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Authenticity of Indigenous Mexican Arts in Tourism

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Imagine you are in your favorite authentic Mexican restaurant just outside your small, Midwestern American hometown of 700 people. The vibrant murals, the menu with dishes you may not be able to pronounce, the Mexican servers, and the overall aura of exoticism the restaurant emits draws you in. The restaurant poses as an escape from everyday life and the typical family meals of which you have tired. The fact that the food and experience is labeled authentic makes it even more enjoyable than making a Mexican meal from a taco kit at home and satisfies your need of something different or special.

What you may not realize is that the restaurant is most likely considered to be a “staged authenticity,” or a product that is altered to meet consumers’ needs rather than an exact replica of that product. The meals may not be exactly what families in Mexico prepare and are subject to alterations in order to please guests’ tastes and expectations while also adhering to the restaurant’s requirements, budget, and management of time. The restaurant is able to be considered authentic even though it may be altered from the original because it has the authority to decide what is authentic. The restaurant owners and workers are able to make this statement of authenticity because they can agree that the restaurant is serving Mexican food that is authentic to the present time and place. Whether or not the meals and experience are exactly like that of a home in Mexico does not matter to the customer as long as their need for an escape from their daily lives is reached.

I am using this relatable example of authenticity as a way to introduce my topic of “authenticity” and tourism in Mexico. Among theorists, there has been an ongoing argument about who has the authority to decide what is authentic. I agree with Erve Chambers’ (2010) theory that authenticity is determined by the hosts and believe it is applicable to all indigenous communities. I will apply Chambers’ (2010) theory of authority as the main factor in

determining authenticity of handicrafts and cultural performances to the case studies of Oaxaca and Chiapas. Such communities must have the authority to decide what is authentic to their culture, as opposed to outsiders deciding what is authentic. If the government or an outside actor takes away the indigenous community's authority in representing itself, then it loses its authenticity. The idea of authenticity in tourism raises two questions of interest: is it possible for indigenous handicrafts and cultural performances to lose their authenticity through tourism? How do the communities preserve the authenticity of the arts at the expense of touristic influences? These questions are important to think about because tourism affects indigenous communities in both positive and negative ways. My argument is that while handicrafts and performances experienced by tourists may not represent the historical traditions of an indigenous community, they are still considered authentic. This is because "authenticity" applied to tourism is intended to mean the acceptance of a community to represent their culture in a way that fits the present time and place. Traditions are always changing and items, beliefs, and practices are altered naturally over time due to people finding better or different ways of doing things. The tourism industry is a means for indigenous communities to benefit economically while preserving their culture. Maintaining authenticity, handicrafts and performances from the past may be revived by the community as a result of tourists' interests, or may be altered to fit into the present culture.

In addition to Erve Chambers (2010), the main theorists that I will refer to include recent anthropologists of tourism: Edward Bruner (2006), Pierre van den Berghe (1994), and Adam Kaul (2010). The early anthropologists include Dean MacCannell (1973) and Erik Cohen (1988). The early anthropologists have regarded many indigenous communities that participate in the tourism industry as inauthentic because they are not presenting themselves in their original,

native ways. Performances and handicrafts sold to tourists in Oaxaca and Chiapas would thus not be considered authentic if they are not exactly like the arts found in the past. These handicrafts or performances would be viewed by MacCannell and Cohen as altered commodities for tourists, or false representations. In support of my argument, more recent anthropologists disagree with the older anthropologists because they understand that cultures and traditions are always changing and an “original” does not exist.

Early theorists Dean MacCannell and Erik Cohen contend that authenticity cannot occur in tourism because it becomes a “staged authenticity,” or something that does not truly represent the culture. Cohen quotes MacCannell, “Commoditization is said to destroy the authenticity of local cultural products and human relations; instead a surrogate, covert ‘staged authenticity’ (MacCannell 1973) emerges” (Cohen 372). MacCannell believes that a staged authenticity in tourism greatly impedes with tourists’ expectations of a culture. This theory fails to consider that tourists may be just that-tourists-rather than tourists who are searching for experiences that are “pristine, the primitive, the natural, that which is as yet untouched by modernity” (Cohen 374). Most tourists do not visit places to analyze every detail and criticize cultures for changing their ways as MacCannell suggests.

