion/calidadycompetititvidad/publicacionesexternas/2006_BID_TurismoyDesarrolloenMexico.pdf; Carmen Altés, "El turismo en América Latinoa y el Caribe: la experiencia del BID," Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, Julio 2006, accessed March 21, 2016, http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=1442249.

tourism development in Mexico City, Acapulco, and the U.S.-Mexico border region.[1107] Some important works have been written related to the historical development of Cancún, but most are written by scholars outside of the historical discipline and they are often limited to journal articles.[1108] Thus, a major historical study of the country's most important tourism center fills a significant gap in the historical literature.

Most studies of tourism in Mexico do not extend beyond the 1960s. *Selling Mexico* fills this gap by focusing on a later era. This study illuminates Mexico's state-led tourism projects and demonstrates how it emerged as a regional leader as a result. The period between 1970 and 2000 was an especially important era for Mexico's international tourism industry. By the 1970s, the state assumed a more active role in tourism planning and centralized its efforts to create new tourism "poles" of development in order to

---

[1107] Some of the major works to consult related to tourism in Mexico include, but are not limited to: Dina Berger, *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry: Pyramids by Day, Martinis by Night,* Palgrave MacMillan, 2006*;* Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood, Eds., *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourism Encounters,* Duke University Press, 2010*;* Nicholas Bloom, ed. *Adventures into Mexico: American Tourism beyond the Border,* Landham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006*;* Andrea Boardman, *Destination Mexico: A Foreign Land A Step Away, U.S. Tourism to Mexico, 1880s-1950s,* DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, 2001; Dennis Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America,* University of North Carolina Press, 2009*;* Héctor Manuel Romero, "Miguel Alemán Valdés (1905-1983): Arquitecto del turismo en México," México, D.F.: Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística, 1993; Jason Ruiz, *Americans in the Treasure House: Travel to Porfirian Mexico and the Cultural Politics of Empire,* University of Texas Press, 2014; Paul J. Vanderwood, *Satan's Playground: Mobsters and Movie Stars at America's Greatest Gaming Resort,* Duke University Press Books, 2009.

[1108] Some of the most useful studies focusing on Cancún include M. Bianet Castellanos, *A Return to Servitude: Maya Migration and the Tourist Trade in Cancún,* University of Minnesota Press, 2010; Michael Clancy, *Exporting Paradise: Tourism Development in Mexico,* Emerald Group Publishing, 2002; Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolas, "Cancun Bliss," in *The Tourist City,* edited by Dennis Judd and Susan Fainstein, 124-139, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999; Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolás, "Mitos y Realidades del Milagro Turístico," in *Teoría y Praxis del Espacio Turístico,* edited by Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolás, 109-120, Mexico City: UAM-Xochimilco, 1989; Fernando Martí, *Cancún, fantasía de banqueros: La construcción de una ciudad turística a partir de cero,* Mexico City: UNO, 1985*;* Fernando Martí, *Cancún, Paradise Invented: Notes on Landscape and Architecture,* Impresora Formal S.A. de CV, 1998*;* Jeffrey S. Smith, "Three Generations of International Tourist Resorts in Mexico," *Geographische Rundschau International Edition* 5(1): (2009) 4-10; Rebecca Torres, "Cancun's Tourism Development from a Fordist Spectrum of Analysis," *Tourist Studies* 2, No. 87 (2002): 87-116, accessed November 11, 2011, http://tou.sagepub.com/content/2/1/87; Rebecca Torres and Janet Henshall Momsen, "Gringolandia: Cancún and the American Tourist," in Nicholas Dagen Bloom, ed. *Adventures Into Mexico: American Tourism Beyond the Border,* 58-76, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006.

generate capital in some of Mexico's poorest states. Thus, *Selling Mexico* examines Mexico's 1970s tourism promotions as a means of bringing economic stability to under-developed regions. It also shows how the period of intense state-led tourism in the 1970s and beyond differs from earlier periods of Mexico's own state involvement in tourism planning, which were less centralized and less intensive. Later, the state privatized much of its direct ownership in tourism during the 1980s and 1990s. However, it continued to play an active role in gathering information on tourism growth and activity, planning new projects, and advertising tourism to Mexico until the close of the century (and still does). Therefore, *Selling Mexico* offers new insight into state-led tourism development in Mexico and the changes it underwent between 1970 and 2000.

Selling Mexico also studies the state's attempts to promote national unity by increasing tourism among Mexican nationals. It is influenced by Marguerite Shaffer's important work, as she similarly examines the use of nationalism to promote tourism in the U.S. as the American middle class expanded there in the early twentieth century.[1109] However, its approach differs from Schaffer's, since it also demonstrates the use of Pan Americanism and internationalism to foster international tourism. Thus, *Selling Mexico* examines the state's adoption of a two-pronged approach to increase Mexico's attraction of both foreign and domestic tourists. This allows for a multidimensional interpretation of the state's motivations for promoting tourism. The state promoted the idea of "imagined communities" of tourists who shared common identities as fellow Mexicans, Pan Americans, and global citizens in order to foster growth in the hospitality sector. Thus, in this way, this study illuminates the way the Mexican state simultaneously

---

[1109] Marguerite Schaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940,* Smithsonian Books, 2001.

exemplified and transcended Benedict Anderson's concept of nationalism through tourism promotions.[1110] *Selling Mexico* also examines the powerful role of ideologies, propaganda, and international relations in tourism promotions. Finally, the close examination of nationalism through the lens of tourism offers an important new interpretation of post-revolutionary nationalism in Mexico. This makes a fresh contribution to the already rich Mexican historiography covering the relationship between post-revolutionary nationalism and culture.[1111] It not only covers new ground by examining the ties between nationalism and tourism, but it also studies a later period than most of these works. Therefore, it pushes historical understanding of the state's use of culture to promote post-revolutionary nationalism in Mexico into the 1970s and beyond.

This study also explores the important intersections of race and gender in international tourism. This sets it apart from other historical studies of tourism, which do not often address these issues. In particular, it illuminates the crucial role of Mexican women—both Maya and *mestiza*—in the resorts' development, working as chamber maids, laundresses, waitresses, beauty pageant queens, sex workers, and sometimes as top tourism executives. This study demonstrates that tourism industry in Cancún, and more broadly, Mexico as a whole, has been buttressed by a hierarchical labor structure defined on gendered and racialized lines. Around the globe, hospitality has relied heavily on a steady pool of low-cost feminine labor. Women dominate the lowest-paid positions

---

[1110] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* London: Verso, 1983.

