

Does Tourism Matter? The Effects of Tourism and the State on the Political Choices of Indigenous Populations in Mexico and Guatemala.

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Abstract

The current study examines the effects of tourism and the state on the political choices of indigenous populations in Mexico and Guatemala. Traditionally, anthropologists and other social scientists have decried the effects of tourism on “exotic” cultures but contemporary research may reveal that this growing economic resource, especially indigenous related tourism that specifically requires the presence of indigenous people, is being utilized by savvy rational actors to further political and social gains in regions largely ignored or even repressed by controlling classes. The current study suggests that the findings of scholars of agrarian political mobilizations such as Jeffrey Paige, James Scott, Samuel Popkin and Theda Skocpol can be applied to other forms of economic interaction, namely indigenous populations, rather than simply “peasants” and the economic resource of tourism can be substituted for the traditional resource of “land” with more nuanced results. Additionally, the structure of the state apparatus is also informative in the political mobilization choices of indigenous populations and may dictate the parameters from which choices are made.

Introduction

The ability of human beings to form collectives, to mobilize, to demand a voice in their society, and, as a result, to obtain resources previously unobtainable is always intriguing to the student of politics, economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology and any other number of social sciences. It usually is considered especially remarkable when people find the ability to engage in these activities when many, if not all of the cards, have been dealt against them. Such is the case with indigenous populations of Latin America. Although anthropologists have shown great interest over the last century in studying indigenous behavior in Latin America, little attention has been paid to their quest for political voice within the confines of the polities in which they currently exist and with evolving economic opportunities.

Much of the news regarding economic development in Latin America over the past several decades has been seen as two steps forward and one step back. This has been especially

true with regard to indigenous communities. In 1989, the International Labor Organization's (ILO's) Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries was ratified and provided support for internal self-determination for rights to economic, social and cultural development, to education and to language usage, maintenance and revitalization as well as substantial protection of land rights for indigenous peoples (Sanchez, 1998). In response to the growing recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples following decades of attempted cultural assimilation, the United Nations proclaimed the beginning of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples on December 10, 1994 (Hall & Patrinos, 2006).¹ In 1993, the first draft of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was prepared and was ultimately ratified in 2007. This international recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples has accompanied growing NGO involvement in their politicization and development as well through bilingual education, cultural support through community groups, health initiatives and labor market equalization (Hall & Patrinos, 2006).

Unfortunately, most economic indicators reveal that indigenous economic development has been slower than other ethnic groups in Latin America and their political influence is still greatly lagging in proportion to their numbers. For example, in Guatemala during the years 1989-2000, poverty declined by 25% for non-indigenous people but only decreased by 15% for indigenous people (Hall & Patrinos, 2006). In Mexico during the years 1992-2002 poverty declined by 5% for non-indigenous people but yielded a negative change of less than 0.1% for indigenous people. Additionally, significant discrepancies still exist in educational quality and basic health services (Hall & Patrinos, 2006).

¹ The General Assembly issued another resolution in December 2004 proclaiming the next decade as the "The Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People."

Not surprisingly, indigenous political influence, as measured by indigenous members in national and local governments, remains very low in proportion to the numbers of indigenous citizens throughout Latin America; however, there has been a remarkable groundswell of indigenous political behavior during the past 20 years (Hall & Patrinos, 2006). This has been evidenced from the 1994 Chiapas rebellion to the overthrow of the Bolivian and Ecuadoran governments in 2005 and 2007, respectively. Additionally, there has been cultural and linguistic reaffirmation of indigenous peoples throughout Latin America in recent decades revealing growing political influence. While the only official language recognized in Guatemala, for example, is still Spanish, the creation of the Mayan Language Academy of Guatemala (ALMG) was legally empowered in 1991. It is the first governmental institution in Guatemala led only by Maya and committed to Maya languages (Sanchez, 1998).²

Indigenous peoples are claimed to represent only approximately 10% of the region's population (although these figures are the source of much contestation and are often underreported) so what can explain this growing interest in indigenous rights and influence on governments, parties and businesses in the region?³ One explanation is tourism. In both Mexico and Guatemala, tourism is the largest industry in the country. In 2001, for the first time, tourism surpassed coffee production as the greatest earner in Guatemala generating 493 million dollars.⁴ Like Guatemala, Mexican tourism has surpassed agriculture as its major source of income. In 2000, 20 million tourists visited Mexico spending 8 billion dollars with the Yucatan receiving half of the international visitors who visit Mexico as tourists (Martin & Gonzalez in Baklanoff & Moseley, 2008). Tourists in both countries are attracted, in large part, to the ancient Maya past

² There are at least 23 separately identified indigenous languages in Guatemala (DIGEBI).