Dean MacCannell’s main viewpoint of authenticity is “there is always a real and true at the very back” or a “frontstage-backstage” (Bruner 5). The frontstage is what the tourists are permitted to see and the backstage is the part of the community that is more private or has restrictions on how tourists can interact. While MacCannell acknowledges there is a more sacred part of an indigenous community that tourists are less likely to access, he dismisses the staged performances for tourists as authentic. MacCannell explains that when the hosts share the back regions with tourists, one is able to “see behind the others’ mere performances, to perceive and

accept the others for what they really are” (MacCannell 592). Some of the more sacred, backstage performances may unintentionally become available for the public to witness, but are subject to tight restrictions on the interactions between tourists and the performance. These performances are considered more authentic by indigenous communities than the frontstage performances. Tribal police help preserve the more sacred parts of the indigenous community by making sure tourists do not photograph and interrupt the event (Chambers 115).

Although there are backstage performances that are considered more authentic to the indigenous community, Chambers would disagree with MacCannell and argue that this does not make the tourism-related performances any less authentic. Chambers writes, “My sense of the authentic is that it occurs under conditions in which people have significant control over their affairs, to the extent that they are able to play an active role in determining how changes occur in their social settings” (Chambers 101). This theory of authority supports my argument that indigenous communities that have the authority to declare both performances as authentic have power over scholars who may not accept the staged performance as authentic. If the indigenous people want to represent their cultures in different or new ways in order to satisfy tourists’ needs for an escape from ordinary life, they are still an authentic community rather than one that masks its true identity. Early theorists’ debates on the degree of authenticity is irrelevant because they do not have the authority to define indigenous people or decide how they should represent themselves.

Authority figures could include museum professionals, scholars, and the government but they would only have the power to critique what is authentic about an indigenous community in relation to tourism (Bruner 151). Scholars do not have the power to control indigenous communities in the tourism industry or decide what is authentic to them. The government

becomes especially problematic because it has the power to control how indigenous communities represent themselves to the tourist industry rather than merely critiquing them as a scholar would. Erve Chambers' theory and my argument that the indigenous communities have the authority to decide authenticity becomes complicated when the communities have to respond to the government's idea of authenticity. If the government has too much control and authority over the industry and the community loses its power to decide how to represent itself, authenticity is lost.

Over the years, Cohen has recognized that MacCannell's original theory of authenticity addresses analysts or scholarly tourists searching for the answers to authenticity in tourism. Nonacademic, or simple, tourists are more likely to accept the "staged authenticity" as found in the Mexican restaurant in lieu of analyzing the authenticity of the establishment while waiting to be served. Cohen has transformed his theory to believe that authenticity is negotiable and depends on the type of tourist, simple or analytical (Cohen 374).

Adam Kaul, a recent theorist, explains the conflict with authenticity and tourism in Sharon Gmelch's reader *Tourists and Tourism*. He writes, "One would necessarily have to prove that they are in no way being produced for any other reason than for their supposedly original function in society. This is problematic because pure original functions are not likely to exist" (Kaul 197). Kaul contends that performances for tourists would not be regarded as authentic by MacCannell even though they are similar or exact representations of the culture because the performances are marketed to tourists. Kaul understands that this viewpoint is not a plausible standard for identifying what is authentic.

Erik Cohen has accepted recent theorists' views that cultures are continuously transforming and thus redefining the authenticity of a product over time (Cohen 380). The term

“emergent authenticity” is assigned to this theory. Cohen writes, “Craft products initially produced merely for sale to visitors and tourists, may eventually become ‘authentic’ products of an ethnic group or region” (Cohen 380). He uses the example of Disney in the United States to explain his argument. At one time, Disney was just a spectacle for theme park enthusiasts, but it is now one of the defining aspects of American society. The brand has defined America in its films, leisure, toys, and clothing and has become an authentic trademark for Americans. Cohen explains that American Disneylands “in the future be perceived even by historians and ethnographers as an authentic American tradition,” (Cohen 380). A modification to an indigenous Mexican handicraft can become authentic if it is accepted and recognized by the indigenous community just as Disney has been accepted as authentic in American culture by Americans.