[1111] Joy Elizabeth Hayes, *Radio Nation: Communication, Popular Culture, and Nationalism in Popular Culture, 1920-1950,* University of Arizona Press, 2000; Julio Moreno, *Yankee Don't Go Home!: Mexican Nationalism, American Business Culture, and the Shaping of Modern Mexico, 1920-1950,* University of North Carolina Press, 2003; Jeffrey Pilcher, *Que vivan los tamales!: Food and the Making of Mexican Identity,* University of New Mexico Press, 1998; Mary Kay Vaughn and Stephen Lewis, eds., *The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and Cultural Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940,* Duke University Press Books, 2006; Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: the Rise of the Mexican Counterculture,* University of California Press, 1999.

while men usually occupy the higher-paid positions with more potential for upward mobility. Cancún's labor force fits these global trends. Thus, this study supports the findings by Cynthia Enloe and M. Bianet Castellanos, both of whom describe the racialized and gendered labor structure in global tourism.[1112] In addition, in Cancún, Mexicans of Maya descent, originating from neighboring regions, make up the majority of the lowest-paid workers. In particular, Maya women occupy the lowest-paid positions with the fewest benefits, thereby highlighting the intersections of gender and race in the hospitality labor hierarchy and demonstrating bell hooks' concept of an imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy.[1113] Similarly, sex tourism, mostly made up of female sex workers, is also common in Cancún and elsewhere in international tourism resorts, and indigenous sex workers often possess the lowest capital value in the sex tourism market.

Through an examination of the city planning strategies and land expropriation for the purposes of tourism, *Selling Mexico* offers new ways of looking at state-led economic development projects through the lenses of race and class. Other scholars have looked at racialized city planning and beach privatization in Cancún, but not through a historical lens.[1114] Also, unlike other works, *Selling Mexico* contextualizes tourism as an attempt to control leftist uprisings in the Mexican countryside in the 1960s and 1970s. Other scholars have briefly mentioned this connection, but none have discussed it at length.[1115]

[1112] Castellanos, *A Return to Servitude;* Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, University of California Press, 1989.
[1113] bell hooks, "Understanding Patriarchy," in *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love,* bell hooks, 1-5, Atri Books: 2004.
[1114] Henry Geddes Gonzales, "Tourism, Mass Media, and the Making of Visual Culture in the Greater Yucatán Peninsula," *Journal of Film and Video* 60, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 50-58; Smith, "Three Generations"; Torres, "Cancún's Tourism Development"; Torres and Momsen, "Gringolandia."
[1115] Clancy, "Tourism and Development"; Smith, "Three Generations."

It also sheds light on how land disputes raging throughout the country beginning in the 1970s related directly to government efforts to expropriate those lands for tourism use. While this approach is similar to Mark David Spence's investigations of indigenous removal during the creation of the U.S. National Parks, *Selling Mexico* covers the subject in Mexico rather than the U.S., and during a much later time period.[1116] Also similar to Spence's work, this study examines the use of indigenous identity to define and market the tourism resorts. However, unlike Spence, this study theorizes the marketing of "authenticity" in tourism by using Stuart Hall's theory of culture and "authenticity" as fluid concepts.[1117] Cancún's reputation for socioeconomic inequality and environmental damage has led some scholars to ponder the "morality" of tourism.[1118] *Selling Mexico* speaks to this body of literature by examining racialized socioeconomic apartheid in the city and indigenous removal for the purposes of tourism. A more in-depth study of tourism in relation to environmental concerns and the state's responses to those discussions is a significant gap in the literature which should be explored.

This study breaks new ground by interpreting Cancún as a cultural borderland. It closely examines the historical impact of the continuous cyclical meeting of people and culture in an international tourism resort on Cancún's emerging identity. It also uncovers Cancún's historical transformation into a sexualized American paradise through its attraction of spring breakers. No other work has closely examined the role of spring break culture in the historical development of the city's identity, although it is similar to

---

[1116] Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of National Parks,* Oxford University Press, 2000.
[1117] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation," *Framework* 36 (1989): 68-81.
[1118] Castellanos, *A Return to Servitude;* Mary Mostafanezhad and Kevin Hannam, eds., *Moral Encounters in Tourism (Current Developments in the Geographies of Leisure and Tourism,* Burlington, VT, Ashgate Publishing Company: 2014.

the body of work which explores vice tourism in Havana, Cuba, cities in the U.S.-Mexico border, and other places.[1119] In addition, like Matilde Córdoba Azcárate's work, *Selling Mexico* recognizes Cancún's development into a "come and go city" (*ciudad de paso).*[1120] However, it takes Córdoba Azcárate's interpretation further by linking the city's character as a *ciudad de paso* and a new "frontier city" to its overwhelming identity as an Americanized city defined first by capital interests determined by tourists and hoteliers and second by local, often detached and transient, inhabitants. It accentuates how Cancún was notably different from tourism projects of the past—its rapid rate of expansion was remarkable and it differed from tourism resorts of the past since it was originally designed to be an international tourism resort. This interpretation sets *Selling Mexico* apart from other works, as it offers an important comparative analysis with earlier tourism projects in order to demonstrate historical change. Most other historical studies of tourism in Mexico focus on other tourism cities during earlier periods of time, and therefore, are unable to address the changes which occurred in the late twentieth century.

This study also explores the profound influence of American capital interests and cultural patterns on the resort. Rebecca Torres and Janet Momsen have addressed this issue, but they simplified the complex makeup of hotel ownership in Cancún and other places in Mexico. In order to make their case that most hotels in Cancún were Mexican-owned by the 1990s, they downplayed the franchise relationships that Mexican hoteliers often held with international hotel firms.[1121] This overlooks the findings by

---

[1119] Rosalie Schwartz, *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba,* University of Nebraska Press, 1997*;* Vanderwood, *Satan's Playground.*
[1120] Matilde Córdoba Azcárate, "Tourism Development, Architectures of Escape and the Passive Beloved in Contemporary Yucatán," in *Moral Encounters in Tourism (Current Developments in the Geographies of Leisure and Tourism),* edited by Mary Mostafanezhad and Kevin Hannam, (Ashgate: 2014), 63.
[1121] Torres and Momsen, "Gringolandia."

Michael Clancy, who explains that the relationships between international hotel firms (often U.S.-based) and Mexican business conglomerates intensified by the 1990s but also changed frequently during that period of time.[1122] This makes it difficult to pinpoint the exact makeup of hotel ownership, capital interests, and franchising relationships, thereby complicating Torres and Momsen's argument. *Selling Mexico* combines these interpretations, therefore offering a more nuanced interpretation of the relationships between Mexican ownership and international hotel chains in Cancún.