³ Guatemala's indigenous population has been reported as 48% to 60% (MINUGUA, 2001). Mexico's indigenous population ranges from 7.6% to 14% (Yoshioka, 2006).

⁴ In 2002, this figure rose 24% to 612.2 million dollars (CAMTUR, 2003).

in the form of ruins and “a continuing indigenous present” (as opposed to simply an “indigenous past” as represented in museums and at ruins sites) (Martin & Gonzalez, 2008: 164). While indigenous tourism is popular with Mexicans and Guatemalans who travel to the areas within their own countries to experience this cultural uniqueness, the explosion of interest in Maya history and the interest in the connection with something “otherworldly” and “exotic” has most acutely impacted North America and Europe where most of the tourists that come to this region hail. Hinch and Butler argue that the desire to experience other cultures was based on the Elizabethans’ definition of “well educated” which required the Grand Tour to learn from other cultures (1996). Because of the rapid pace of globalization and assimilation with colonial cultures, tourism is now spreading into formerly ignored and increasingly peripheral and remote areas (1996). Tourism “has been driven in part by a perpetual search for new destinations, and in part by an increasing interest in and marketing of things natural or unspoiled” (1996: 3).

The debate among those who have studied tourism development has focused on traditional economic indicators of economic growth, often concluding that tourism leads to economic exploitation and further economic inequality (Kincaid, 1988 and Trask, 1993). Anthropological debates have often focused on the “commodification” of a false culture for tourist consumption or the, usually negative, influence of tourists on “living museums” (Little, 2004). Further, much research in political science has focused on the development of large scale political behaviors, such as specific elections in Bolivia or indigenous population development in Latin America as a whole as with UN annual reporting of the support of Millennium Goals. What has been absent from these analyses has been an investigation into less openly visible political behaviors and the non-quantifiable constraints on and promotions of choices of behaviors. The current study investigates more subtle political behavior and the manner in

which indigenous people are utilizing this new resource in order to gain political leverage in the political apparatus where they live.

Literature Review

The “Maya” are generally considered a significant portion of centuries old indigenous populations in the Yucatan region of Mexico, Guatemala and Belize and have existed for 500 years while being intimately connected to European and mixed blood, mestizo/ladino, peoples but have been able to resist assimilation by, in large part, remaining rural farmers (Champagne, et al., 2005).⁵ Neoliberal trade and economic policies, proffered and heavily supported by the “global North,” have affected both the Mexican and Guatemalan Maya similarly, in that; they have resisted even more virulently cultural homogeneity in light of this recent global change to an export-oriented economic regime.⁶

An effective argument can be made that the Maya share a similar conceptualization of why they seek redress from their government as they share a similar oppression and marginalization across state lines. While the histories of Maya relationships are different in Mexico (where they are a minority population but have a history of resistance which they embrace) and Guatemala (where they are the majority but have a recent history of genocidal destruction at the hands of the ladino minority and distrust of the military that is even greater than ladino civilian populations), their identification as a population under attack from within *and without* is consistent. The Maya also perceive themselves as not only the subjugated in their own state governments and economic and political elites, they also view themselves as under attack from globalization and liberal economic reforms from the developed world (Chase-Dunn,

⁵ This is an ironic development since the mestizo population attempted to marginalize their influence by inducing them to remain in peasantry.

⁶ By “recent,” I do not mean to infer that neoliberal economic policies have changed in the last decade, rather, anything that occurs in the last *century* must be considered by indigenous people as relatively “recent!”

Jonas and Amaro, 2001). These influences also color their relationship to and perception of economic opportunities that arise as a result of liberalized economic reforms as well.