Cohen’s main concern with authenticity in tourism is that it does not correlate well with commoditization. He poses two outcomes of commoditization: the indigenous community will either lose interest in producing items that have lost their true meaning or “may be excited by the opportunity to present their art and proud to display their competence” (Cohen 382). He seems to agree with Chambers that the indigenous community must have the ability to control the tourism industry and not allow outsiders to exploit them (Cohen 381). Communities cannot avoid commodification in the tourist industry, but they can control how their products are commoditized. Cohen explains that “the emergence of a tourist market frequently facilitates the preservation of a cultural tradition which would otherwise perish. It enables its bearers to maintain a meaningful local or ethnic identity which they might otherwise have lost” (Cohen 382). When the indigenous people have authority over the tourism market in their community, they are more likely to be proud of their arts whether they are altered by commoditization or not.

This pride and power allows them to present the community in their own authentic way to tourists.

The first case of authenticity of the arts in tourism that will be examined comes from Chris Goertzen's book, *Made in Mexico*, which focuses on tourism in Oaxaca. The book begins with a case study of tourism in Chiapas, a Mexican state just south of Oaxaca. The authenticity of the indigenous community that attracts tourists is not voluntary, but rather influenced by the Ladinos, or the elites. The Ladinos are mostly described as people of mixed European and Indian descent, but can also include full blooded Indians who have adopted the Ladino culture. The Ladinos have the power to control the Indians because they are considered the superior race (Goertzen 5). They are only superior in that they look and act different than the Indians. The Indians first began to lose their authority over their community when the Protestant missionaries arrived in 1524. Goertzen explains that "when Protestants advocated abandoning the local religious festival system— an argument with immediate economic appeal, since festival support was so expensive— they were fomenting the overturning of all authority" (Goertzen 7). In this case, it can be argued that the Indians lost their true cultural authenticity and would not be regarded as authentic unless they could regain their authority.

When the Indians in Chiapas decided to commoditize their culture to profit from tourists during the tourist boom of the 1970s, they preserved the authenticity of their arts. Goertzen explains that tourists are not capable of influencing the loss of authenticity in Chiapas because there are barriers that prevent the loss from happening. For example, "Tourists are prevented from delving too deeply into religion in the highlands by the frequent prohibition of photography, the rationing of entrance into churches, and the barrier of language; it is a rare tourist who can tune into prayers spoken in Tzotzil or any other modern Maya language"

(Goertzen 9). By raising barriers to what the Chiapas Indians consider the most authentic aspects of their culture, the Indians have taken control over ethnic tourism and thus preserved their present authenticity.

Goertzen's personal example, a pillowcase purchased from Chiapas, demonstrates the capacity for Indians to have control over their arts but still modify them in order to please the tourists. The pillowcase itself is an untraditional piece for the culture, but the design weaved on it is traditional (Goertzen 10). Although the pillowcase is marketed to tourists, the Indians are able to say that it is authentic by deciding how to design the artwork placed on the pillowcase: the size of the piece, the colors, the technique used, and the marketing of the final product with respect to the traditions of the art and its sacred meanings.

The design used on the pillowcase is considered a "sample" of what the design would be typically displayed as in the indigenous community (Goertzen 11). The ancestor symbol on Goertzen's pillowcase is accepted as authentic because when the symbol is used alone on a handicraft, it is intensified. This "intensification through selection thus helps turn an authentic craft that had been as much aimed at the soul as at the eyes into satisfactory art for outsiders" (Goertzen 13). In this case, Goertzen argues that the product preserves its authenticity because the correct symbol is being used and portrayed in a respectful manner. From my perspective, it is authentic to their culture because the Indians have the authority to design it and state that it is authentic although the symbol is not presented in a traditional way that tourists might consider to be authentic.

The size of the pattern on the pillowcase was larger than it would normally be displayed, but it is not "far from tradition" because in some cases it is made larger to complement the border of a huipil (Goertzen 14). Just as in a Mexican restaurant in the United States, the artisans

do not mind altering the product from traditional ways that would be considered more authentic to tourists because the modern way of creating the product can be more efficient and they can earn money faster. "Craftspersons for whom time is money welcome larger designs because they are faster to execute" (Goertzen 14). Another important point is that the shape and size of each design has the tendency to differ because Chiapas artisans' handicrafts tend to be inspired by dreams and are traditionally subject to changes (Goertzen 14). The authenticity of the Indian culture can be described as based off of dreams and profits, but that does not make the pillowcase any less authentic as traditional handicrafts.