Scholars have commonly used tourism as a lens through which to view larger political, social, and cultural changes throughout history. Unlike other works, *Selling Mexico* highlights the importance of Cancún in the rise of Mexico's tourism industry, the growth of middle-class American tourism abroad, and the increased presence of American hospitality business in Mexico. In addition, it underlines the role of race and gender in tourism, which studies rarely address. Similarly to Dennis Merrill and Dean MacCannell, this study analyzes social and cultural change in the context of tourism.[1123] Like Dina Berger's work, it looks at the Mexican government's influence on the evolution of tourism, but it covers a later period.[1124] Like Mark David Spence's study, it examines the use of indigenous people in the creation of a profitable vacation spot, but with an emphasis on both the removal and incorporation of indigenous identity into the tourism space.[1125] It also incorporates Benedict Anderson's seminal work, which

---

[1122] Michael Clancy, "Mexican Tourism: Export Growth and Structural Change since 1970," *Latin American Research Review* 36: No. 1, (2001): 128-150.
[1123] Dean MacCannell, *Empty Meeting Grounds: The Tourist Papers*, Routledge, 1992; Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise.*
[1124] Berger, *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry.*
[1125] Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness.*

analyzes nationalism through identity theory.[1126] In addition, it utilizes feminist theories such as bell hooks' concept of the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy and Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality theory in order to illuminate the intersections between gender, race, and capitalism in the international tourism industry.[1127] This study provides a useful framework for analyses of race, gender, and intercultural exchange in the creation of a tourist destination, thereby making a valuable addition to the historical field.

[1126] Arnold, *Imagined Communities.*
[1127] Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins"; hooks, "Understanding Patriarchy."

References

Primary Sources

List of Archival Abbreviations

AGN	Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City
BLAC	Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin
DLSC	DeGolyer Library Special Collection, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.
HUNAM	Hemeroteca UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City
LBJL	Lyndon B. Johnson Library, Austin, Texas
PAR	Pan American World Airways Collection, University of Miami, Miami Florida
PCSC	Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.
UMA	Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts

Mexico Archives

Antonio Enríquez Savignac Library, Universidad del Caribe, Cancún, Quintana Roo
Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Mexico
JLP José López Portillo
LEA Luis Echeverría Alvarez
MAC Manuel Ávila Camacho
SECTUR Secretaria de Turismo
MDLM Miguel de la Madrid
Archivo Municipal de Benito Júarez, Cancún, Quintana Roo
Biblioteca de la Universidad La Salle, Cancún, Quintana Roo

U.S. Archives

DeGolyer Library Special Collection, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas
Hilton College's Hospitality Industry Archives, University of Houston, Houston, Texas
Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas
Lyndon B. Johnson Library, Austin, Texas
Pan American World Airways Collection, University of Miami, Miami, Florida
Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.
Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts

Mexican Periodicals

El Economista
El Universal
Excelsior
La Voz Quintanarroense
Mexican Folkways
Mexico Travel and Hotel News
Pemex Travel Club Bulletin
Revista de Yucatán
Sin Embargo
Unión Cancún

U.S. Periodicals

Abilene Reporter-News
The Amarillo Globe-Times
American Way
The Argus
Arizona Republic
Associated Press
Borgen Magazine
The Brownsville Herald
Business Mexico
Chain Leader
Challenge
Chicago Daily Herald
Chicago Sun-Times
Chicago Tribune
The Christian Science Monitor
The Circleville Herald
Corsicana Daily Sun
Corpus Christi Caller Times
The Daily Herald
The Daily Journal
The Daily Tar Heel
The Daily Times
The Des Moines Register
Dispatch of the Sunday Times
Dollars and Sense
El Paso Herald Post
The Emporia Gazette
Forbes
Harrisburg Daily Independent
Hotels
Hotel & Motel Management

Huffington Post
Independent Press-Telegram
Independent Star News
Indiana Gazette
International Travel
IPS-Inter Press Service
Irving Daily News
Jefferson City Post-Tribune
The Kingston Daily Freeman
Las Cruces Sun-News
Maclean's
The Mason City Globe-Gazette
The Nation
New Statesman
Newsweek
New York Magazine
The New York Times
The Oneonta Star
The Pentagraph
Philadelphia Public Ledger
Plano Daily Star-Courier
Redlands Daily Facts
The Salina Journal
The San Bernardino County Sun
San Diego Business Journal
San Francisco Chronicle
Santa Cruz Sentinel
The Seguin Gazette-Enterprise
Sports Illustrated
St. Louis Post-Dispatch
Telegraph
The Tennessean
Texas Monthly
Time
The Times
The Times Herald Record
Travel
Tucson Daily Citizen
The Wall Street Journal
Ukiah Daily Journal
The Washington Post

Interviews

Casparius, Rodolfo. Interview by author. Houston, TX. November 17, 2011.
Flores, Alfredo. Interview by author. Cancún, Mexico. August 5, 2013.
Hiernaux, Daniel. Interview by Michael Clancy. Mexico City. July 23, 1992.

Martínez Colli, Irving Ernesto. Interview with author. Cancún, Mexico. July 31, 2013.
SECTUR employee. Interview by Michael Clancy. Mexico City. July 2, 1992.

Books

Ai Camp, Roderic. *Mexican Political Biographies, 1935-1993*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995.

Almere Read, Kay and Jason González. *Handbook of Mesoamerican Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs of Mexico and Central America.* Oxford University Press, 2002.

Altschuler, Glenn C. and Stuart M. Blumin. *The G.I. Bill: A New Deal for Veterans*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities.* Verso, 1983.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza.* Aunt Lute Books, 1987.

Aron, Cindy S. *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Ash, Louis and John Turner. *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery.* Constable, 1976.

Berger, Dina. *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry: Pyramids by Day, Martinis by Night.* Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.

Berger, Dina and and Andrew Grant Wood, Eds. *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourist Encounters.* Duke University Press Books, 2010.

Beteta, Ramón. *Pensamiento y dinámica de la revolución mexicana: Antología de documentos politicosociales,* 2nd ed. Mexico City: México Nuevo, 1951.

Bermúdez, Antonio J. *Rescate del mercado fronterizo: una obra al servicio de México.* 1966.

Bloom, Nicholas, Ed. *Adventures Into Mexico: American Tourism beyond the Border.* Landham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006.

Boardman, Andrea. *Destination Mexico: A Foreign Land a Step Away.* Southern Methodist University, 2001.

Bouvier, Virginia. *Women and the Conquest of California, 1542-1840: Codes of Silence.* University of Arizona Press, 2004.

Brands, H. W. *American Colossus: The Triumph of Capitalism, 1865-1900.* Anchor, 2011.

Britton, Stephen G. *Tourism, Dependency, and Development: A Mode of Analysis.* Canberra: Australian National University, 1981.