Because of the unique character of the Maya in relation to the polities in which they live, the extensive literature regarding peasant political behavior can be utilized to inform indigenous political behavior in Mexico and Guatemala. Eric Wolf defines a “peasant” as populations subject to control by the state (as opposed to “primitives,” who are not) and who are directly involved in cultivation and can make autonomous decisions regarding said cultivation (Wolf, 1969). The key element of peasantry, Wolf explains, is that they are concerned primarily with subsistence and social status gained from their immediate social relationships. Peasants do not risk shift and compete with each other in ever increasing attempts to maximize returns, instead, they prefer smaller risk and rely on traditional relationships for mutual support and survival (Wolf, 1969). Anderson expands on this analysis and suggests that peasant political choices in the wider context of state politics have a unique “peasant quality” that follows them in external interactions (Anderson, 1994). She also suggests that previous research into peasant political activity had been limited to revolutionary behavior and that there is a large continuum of political activity of the peasant but that all of this activity is affected by the peasant’s view of themselves (Anderson, 1994).

Wolf makes an argument highly critical of the influence of the market on peasant populations by arguing that, in essence, until the influence of capitalism, these groups shared resources, maintained subsistence living and reduced risks in order to promote stability (1969). He argued that the influence of competition for resources upset the balance of communal ties and traditions and created instability leading to unrest. Wolf argued that political protests of the peasantry were linked to a loss of subsistence, collective security and communal welfare (1969).

Further, Wolf argued, peasants will sacrifice self interest in order to promote the welfare of the collective group and will strive to maintain class relationships in order to preserve security.

Peasant beneficence is not without its critics, however. Paige, Popkin and subsequent researchers argued that the peasantry always behaved in a much more rational manner and will individually choose strategies with lower risk and increasing rates of return whenever possible (Popkin, 1980). While some investments are made in communal village life, the ultimate goal is for the benefit of the individual engaged in the investing (1980). These arguments ultimately lead to analyses of the influence of economic structures on the choices in political behaviors that are made in order to maximize gains. Paige’s chart summarizing his findings in *Agrarian Revolution* indicating the combination of cultivator and non-cultivator income sources and the typical forms of agricultural organizations with expected forms of agrarian political behavior is provided below (1975).

		Cultivators	
		Land	Wages
Noncultivators	Land	Commercial Hacienda Revolt	Sharecropping Migratory Labor Revolution
	Capital	Small Holding Reform (Commodity)	Plantation Reform (Labor)

Barrington Moore again provides support for these arguments regarding the connections between indigenous population behavior and peasant behavior. Moore, in what one might consider obvious, but bears repeating, states that the absence of solidarity or a state of weak solidarity “puts severe difficulties in the way of *any* political action” (Emphasis in original)

(Moore, 1966). The Maya have shown many of the hallmarks of solidarity in speaking a common language and possessing a common culture and historical experience separate from the controlling group. This baseline solidarity was not present in many of the groups Moore examined but clearly exists in the regions involved in the current study. Additionally, modernization and increased liberal economic interrelatedness produce anticapitalist sentiment in segments not benefitting from this arrangement. Moore supports these arguments in his examination of peasant villages in Germany where industrial development creates seedbeds of reactionary behaviors (Moore, 1966: 477). Further, *revolutionary* behavior is linked to the “weakness of the institutional links binding peasant society to the upper classes” and this, combined with the exploitative character of these relationships, will sow the seeds of these more outward behaviors (Moore, 1966: 478). All of these elements are seen in the relationship between the mestizos/ladinos and the Maya of Mexico and Guatemala and the behaviors of the Maya are easily understood when examining the behavior patterns of peasants in similar situations.

As has been indicated, the history of Maya challenges to mestizo/ladino authority has become part of their cultural identity and is arguably a factor in their ability to politically mobilize in response to and in order to utilize the influence of tourism. From the “War of the Castes” in the mid-19th century to the 1994 Chiapas uprising which was led by a guerrilla force of Tzotzil and Tzeltal Maya demanding economic, political and cultural rights for the Maya of Chiapas and all of Mexico, Mexican Maya have always been able to resist active policies of assimilation and have been able to politically mobilize when necessary (Coe, 2005). Similarly, Guatemalan Maya have undergone a long series of hardships by the ladino run government, the most recent being the 36 year war that began in 1960 but was directly involved attacks on Maya

in 1978 in the town of Panzos and ultimately resulted in 150,000 Maya deaths and up to a million displaced throughout Guatemala (Coe, 2005). Since the peace accords in December 1995, the Maya have made several gains including the Academia de las Lenguas Mayas which has helped create a cultural reawakening that has standardized a Mayan orthography and resulted in bilingual instruction and active teaching of local languages (Coe, 2005).