The use of color can challenge the idea of what tourists believe is authentic as well. Traditionally in Chiapas, designs are made with multiple colors. The two alterations found in handicrafts are either add more, dense colors to the design to intensify it or use fewer colors than is the tradition to make the product fitting for a tourist's home. Another way the traditional method of using color has been altered in Chiapas is the use of dyes. Natural dyes were abandoned when synthetic dyes became readily available (Goertzen 15). The use of natural dyes came back into use when an American, Amber Past, became interested in the making of natural dyes and persuaded the natives to relearn their traditional dye-making ways (Goertzen 15). "At first she had to pay her skeptical Indian associates to work with the natural tints, which they didn't like, as they found them relatively subdued and 'sad.' But their reluctance ebbed when they saw that tourists preferred articles thus dyed" (Goertzen 16). Although the traditional way of using dyes was brought back into craft-making through the influence of an outsider, Goertzen believes that the revival of natural dyes was authentic because it returned to the culture a traditional method to be used on present handicrafts. Goertzen fails to realize that authenticity is not determined by tradition. The revival of natural dyes is authentic not just because it was a

tradition of the past, but rather because the Indians decided to revive the traditional style because it created more profit. This revival is ironic because the Indians did not bring back the traditional way to make their products authentic; what the Indians make in the present is already authentic to them.

The store the pillowcase was sold and marketed in was owned by outsiders that had respect for the Indians and supported improving their economic welfare (Goertzen 17). “The director of textiles, Maddalena Forcella (an Italian married to the store director, the Mexican anthropologist Luis Joel Morales), made many of the decisions [Goertzen] described in the previous sections about the pillowcase” (Goertzen 17). Forcella could have exploited and disrespected the Indians’ handicrafts, but she chose to support and respect the Indians’ art. A supportive middleman provides artisans with the opportunity to market their products to tourists who are looking for authentic handicrafts without travelling far or paying a high price. Goertzen concludes the Chiapas story explaining that “making crafts can be done in a way that ‘selling tradition’ does not injure it significantly. Moreover, the modest income from crafts helps protect aspects of traditional life” (Goertzen 34). While it is a good thing to preserve the past, it is not about selling tradition in order for a handicraft to be considered authentic. Goertzen and tourists need to realize that tradition is separate from authentic.

Pierre van den Berghe (1994) identifies the role middlemen, or those who control the tourism industry in that region, play in his book *The Quest for the Other*. In his book, he focuses on ethnic tourism as tourists’ search for the “exotic other,” or a place, experience, or item that serves as an escape from their ordinary lives, and the way it impacts the Zinacanteco Indians in Chiapas. Middlemen can help tourists find handicrafts that will remind them when they leave Chiapas of the exotic other that they found. Middlemen can have power over the Indians by

controlling the economics and what tourists can and cannot access. Thus, they have the power to “manipulate indigenous cultural symbols for commercial gain...even to alter indigenous culture for tourist marketing” (van den Berghe 14). If the middlemen manipulate their power over the Indians, the handicrafts being marketed to tourists will not be considered authentic to the culture because the indigenous people do not have the power to decide how and what parts of their culture will be displayed to outsiders.

On the other hand, van den Berghe notes that in the town of San Cristóbal de las Casas, located in the state of Chiapas, the Indians have avoided exploitation by middlemen by running cooperatives organized by outsiders. The Indians are able to make decisions about their handicrafts and how they want to market them as opposed to middlemen telling them how to create their handicrafts. “The most successful one was organized by an American” and another was organized by a German (van den Berghe 64). Similar to Maddalena Forcella’s shop in the pillowcase example, multiple Indian products are able to be sold through the cooperatives without losing what is considered authentic by the artisans.

Authenticity of the indigenous communities is not always challenged by tourism. Van den Berghe solidifies the idea that cultures are always changing by explaining that tourists do not always influence change. “One example is evolution of Zinacanteco dress style from very sober white cloth with just a pin-stripe of pink to a much more colorful explosion of pink with multicolored embroidered flowers” (van den Berghe 141). While the tourists find the new, colorful style attractive, it is not frequently marketed to tourists (van den Berghe 141). In this case, two types of authenticity appear. The white cloth is considered authentic by the Indians for tourist use. The colorful style is considered by the Indians as authentic to their culture and personal tastes. Goertzen’s pillowcase example of the marketing of the sober white cloth to

tourists supports this observation. The sober white cloth style may have been authentic to the Indians' tastes in the past, but multiple colors is authentic to the present time but is not likely to sell.