Bulmer-Thomas, Victor. *The Economic History of Latin America Since Independence.* Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Cacho, Lydia. *Los Demonios del Edén: El Poder que Protege a la Pornografía Infantil.* Debolsillo, 2004.

Calderón de la Barca, Madame. *Life in Mexico during a Residence of Two Years in That Country.* 1843.

Carey, Elaine. *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power, and Terror in 1968 Mexico.* University of New Mexico Press, 2005.

Castañeda, Luis M. *Spectacular Mexico: Design, Propaganda, and the 1968 Olympics.* University of Minnesota Press, 2014

Castellanos, M. Bianet. *A Return to Servitude: Maya Migration and the Tourist Trade in Cancún.* University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Clancy, Michael. *Exporting Paradise: Tourism Development in Mexico.* Emerald Group Publishing, 2002.

Coatsworth, John H. *Growth Against Development: The Economic Impact of Railroads in Porfirian Mexico.* Northern Illinois University Press, 1981.

Cockcroft, James D. *Mexico: Class Formation, Capital Accumulation, and the State.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983.

Cocks, Catherine. *Tropical Whites: The Rise of the Tourist South in the Americas.* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

Delpar, Helen. *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935.* The University of Alabama Press, 1992.

Endy, Christopher. *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France.* University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Enloe, Cynthia. *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics.* University of California Press, 1990.

Flandrau, Charles M. *Viva Mexico!* New York: Appleton-Century, 1937.

Frieden, Jeffrey A. *Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006.

Frost Arnold, Channing and Frederick J. Tabor. *The American Egypt: A Record of Travel in Yucatán,* 1909.

Ganster, Paul and David Lorey. *The U.S.-Mexican Border into the Twenty-First Century.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008.

Gladstone, David L. *From Pilgrimage to Package Tour: Travel and Tourism in the Third World.* New York: Routledge, 2005.

Grandin, Greg. *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism.* Metropolitan Books, 2006.

Guerin-Gonzales, Camille. *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939.* New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994.

Hahner, June Edith. *Women Through Women's Eyes: Latin American Women in Nineteenth-Century Travel Accounts.* Rowman & Littlefield, 1998.

Hall, Stuart. *Questions of Cultural Identity.* Sage Publications, 1996.

Hanke, Lewis, ed. *Do the Americas Have a Common History: A Critique of the Bolton Theory.* New York: Knopf, 1964.

Hart, John Mason. *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico Since the Civil War.* University of California Press, 2002.

Hart, John Mason. *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution.* University of California Press, 1987.

Hayes, Joy Elizabeth. *Radio Nation: Communication, Popular Culture, and Nationalism in Popular Culture, 1920-1950.* University of Arizona Press, 2000.

Hollander, Paul. *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, 1928-1978.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Horsman, Reginald. *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*. Harvard University Press, 1981.

Hove, Andrew C., Jr. *History of the Eighties—Lessons for the Future. Volume I: Symposium Proceedings.* Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, 1997. Accessed October 5, 2015, https://www.fdic.gov/bank/historical/history/191_210.pdf.

Katz, Friedrich. *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution.* University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Knight, Alan. *The Mexican Revolution, Volume 1: Porfirians, Liberals, and Peasants.* University of Nebraska Press, 1990.

Knight, Alan. *The Mexican Revolution, Volume 2: Counter-Revolution and Reconstruction.* University of Nebraska Press, 1990.

Lea, John. *Tourism and Development in the Third World.* London: Routledge, 1988.

Lieberman, Ira W. and Christopher D. Kirkness, ed. *Privatization and Emerging Equity Markets*. World Bank Publications and Flemings, Washington, DC: 1998. Accessed September 1, 2015, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1999/08/15/000009265_3980624143509/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf.

Lorey, David E. *The U.S.-Mexico Border in the Twentieth Century: A History of Economic and Social Transformation.* Wimington, DE: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999.

MacCannell, Dean. *Empty Meeting Grounds: The Tourist Papers.* Routledge, 1992.

MacCannell, Dean. *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class.* New York: Shocken, 1976.

Martí, Fernando. *Cancún, fantasía de banqueros: La construcción de una ciudad turística a partir de cero.* Mexico City: UNO, 1985.

Martí, Fernando. *Cancún, Paradise Invented: Notes on Landscape and Architecture*. Impresora Formal S.A. de CV, 1998.

Martínez, Oscar. *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Júarez since 1848.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978.

Martínez, Oscar J., ed. *U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives.* Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1996.

Martínez Quintana, Violante. *Ocio y Turismo en la Sociedad Actual: Los Viajes, el Tiempo Libre y el Entrenamiento en el Mundo Globalizado.* Madrid: McGraw Hill, 2006.

Matthe*ws*, Michael. *The Civilizing Machine: A Cultural History of Mexican Railroads, 1876-1910.* University of Nebraska Press, 2014.

Merrill, Dennis. *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America.* North Carolina University Press, 2009.

Mojica, José. *I, A Sinner: The Autobiography of Fray José Francisco de Guadalupe Mojica, O.F.M.* Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1963.

Moreno, Julio. *Yankee Don't Go Home!: Mexican Nationalism, American Business Culture, and the Shaping of Modern Mexico, 1920-1950.* University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Morley, Sylvanus. *The Ancient Maya.* Stanford University Press, 1947.

Mostafanezhad, Mary and Kevin Hannam, Eds. *Moral Encounters in Tourism (Current Developments in the Geographies of Leisure and Tourism.* Burlington, VT, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014.

O'Brien, Thomas F. *Making the Americas: The United States and Latin America from the Age of Revolutions to the Era of Globalization.* University of New Mexico Press: 2007.

Oles, James. *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination.* Yale University Art Gallery, 1993.

Pilcher, Jeffrey. *Que vivan los tamales!: Food and the Making of Mexican Identity.* University of New Mexico Press, 1998.

Preston, Julia and Samuel Dillon. *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2004.

Raat,William Dirk. *Mexico's Sierra Tarahumara: A Photohistory of the People of the Edge.* University of Oklahoma Press, 1996.

Reid, Donald G. *Tourism, Globalization, and Development: Responsible Tourist Planning.* Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2003.

Report of Combined Mexican Working Party. *The Economic Development of Mexico.* Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1953.

Rosenberg, Emily. S*preading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945.* Hill and Wang, 1982.

Ruiz, Jason. *Americans in the Treasure House: Travel to Porfirian Mexico and the Cultural Politics of Empire.* University of Texas Press, 2014.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism.* Vintage Books: 1994.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism.* Vintage Books: 1979. .

Schwartz, Rosalie. *Flying Down to Rio: Hollywood, Tourists, and Yankee Clippers.* Texas A&M University Press, 2004.

Schwartz, Rosalie. *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba.* University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

Schaffer, Marguerite. *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940.* Smithsonian Books, 2001.