Brockett, Paige, Popkin, and others seem to suggest Barrington Moore's observation that oppressed peoples will not revolt as long as there is a collectively recognized legitimacy of the "privileges of aristocracy" and, further, that they owe obligations to them (Moore, 1966). They argue that what is necessary for political mobilization of these groups is, first, an ability to challenge the legitimacy of these arrangements and, secondly, a means of organizing. It should be noted, however, that not the only political movements that "count" are those that result in revolution. James Scott offers that peasant *resistance* does not necessarily involve overt protest, in fact, that form of protest can be deadly given the lack of recourse that many of these people experience making them at the mercy of local mercenaries and, therefore, is usually considered an option of last resort by marginalized people. Further, he argues that resistance, rather than revolution, requires little or no organization and, therefore, is a significantly more efficient form of protest (Scott, 1987). He offers as a definition of 'peasant resistance' as any act by a peasant that is intended either to mitigate or deny claims made on that class by super-ordinate classes or to advance peasant claims vis-à-vis these super-ordinate classes (1987: 419). Scott argues that there is a continuum of violence from one extreme to the other that characterizes the nature of

the political movement and that peasant resistance is usually on the extreme non-violent end of this continuum but that this does not make it any less relevant or significant (Scott, 1987).⁷

Further, in order to measure the patterns of agrarian social organization, Paige offers that all segments of rural society should be examined, not simply workers on large plantations, which, prior to Paige's work was often the only area studied as a source of political mobilization of peasantry. He offers that in most rural communities, the main "*probretariado*" (proletariat) are wage laborers and other landless rural people along with small land holders and squatters and suggests that all of these groups should be combined to provide a complete picture of political mobilization potential (Paige, 1996). This suggestion should come as no surprise to the researcher of peasant populations as their parameters are, in fact, difficult to define, especially in determining primary sources of income in order to categorize them as in Paige's analysis (Anderson and Seligson, 1994). Assuming Skocpol's arguments are correct; however, all members of this group will experience some level of exploitation and will have a common sense of their exploiter.

The analysis of the Maya as a social grouping with similar characteristics that transcend geographical and political boundaries begs the question of why they choose different political behaviors in different areas even when those areas are often closely situated or have similar economic and political structures. When discussing the concept of the Maya with indigenous political participants in Mexico as compared to those in Guatemala and vice versa, one is often told that there could be no comparison because Mexico and Guatemala "are so different!" What is the influence of the different states on behavior choice?

⁷ Helman and Rapoport (1997) discuss the importance of studying the effect of 'subtle' unstructured protest which can be as effective as any revolution.

State Strength as an Influence on Political Behavior

State strength is an important factor in examining indigenous political behavior choices and Theda Skocpol's seminal research is instructive in this regard. Skocpol is widely known as one of the leading researchers in peasant political movements because of her work examining revolutions in France, Russia and China (Skocpol, 1979). She was one of the first researchers to recognize that peasant revolts were different from lower-class urban revolutionary actions in that they are largely agrarian, and therefore, somewhat less visible (Skocpol, 1979). She argued that the specificity of their focus, which was largely anti-landlord, and their lack of geographic concentration, "created decisive constraints at the societal level on the range of sociopolitical options available to elites contending for national power." (1979: 113). Additionally, Skocpol posited that it was not the *level of poverty* that determined whether the agrarian order was vulnerable to peasant revolution; rather, it was the *nature* of the political apparatus. She argued that agrarian order would be insulated from peasant revolt if landlords directly controlled administrative and military machineries at a *local* level. If the local decision-making was autonomous then it was likely that agrarian orders would be maintained but, if decision-making was done centrally with local landlords acting as simply agents of a monarch or other central power, sudden and autonomous peasant revolts were more likely (Skocpol, 1979).