One way the Zinchantecos are able to preserve their culture and avoid creating a false, authentic culture driven by Ladinos and foreigners is through the support of the elite Ladinos. Since 1778, the Indians have been exploited by the Spanish and Ladino elites who wanted to save San Cristóbal from its backwardness. The Indians had to pay tributes and work for the elites. Even after its independence in 1810 from Spain, the Ladinos remained in control of the economy and local government (van den Berghe 35). San Cristóbal became a Ladino town where Ladinos and Indians had a patron-client relationship. The Indians worked for the elite Ladinos and competed with the working class Ladinos. "Not infrequently, ladinos would insult Indians or push them aside on the marketplace" (van den Berghe 36). The Indians were regarded as uncivilized, alcoholics, ignorant, and dirty, but were also known as hard-working peasants (van den Berghe 36). The main reason Indians are separated from Ladinos and looked down upon is because the Indians do not speak Spanish, or the language of the elites. The Indians were able to move up in status if they learned and spoke Spanish, but with the influence of tourists, they no longer have to rid of their native language to be regarded as valuable (van den Berghe 38). It is important to understand the relationship between these two social classes in order to grasp the full impact the tourists had on the indigenous community.

Tourism has influenced the Ladinos to change their views of the Indians who are now viewed as a valuable asset (van den Berghe 144). This new image spurred from the tourists' desires to see something exotic, such as the Indians and their culture. Rather than hiding the Indians, Ladinos now display artifacts, murals, books, handicrafts, postcards, and posters of

Indians in their hotels and restaurants (van den Berghe 143). This change enables Indians to gain a stronger cultural pride and prevents Ladinos from having too much control over the Zinacantan determined authentic culture. The Indians can now work with the Ladinos to expand the tourist industry in San Cristóbal, rather than being insulted or pushed aside. In my opinion, in order for the indigenous-centered tourist town to be considered authentic, the Ladinos should give all tourist deciding power to the Indians.

Overall in San Cristóbal, tourists have been able to appreciate that the town is real and authentic in the sense that the Ladinos and indigenous people actually live and work there and willingly choose to make modifications to the town to accommodate tourists. "A few of the more perceptive tourists cannot help but notice that the food in the better restaurants is adapted to their taste, that the menus are often multilingual, that some of the hotels are built in neocolonial style, that proliferating galleries of cute boutiques sell nonlocal crafts, that, in short, authenticity is already being staged" (van den Berghe 150). Although the tourists understand that the town is staged to accommodate them similar to the Mexican restaurant example, San Cristóbal remains authentic in that it is a town where the indigenous have the voice to identify it as authentic despite changes that modernize San Cristóbal. The town simply "spruced itself up" (van den Berghe 150) and became authentic to the present times and cultural values of making money off of tourism.

San Cristóbal has been able to remain an authentic town because it was built organically by the Ladinos who gave the Indians a voice and the authority to decide what is authentic. Outsiders who contributed to the development of tourism in San Cristóbal understood the local culture's interests and respected what the indigenous viewed as authentic. Van den Berghe concludes his case study of San Cristóbal by advising that in order to remain authentic, tourism

planning and development must “be based on local control at the municipal level, combined with small-scale private enterprise and investment” (van den Berghe 149). Or, as Erve Chambers would argue, give the locals, including the Indians, control over the tourism industry.

Goertzen continues his book *Made in Mexico* with examples of authenticity in Oaxaca, the Mexican state just north of his first case study in Chiapas. He explains that “In contrast to Chiapas, a majority of the tourists visiting Oaxaca remain Mexican nationals, though U.S. citizens and somewhat fewer Europeans are important constituencies and are critical in the support of craft communities” (Goertzen 40). One of the most sought after crafts that tourists look for in Oaxaca are the rugs. Rugs are not common in working-class Mexican homes in rural areas. Also, rugs are not suitable in affluent homes with tile floors that need to be mopped every day. Rug making is not a traditional practice; it came about when a taxi driver in the 1960s noticed the demand for rugs in American homes. Since rugs are not used in Mexican homes, one might assume that they are not authentic to the culture. These rugs are not used the way they are in the United States, but are viewed as authentic handicrafts only to be sold in the tourist market. The weaving business simply expanded to making rugs from the same technique used to make serapes, or shawls (Goertzen 45). Goertzen comments, “The leap in the customary narrative from serape to rug seems not to injure the twin themes of continuity and authenticity, although the weaving of rugs constitutes a dramatic break in tradition” (Goertzen 45). Although rug making broke serape weaving tradition, I agree that it did not injure the authenticity of weaving. From my perspective, the indigenous community does not have to use the rugs for them to be considered authentic as long as the community agrees that it represents their culture.