Shelton, Laura. *For Tranquility and Order: Family and Community on Mexico's Northern Frontier, 1800-1850.* University of Arizona Press, 2010.

Skwiot, Christine. *The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawaii.* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

Smith, Valene. *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourists.* University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989.

Spence, Mark David. *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of National Parks.* Oxford University Press, 2000.

Tutino, John. *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico: Social Bases of Agrarian Violence, 1750-1940.* Princeton University Press, 1989.

Urry, John. *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies.* SAGE Publications, 1990.

Van Der Berghe, Pierre L. *The Quest for the Other: Ethnic Tourism in San Cristóbal, Mexico.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.

Vanderwood, Paul J. *Satan's Playground: Mobsters and Movie Stars at America's Greatest Gaming Resort.* Duke University Press Books, 2009.

Van Hoy, Teresa. *A Social History of Mexico's Railroads: Peons, Prisoners, and Priests*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008.

Vaughn, Mary Kay and Stephen Lewis, Eds. *The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and Cultural Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940.* Duke University Press Books, 2006.

Waters, Somerset. *Travel Industry World Yearbook: The Big Picture.* New York: Child and Waters, 1996.

Whitaker, Arthur. *The Western Hemisphere Idea: Its Rise and Decline.* Ithaca: Cornelle University Press, 1954.

Whitaker, Arthur Preston. *The United States and the Independence of Latin America, 1800-1830*. Johns Hopkins Press, 1941.

Wilson, Tamar Diana. *Economic Life of Mexican Beach Vendors: Acapulco, Puerto Vallarta, and Cabo San Lucas.* Lexington Books: 2012.

Witherspoon, Kevin B. *Before the Eyes of the World: Mexico and the 1968 Olympic Games.* Northern Illinois University Press, 2008.

Witt, Stephen F., Michael Z. Brooke, and Peter J. Buckley. *The Management of International Tourism.* London: Unwin Hyman, 1991.

Woodward, Ralph Lee, ed. *Here and There in Mexico: The Travel Writings of Mary Ashley Townsend.* The University of Alabama Press, 2001.

Zolov, Eric. *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture.* University of California Press, 1999.

Articles

Acharya, Arun Kumar. "Gender Violence and Sexual Behaviors of Trafficked Women in Mexico." Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, 2009.

Acharya, Arun Kumar y Adriana Salas Stevanato, "Violencia y Tráfico de Mujeres en México: Una Perspectiva de Género." *Estudios Feministas* 13, no.3 (2005): 507-524.

Aclarando. Accessed March 28, 2016, https://aclarando.wordpress.com/category/cancun-por-ano/cancun-en-1975/.

Aclarando. Accessed March 28, 2016, https://aclarando.wordpress.com/tag/cancun/page/18/.

Altés, Carmen. "Turismo y desarrollo en México: Nota Sectorial," Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, Octubre 2008, accessed March 7, 2016, ictur.sectur.gob.mx/pdf/estudioseinvestacion/calidadycompetititvidad/publicacionesexternas/2006_BID_TurismoyDesarrolloenMexico.pdf.

Altés, Carmen. "El turismo en América Latinoa y el Caribe: la experiencia del BID," Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, Julio 2006, accessed March 21, 2016, http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=1442249.

"50 Años de la CONASUPO." Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado. Accessed August 4, 2015, http://www.mmh.org.mx/nav/node/710.

"Análisis Programático Institucional Compañía Nacional de Subsistencias Populares." Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público. Accessed August 4, 2015, http://www.apartados.hacienda.gob.mx/contabilidad/documentos/informe_cuenta/1999/documentos/chp99p05r05v1.pdf.

Apple Vacations. "About Apple Vacations." Apple Vacations. Accessed October 23, 2015, http://www.applevacations.com/about/.

Bello, Walden. "Structural Adjustment Programs: 'Success' for Whom?" In *The Case against the Global Economy for a Turn to the Local,* edited by Jerry Mander and

Edward Goldsmith, 285-296. San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1996. Accessed August 18, 2015, http://www.converge.org.nz/pirm/structur.htm.

Berger, Dina. "A Drink Between Friends: Mexican and American Pleasure Seekers in 1940s Mexico City" In *Adventures Into Mexico: American Tourism Beyond the Border*, edited by Nicholas Dagen Bloom, 13-34. Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

Berger, Dina. "Goodwill Ambassadors on Holiday: Tourism, Diplomacy, and Mexico-U.S. Relations." In *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourist Encounters*, edited by Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood, 107-129. Duke University Press, 2010.

"Biblioteca Benjamin Franklin." Embajada de los Estados Unidos. Accessed September 25, 2015, http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov/bbf/bfacerca.htm.

Boardman, Andrea. "The U.S.-Mexican War and the Beginnings of American Tourism in Mexico," In *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourist Encounters*, edited by Dina Berger and Andrew Grant, 21-53. Duke University Press, 2010.

Bound, John and Sarah Turner. "Going to War and Going to College: Did World War II and the G.I. Bill Increase Educational Attainment for Returning Veterans?" *Journal of Labor Economics* 20, no. 4 (October 2002): 784–815.

Bryan, William M. "History and Development of Tourism in Mexico." *Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science for 1956* 37 (1956): 130-131. Accessed August 12, 2015, http://ojs.library.okstate.edu/osu/index.php/OAS/article/view/3930/3604.

Bueno, Christina. "Teotihuacán: Showcase for the Centennial." In *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourist Encounters*, edited by Dina Berger and Andrew Grant, 54-76. Duke University Press, 2010.

Campos, B. "La Actividad Turística Internacional y Su Repercusión en la Población de Quintana Roo." In *Descentralización y Manejo Ambiental Gobernanza Costera en México.* Edited by J. Fraga, G.J. Villalobos, S. Doyon and A. García. México: Centro Internacional de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo CINVESTAV-IPN, 2008.

"Cancún Named #1 International Destination for Summer Travel," last updated May 25, 2013. Accessed October 6, 2013, http://www.investmentpropertiesmexico.com/mexico-real-estate-news-blog/2013/05/cancun-named-1-international-destination-for-summer-travel/.

"Cancún Ranks As #1 International Summer Family Vacation Spot on Travelocity 2011 List," last updated May 18, 2011. Accessed October 6, 2013, http://cancun.travel/en/2011/05/18/cancun-ranks-as-1-international-summer-family-vacation-spot-on-travelocity-2011-list/.

"Cancún Rated #1 International Travel Destination on 2012 Orbitz Summer Index Travel Report," last updated June 15, 2012, accessed October 6, 2013, http://cancun.travel/en/2012/06/15/cancun-rated-1-international-travel-destination-on-2012-orbitz-summer-index-travel-report/.

Capanegra, César, et al. "Historia del turismo: La construcción del turismo como factor de desarrollo, Argentina (1958-1976)." Paper presented at the V Congreso Latinoamericano de Investigación Turística, V Latin American Conference on Tourism Research, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 2013. Accessed August 18, 2015,

http://www.academia.edu/3034918/Historia_del_Turismo._La_construcci%C3%B3n_social_del_turismo_como_factor_de_desarrollo_Argentina_1958-1976.

Castellanos, M. Bianet. "Adolescent Migration to Cancún: Reconfiguring Maya Households and Gender Relations in Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 28, no. 3 (Sept. 2007): 1-27.

Caves, Richard E. "Industrial Organization." In *Economic Analysis and the Multinational Enterprise,* edited by John H. Dunning, 115-46. New York: Praeger, 1974.

Chayett, Zack V. and Leonard V.B. Sutton. "Mexican Real Estate Transactions by Foreigners." *Journal of International Law and Policy* 4, no. 15 (1974): 15-24.

Chong, Alberto and Florencio López-de-Silanes. "Privatization in Mexico." In *Privatization in Latin America: Myths and Realities.* Edited by Alberto Chong and Florencio López-de-Silanes, 1-60. World Bank Publications, 2005.

Clancy, Michael J. "Mexican Tourism: Export Growth and Structural Change since 1970." *Latin American Research Review* 36: No. 1, (2001): 128-150.

Clancy, Michael J. "Tourism and Development: Evidence from Mexico." *Annals of Tourism Research* 26 (1999): 1-20. Accessed August 5, 2015, http://www.sciencedirect.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/science/article/pii/S0160738398000462.

Cohen, Erik. "Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 15, (1988): 371-386.

Congress: House of Representatives, U.S. International Trade Commission, (1987), x.

Cope, R. Douglas. *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico, 1660-1720.* University of Wisconsin, 1994.

Córdoba Azcárate, Matilde. "Tourism Development, Architectures of Escape and the Passive Beloved in Contemporary Yucatán." In *Moral Encounters in Tourism (Current Developments in the Geographies of Leisure and Tourism),* edited by Mary Mostafanezhad and Kevin Hannam, 59-70. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company: 2014.

Córdoba y Ordóñez, Juan and Ana García de Fuentes. "Turismo, Globalización y Medio Ambiente en el Caribe Mexicano." *Investigaciones Geográficas, Boletín del Instituto de Geografía.* UNAM, 52 (2003): 117-136.

Cothran, Dan A. and Cheryl Cole Cothran. "Promise or Political Risk for Mexican Tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 25, no. 2 (1998): 477-495.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43 (July 1991): 1241-1299.

de Ita, Ana. "The Impact of Liberalization of Agriculture in Mexico: from the GATT to NAFTA." *Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy*, April 20, 1999. Accessed January 5, 2016, http://www.iatp.org/files/Impact_of_Liberalization_of_Agriculture_in_Mex.htm

"Déjà vu of Policy Failure: the New $14 Billion Mexican Debt Bailout." *The Center for International Economic Growth,* No. 588 (June 25, 1987): 1-12. Accessed August 14, 2015, http://s3.amazonaws.com/thf_media/1987/pdf/bg588.pdf.

Dunning, John H. and Matthew McQueen. "Multinational Corporations in the International Hotel Industry." *Annals of Tourism Research* 9 (1982): 69-90.

Escuela de verano: Cursos para estudiantes mexicanos y extranjeros. Mexico City: N.p., 1926, p. 33-36.

FAMSI. Anthony P. Andrews. "Some Historic Notes and Observations on Isla Cancún, Quintana Roo." New College of Florida, Sarasota, Florida, 2006. FAMSI. Accessed August 26, 2015, http://research.famsi.org/aztlan/uploads/papers/Andrews-Cancun-06-Aztlan.pdf.

Fernández de Lara, A. E. "Cancún: Las contradicciones socio-ambientales de un desarrollo turístico integralmente planeado: 1970-2000." In *Cancún: Los Avatares de una Marca Turística Global,* edited by Carlos Macías Richard y Raúl Al Pérez Aguilar. México: Universidad de Quintana Roo-CONACyT, Secretaría de Turismo, 2009.

Fish Mary and Jean D. Gibbons. "Mexico's Devaluations and Changes in Net Foreign Exchange Receipts from Tourism." *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 10, No. 1 (1991): 73-80.

"Forbidding Fruit: How America Got Turned On to the Date." *Morning Edition.* NPR Narrated by The Kitchen Sisters and Lisa Morehouse. June 10, 2014. Accessed January 25, 2015, http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2014/06/10/320346869/forbidding-fruit-how-america-got-turned-on-to-the-date.

Fuentes, Rafael. "El alma mexicana en Hollywood." *Revista de Revistas* (Mexico City) 16 (February 14, 1926): 43.

Geddes Gonzales, Henry. "Tourism, Mass Media, and the Making of Visual Culture in the Greater Yucatan Peninsula," *Journal of Film and Video* 60, No. 2 (Summer 2008): 50-58.

Gilly, Mary C. "Sex Roles in Advertising: A Comparison of Television Advertisements in Australia, Mexico, and the United States." *The Journal of Marketing* 52, No. 2 (Apr. 1988): 75-85.

"Guía de Escuelas, Distrito Federal." SECTUR. Accessed August 6, 2015, http://www.sectur.gob.mx/ictur/cultura/educacion/guia-de-escuelas/nivel-superior/distrito-federal/.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation." *Framework* 36 (1989): 68-81.

Hawley, Chris. "Darkness beyond Cancún's Beaches: Mexico's Model Resort City Hides an Undercurrent of Crime and Poverty." Republic Mexico City Bureau. June 12, 2005. Accessed November 23, 2015, https://www.ecu.edu/cs-admin/news/inthenews/archives/2005/12/061206AZrepublic.cfm.

Henrici, Jane. "Trading Culture: Tourism and Tourist Art in Pisac, Peru." In *Tourism and Cultural Conflicts,* edited by Mike Robinson and Priscilla Boniface, 161-180. New York: CABI Publishing, 1999.

Herzog, Lawrence A. "U.S.-Mexican Border: Border Urbanism." In *Concise Encyclopedia of Mexico,* edited by Michael S. Werner, 767-784. Taylor & Francis, 2001.

Hiernaux-Nicolas, Daniel. "Cancun Bliss." In *The Tourist City,* edited by Dennis Judd and Susan Fainstein, 124-139. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999.

Hiernaux-Nicolás, Daniel. "Mitos y Realidades del Milagro Turístico." In *Teoría y Praxis del Espacio Turístico,* edited by Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolás, 109-120. Mexico City: UAM-Xochimilco, 1989.