Another aspect of Oaxaca that attracts tourists in July is the “Guelaguetza, the splendid local festival encompassing Mexico’s most extensive and colorful variety of dance

performances” (Goertzen 41). The festival occurs twice in July and is presented to over twelve thousand people and generates “immediate economic benefits of tourist dollars” (Goertzen 75). As Erik Cohen stated indigenous people in cases where their culture is exposed to the outside world may lose interest in their culture or may be excited to share it. In this case, the indigenous people are excited to dance in the festival because the festival is viewed as a public celebration of indigenous identity (Goertzen 75). The indigenous identify the festival as being authentic to their identity.

At the festival, Goertzen explains that “The shaping of each Guelaguetza on the hill begins when an “authenticity committee” of anthropologists and other upper-class culture mavens visits sizable native towns” (Goertzen 97). An authenticity committee challenges my thesis that authenticity is determined by the indigenous people according to the time and place. The committee makes recommendations realizing that tradition cannot always fit into the festival. For example, the traditionally seven hour dances are shortened to ten minutes (Goertzen 98). The indigenous performers do not mind the change because they still know the true meaning of the full length dance and understand that the shortened version is made to accommodate tourists (Goertzen 98). The indigenous community accepts the changes made by the committee, but they must also possess the authority to decide what is authentic.

Goertzen writes this committee off as being critics against modern dress and performance styles. This committee does not understand that authenticity does not derive from tradition and that modernizing dresses and performances is just as authentic as tradition. The only people who mind the modern changes, such as length of performances, are the intellectuals that join the authenticity committee. Goertzen quotes, “But this is for the state and the economy: we don’t let it get too crazy, but we bend quite a bit,” explained Margarita Dalton Palomo, a prominent

anthropologist and frequent member of the authenticity committee” (Goertzen 100). The authenticity committee may have a large say in what can and cannot be bent, but they should not have the authority to decide authenticity. Tradition may seem more authentic to tourists and scholars, but what really matters is what is authentic to the indigenous people even if that means modernizing the culture. Goertzen realizes that “The craftsmen are not worrying about the letter of authenticity; they are embodying its spirit” (Goertzen 121). Thus, the authenticity of festivals and handicrafts cannot be determined by outsiders, but by the indigenous people who put their soul into what they believe to be authentic to their present culture.

The final case study of Capulálpam de Méndez, located in the Mexican state of Oaxaca, is different because the indigenous tourism industry there relies on the interference of the state government. Without the government’s help, the indigenous communities would not have the resources to develop their community into a tourist friendly attraction. The Magical Villages program, created in 2001 by the Oaxaca government, has a goal to “promote tourism (both domestic and international) to “typical” Mexican communities and to offer tourists an experience of ‘true Mexico’ in addition to (or rather instead of) beaches, resorts, and pre-colonial ruins” (Gross 51). Within this program, indigenous villages are able to benefit financially from the tourists the program helps to attract. The downside is that the indigenous community has to respond to the government’s requests and does not have the authority to decide what an authentic representation of their village is. This is where authenticity becomes complicated.

In order to become a Magical Village, indigenous communities must apply and possess these qualities: a two hour proximity to a consolidated tourist destination, accessibility from good roads, and must possess magic. Magic is determined by the architecture, if the people possess an outstanding cultural identity (such as making handicrafts), and if it is different than

other villages (Gross 56). In 2007, Capulálpam de Méndez was able to become a magical village and was transformed by 2008 (Gross 59). Because the village had to suddenly respond to the government's idea of an authentic village or become audited, the village lost its authenticity.