"Hirschfeld Almada, Julio." In *Historical Dictionary of Mexico,* edited by Donald C. Briggs and Marvin Alisky, s.v. Scarecrow Press, 1981.

Hoganson, Kristin. "Girdling the Globe: The Fictive Travel Movement and the Rise of the Tourist Mentality." In *Consumer's Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920,* 153-208. University of North Carolina Press: 2007.

hooks, bell. "Understanding Patriarchy." In *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love,* bell hooks, 1-5. Atri Books: 2004.

"Informe sobre cursos de verano." In *El movimiento educativo en México,* 501-505. Mexico City: Dirección de Talleres Gráficos, 1922.

Kastelein, Barbara. "The Beach and Beyond: Observations from a Travel Writer on Dreams, Decadence, and Defense." In *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourist Encounters,* edited by Dina Berger and Andrew Grant, 320-370. Duke University Press, 2010.

Kaye, Dionisio J. "Mexico: Liberalizing Foreign Investment." *Temple Int'l & Comp. L.J.* 4, (1990): 79-90. Accessed January 5, 2016, https://www.copyright.com/ccc/basicSearch.do?&operation=go&searchType=0&lastSearch=simple&all=on&titleOrStdNo=0889-1915.

Lamb, Blaine P. "The Convenient Villain: The Early Cinema Views of the Mexican-American." *Journal of the West.* 14 (October 1975): 75-81.

López, Rick A. "The India Bonita Contest of 1921 and the Ethnicization of National Culture." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 82, (2002): 291-328.

MacLachlan, Colin E. and Jaime E. Rodriguez O. *Forging of the Cosmit Race: A Reinterpretation of Colonial Mexico.* University of California Press, 1980.

"The Mansion." The Mexican Cultural Institute, Washington D.C. Accessed July 16, 2015, http://www.instituteofmexicodc.org/mansion.php.

McKercher, Bob and Thomas G. Bauer. "Conceptual Framework of the Nexus between Tourism, Romance and Sex." In *Sex and Tourism: Journeys of Romance, Love and Lust.* Edited by Thomas G. Bauer and Bob McKercher, 3-18. New York: Haworth Hospitality Press, 2003.

Medrano, Marlene. "Sexuality, Migration, and Tourism in the 20th Century U.S.-Mexico Borderlands." *History Compass.* 11:3 (2013), 235-246.

"The Mexican 1982 Debt Crisis." Rabobank. September 19, 2013. Accessed February 15, 2016, https://economics.rabobank.com/publications/2013/september/the-mexican 1982-debt-crisis/#.

México. Programa Nacional Fronterizo/National Border Program: Ciudad Júarez, Chihuahua. México: PRONAF, 1961.

"Mexico's 1968 Massacre: What Really Happened?" *All Things Considered.* Narrated by Robert Siegel. December 1, 2008. Accessed August 13, 2015, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=97546687.

Minster, Christopher. "The Unsung Ally: Mexican Involvement in World War II." About.com. Accessed July 15, 2015,

http://latinamericanhistory.about.com/od/thehistoryofmexico/a/09mexicoww2_2.htm.

Newfarmer, Richard S. "International Industrial Organization and Development: A Survey." In *Profits, Progress, and Poverty: Case Studies of International Industries in Latin America*, edited by Richard S. Newfarmer, 13-61. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.

Nolan, Mary and Sidney Nolan. "The Evolution of Tourism in Twentieth-Century Mexico." *Journal of the West* 27, No. 4 (1988): 14-26.

O'Brien, Thomas F. "Unpublished Manuscript." 2016. By permission of the author.

Olson, Keith. "The G.I. Bill and Higher Education: Success and Surprise." *American Quarterly* 25, no. 5 (December 1973).

ONU Mujeres. "El turismo es motor para la igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de las mujeres." ONU Mujeres. 11 marzo 2011. Accessed November 18, 2015, http://www.unwomen.org/es/news/stories/2011/3/tourism-a-vehicle-for-gender-equality-and-women-s-empowerment.

Organization of American States. "The Network of Inter-American Tourism Centers and CICATUR in Mexico." *Annals of Tourism Research* 2 no. 3 (Jan.-Feb. 1975): 147-154. Accessed July 28, 2015, http://www.sciencedirect.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/science/article/pii/0160738375900432.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). "National Tourism Policy Review of Mexico." Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry, Mexico: October 2001. Accessed September 30, 2015, http://www.oecd.org/mexico/33650486.pdf.

"Pan American Games." Equinecanada. Accessed July 30, 2015, http://equinecanada.ca/dressage/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=209&catid=97&Itemid=554&lang=en.

"Pan American Union." Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed July 30, 2015, http://www.britannica.com/topic/Pan-American-Union.

PBS. "People & Events: Origins of the Beauty Pageant." PBS. Accessed September 2, 2015, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/missamerica/peopleevents/e_origins.html.

Perramond, Eric P. "The Rise, Fall, and Reconfiguration of the Mexican *Ejido." The Geographical Review* 98, no. 3 (July 2008) 356-371. Accessed August 19, 2015, http://momscholar.net/files/2012/08/2012-11-09-Mesa-Central-Haciendas-Reading-Perramond.pdf.

"Plan Estratégico de Desarrollo Sustenable." Instituto de Planeación de Desarrollo Urbano, Mexico: Municipio de Benito Júarez, 2007.

Pogorelsky, Leonardo and Regina G. Schlüter. "Latin American AMFORT Congress." *Annals of Tourism Research* 16 no. 4 (1989): 582-584. Accessed August 6, 2015, http://ac.els-cdn.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/0160738389900145/1-s2.0-0160738389900145-main.pdf?_tid=63ef32c6-62f1-11e5-a0f0-00000aab0f26&acdnat=1443122641_38c3f0fe5843b5ad354fe551f9c6027a.

"Press Kit." Señor Frog's, 2005. Accessed February 17, 2016, https://web.archive.org/web/20060518204208/http://www.senorfrogs.com/news/enorfrog%27sPresskit.pdf.

Ratchford, Fannie E. "Summer School South of the Rio Grande." *TS* 50 (July 15, 1923): 450-451.

"Recordando: Concurso Miss Universo 1989 en Cancún." Aclarando. March 30, 2010. Accessed November 25, 2015, https://aclarando.wordpress.com/2010/03/30/recordando-concurso-miss-universo-1989-en-cancun/.

Romero, Hector Manuel. "Miguel Alemán Valdés (1905-1983): Arquitecto del turismo en México." (México, D.F.: Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística, 1993).

Romero Mayo, Rafael Ignacio. "Política Municipal y Desarrollo Urbano de un Modelo Turístico, Cancún: 1975-2002." In *Cancún: Los Avatares de una Marca Turística Global*, edited by Carlos Macías Richard y Raúl Al Pérez Aguilar. México: Universidad de Quintana Roo-CONACyT, Secretaría de Turismo, 2009.

Rovensky, Joseph C. and A. Willing Patterson. "Problems and Opportunities in Hemispheric Development." *Law and Contemporary Problems* (Fall 1941): 657-668. Accessed January 13, 2016, http://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2104&context=lcp.

Schantz, Eric M. "Beyond the Noir Border: Tourism, the Vice Racket, and Power Relations in Baja California's Border Zone, 1938-65." In *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourism Encounters.* Edited by Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood, 130-160. Duke University Press, 2010.

Schédler, Andreas. "El capital extranjero en México: el caso de la hotelería." *Investigación Económica* 184 (1988): 137-178.

"Schools in Mexico with the Best Tourism and Hospitality Professionals," Global Recruiters, accessed August 6, 2015, http://www.global-recruiters.com/schools-in-mexico-with-the-best-tourism-and-hospitality-professionals/.

"Señor Frog's Cancún, Mexico." Cancún Care. Accessed February 17, 2016, http://www.cancuncare.com/Cancun_Nightlife/senor_frogs.htm.

Señor Frog's Restaurant. December 6, 2005. Accessed February 17, 2016, https://web.archive.org/web/20060521120720/http://www.senorfrogs.com/new/dec-605.htm.

Sex Societies. "Sex and Prostitution in Cancún." Sex Societies. Accessed November 23, 2015, http://sexsocieties.com/index.php?title=Cancun.

Skyscraper City. Accessed November 17, 2011, http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=898064.

Secretaria de Turismo. "Estudio de gran visión del turismo en México: perspectiva 020." Centro de Estudios Superiores de Turismo. Accessed March 9, 2016, http://sistemanacionaldecapacitacion turismo.stps.gob.mx/sncst/pdf/6_estudio_gran_vision_del_turismo_en_mexico_erspectiva_2020.pdf.

Secretaria de Turismo. "Programa Nacional de Modernización del Turismo, 1991-1994." Mexico City: Poder Ejecutivo Federal, 1991.

Secretaria de Turismo. "Estadísticas básicas de la actividad turística." Mexico City: SECTUR, 1992.

Smith, Jeffrey S. "Three Generations of International Tourist Resorts in Mexico." *Geographische Rundschau International Edition* 5, No. 1 (2009): 4-10.

Taylor Hansen, Lawrence Douglas. "The Origins of the Maquila Industry in Mexico." *Comercio Exterior* 53, no. 11 (November 2003): 1-16.

"Toronto 2015 Pan American Games." See Toronto Now. Accessed July 30, 2015, http://www.seetorontonow.com/toronto-2015-pan-am-games/.

Torres, Rebecca. "Cancun's Tourism Development from a Fordist Spectrum of Analysis." *Tourist Studies* 2, No. 87 (2002): 87-116. Accessed November 11, 2011, http://tou.sagepub.com/content/2/1/87.

Torres, Rebecca and Janet Henshall Momsen. "Gringolandia: Cancún and the American Tourist." In *Adventures Into Mexico: American Tourism Beyond the Border*, edited by Nicholas Dagen Bloom, 58-76. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006.

Torres, Rebecca. "Linkages between Tourism and Agriculture in Mexico." *Annals of Tourism Research* 30, no. 3 (2003): 546-566.

"Tourism Growth Bolsters Mexico: Only Coffee and Cocoa Top It as an Industry—Many United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations." *Transnational Corporations, Services, and the Uruguay Round* New York: United Nations, 1990.

Trip Advisor. "Review of Mexigo GoWonders Tour." Trip Advisor. Accessed August 31, 2015, http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g499453-d1728152-r196144032-MexiGo_Tours-Valladolid_Yucatan_Peninsula.html.

U.S. Embassy in Mexico. "Status of Women on the Rise in Mexico, but Challenges Persist." July 6, 2006. Accessed November 25, 2015, http://www.cod.edu/people/faculty/yearman/juarez/documents/Mexico_009688_30Dec2004.pdf.

U.S. Embassy in Mexico. "Status of Women on the Rise in Mexico, but Challenges Persist."

Vargas Martínez, Elva Esther, Marcelino Castillo Nechar, and Felipe Carlos Viesca González. "Ending a Touristic Destination in Four Decades: Cancún's Creation, Peak and Agony." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 3, no. 8 (April 2013): 16-26.

Varisco, Cristina, et al., "El relevamiento turístico: de Cicatur a la Planificación Participativa." Paper presented at the VI Congreso Latinoamericano de Investigación Turística, VI LatinAmerican Conference on Tourism Research, Neuquén, Argentina, September 25-27, 2014. Accessed August 17, 2015, http://nulan.mdp.edu.ar/2052/1/varisco.etal.2014.pdf, 5.

Velásquez, Carolina. "Son explotadas en la prostitución alrededor de 450 mil mujeres." *CIMAC*, August 1, 2010. Accessed November 25, 2015, http://www.cimacnoticias.com.mx/node/43400.

Weiss, Thomas. "Americans Traveling Overseas and Foreign Visitors to the United States: 1820–2000." In *Historical Statistics of the United States, Earliest Times to the Present: Millennial Edition*, edited by Susan B. Carter et al., 319-325. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Wiki Sex Guide, "Cancún," Wiki Sex Guide, accessed November 23, 2015, http://es.wikisexguide.com/wiki/Canc%C3%BAn.

Wilson, Tamar Diana. "Economic and Social Impacts of Tourism in Mexico." *Latin American Perspectives* 35, no. 37 (2008): 37-52. Accessed November 11, 2011, http://lap.sagepub.com/content/35/3/37.

World Atlas. "Cancún." World Atlas. Accessed August 21, 2015, http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/namerica/caribb/cancun.htm.

The World Bank. "International Tourism, Number of Arrivals, Mexico." The World Bank. Accessed March 16, 2016, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL?page=3.

The World Bank. "Workers in the Informal Economy." The World Bank. Accessed December 29, 2015, http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALPROTECTION/EXTLM/0,,contentMDK:20224904~menuPK:584866~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:390615,00.html.

World Tourism Organization and UN Women. "Global Report on Women in Tourism." World Tourism Organization and UN Women. 2011. Accessed November 18, 2015, http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/Headquarters/Media/Stories/en/folletoglobarlreportpdf.pdf.

Zolov, Eric. "Showcasing the 'Land of Tomorrow': Mexico and the 1968 Olympics." *The Americas* 61 (October 2004): 159-188.