Not all of the indigenous people agreed with what the government presented to tourists as an authentic representation of the culture. The village cannot be authentic if the indigenous community as a whole does not agree that it is. One particular example of disagreement came from the elderly who viewed the village as being vulnerable to tourists. Similar to the Guelaguetza festival in the previous case study, the once authentic fiesta patronal that used to have little outside spectators was now used to attract many outsiders. The fiesta began focusing on entertainment rather than its true religious meaning and included vendors (Gross 61). "In fact, the new touristic role of the fiesta seemed to dominate over its religious and communal meaning. This was a source of concern for many locals. As one of my informants, an elderly woman, critically claimed when describing the contemporary fiesta patronal: 'Espura fiesta, no es la fé [It is just a party, not [a manifestation of] faith]'" (Gross 61). The festival cannot be regarded as authentic to the culture because the elders in the community do not agree that it is. Understandably, the indigenous community sacrificed the authenticity of the festival for financial gains.

The indigenous people are the only ones who have the authority to modernize the village in order to attract tourists and consider the new festivals as authentic. In this case, the community were not given authority to make the changes. Authenticity can only be applied to the magic village of Capulálpam de Méndez if the government hands back the power of the village to make its own decisions. In the past, adult males would make the decisions and that was authentic. Now, decisions about village life are made at federal or state level, or complying with the

Ministry of Tourism (Gross 66). While the Magical Villages program is financially beneficial for the indigenous communities, I disagree with the government and Ministry of Tourism's statement that any magical village can be regarded as authentic if the indigenous people do not have a direct say and communal agreement in the changes made to accommodate tourists.

From the four case studies in Chiapas and Oaxaca, I have been able to exemplify my argument that in order for an indigenous culture to be considered authentic, in reality and in a touristic setting, the people must agree that is and have the authority to make changes. Within tourist communities, there may be two different cultures displayed as MacCannell would describe as front-stage and back-stage. One version of culture could be the natural day to day activities that the people go through. In reality, tourist communities consist of people who are simply going about their day and are not directly concerned with the tourists. Another version of the culture would be the one presented for tourists' pleasure. This version may include variations of typical handicrafts and festivals. My argument is that as long as the indigenous people accept both versions of the culture as authentic to them, then both versions are authentic.

Indigenous people may decide to modernize their techniques in order to create a quicker return of profit and then switch back to the traditional ways if tourists are more attracted to them such as in the case of the colors used the pillowcase story in *Made in Mexico*. Many tourists tend to define tradition as authentic and thus appreciate handicrafts that are traditional. It is ironic that sometimes the indigenous people do not agree that traditional styles are no longer authentic to their culture and would rather, for example, wear colorful clothes instead of the traditional plain, white clothes as described in *The Quest for the Other*. The indigenous people may still decide to sell the traditional style to tourists and can consider that authentic to the tourist culture, but the more colorful styles are authentic to the everyday culture.

Indigenous communities can also change or add new handicrafts to their culture, such as the non-traditional rugs in *Made in Mexico*, and consider those new items as authentic. Cultures are always changing and adding new, nontraditional handicrafts does not affect the community's decision to identify something new as authentic. What one has to look out for, as in the cases of the authenticity committee and the Magical Villages program, is who had the authority make changes and call them authentic. If a committee shortens festival dances in order to accommodate tourists' needs, the festival is authentic only if the indigenous people do not mind and accept the festival as an authentic part of the tourist version of their culture. If the government or any middlemen do not give the indigenous people the authority to make decisions to make changes and the community disagrees that the changes are authentic, then the community's idea of what is authentic overrides the outsiders' idea.

In conclusion, my theory that authenticity can only be determined by the indigenous people who have authority should be kept in tourists' minds when searching for the exotic other. Tourists should be wary of outside control and the rights of the indigenous people to represent their culture to the world in their own authentic ways. The government should also realize that if they do not give indigenous communities power in the tourist industry, they will most likely be false advertising a culture to tourists. Authenticity deals with more than just a debate between scholars and theorists. The larger picture is that tourism impacts indigenous communities not only in Mexico, but all around the world. Tourists and governments are invading these communities and giving them little room to deny requests when they can improve their community economically. With so much at risk for indigenous people, the least we can do is give them the power to control how their communities are run, represented, and realize that they can be both modern and authentic. For future implications, it would be interesting to apply the

theories of authenticity to the different categories of a tourism affected culture within an indigenous community. These categories would include the communities' historical traditions, modern tastes in style, and modified versions accommodated to tourists. As I have found in my study, tradition is commonly associated with authenticity. From what I have examined from Oaxaca and Chiapas, tradition and authenticity must be distinguished as two separate identities in order to understand that authenticity is about the people's word over the outsiders' opinions.

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