Expanding Skocpol's theories to the present condition in Mexico and Guatemala we should be able to hypothesize that strong states with localized autonomous control of areas containing large indigenous populations should be somewhat insulated from large scale peasant revolt, whereas, weaker states with less localized control will see more "sudden and autonomous" peasant or indigenous revolts. It would be predicted then that Mexico, where the

state has greater localized control and, therefore, the rate of overt indigenous revolts and protest are, in fact, less likely than in Guatemala where localized state control is nonexistent.

By expanding Skocpol's thesis with Scott's discussion of the different types of political behaviors that are most commonly observed with marginalized populations some predictions can be made. If the state is unable to capture citizen discontentment then there should be more extra-state political behavior even with subtle "safer" behaviors that indigenous people might employ in order to avoid retribution. If the state is better equipped to allow for citizen expression of dissatisfaction with government then it should be expected that one should observe more intra-state or state endorsed political activity. In fact, this prediction is borne out in the current study. In Mexico, across the areas examined, regardless of the presence of tourism development or character of tourism development, political behavior could generally be considered as sanctioned by the state to a large degree. Even in Chichen Itza, where large scale land invasions have occurred, and violent retribution was reported, the choices of the indigenous vendors was intra-state in nature i.e. they employed an attorney, they have filed legal actions, they have selected a representative who ran for federal office within an established (although marginal) political party and have availed themselves of popular media outlets. Additionally, while they have sought to enforce "indigenous" concerns by organizing with other indigenous vendor groups and while pressing for other indigenous issues, such as the right to have religious ceremonies on sight, they have not done so in Yucateko (the Maya language of the Yucatan region) or by alienating local mestizo vendors. In the alternative, where the state is weaker, as in Guatemala, the behavior is likely to be more extra-state as in the situation in Zunil where tour vendors sought to form an unrecognized union of other tour vendors, have threatened violence against other competitive groups and have even made displays of threats in front of tourists. Further, party apparatus

should be stronger in Mexico than in Guatemala where the party is seen as a mechanism for elite control of business and other clientelist benefits. Because of this, Mexico’s indigenous populations should have more activity related to party activity than in Guatemala. In fact, Rigoberta Menchu’s party WINAQ was not considered a “political player” by those that I spoke with throughout Guatemala including indigenous women’s groups that once aligned with Menchu and supported her Nobel Peace Prize win only a few years ago.

A table of the expected findings with regard to political behaviors that are argued to be “captured” by the state, i.e. behaviors that rely on state-centric apparatus, can be identified in the table below and existing within “moderately covert” and “moderately overt” behaviors. The table indicates the expected findings and provides a model incorporating all of the literature regarding state and economic influence on indigenous political behavior choice. The areas in red indicate where on the behavior intensity continuum political behaviors should be observed given the economic influence and the configuration of the state. It is expected that Guatemala, as a weak state, should reveal behaviors that are similar regardless of economic environment. Because Mexico is stronger and, therefore more able to capture citizen discontent should reveal less evidence of covert behavior but should also reveal more overt behavior as well because of the interaction of the economic classes.

Table 1

Political Behaviors by Economic Environment and State Strength: Hypotheses

	State Strength	
Economic Environment	Strong (Mexico)	Weak (Guatemala)

Indigenous Dependent Tourism	Moderate to Overt ----- ----- (Chichen Itza/Piste, Tulum, Izamal)	Covert to Mod. Overt ----- ----- (Quetzaltanango, Antigua, Totnicapan)
Other Types of Tourism	Moderate to Overt ----- ----- (Merida, Cancun, Progreso)	Covert to Mod. Overt ----- ----- (Guatemala City, Iztapa, Zunil)
No Tourism	Mod. Covert to Mod. Overt --- ----- --- (Dzan, Kimbila, Felipe Carrillo Puerto)	Covert to Mod. Overt ----- ----- (Uspantan, Nebaj, Coatepeque)

Note. Areas in red indicate intensity of political behaviors.

Indigenous Dependent Tourism as an Influence on Political Behavior

Applying Paige’s analysis in the current study involves linking the influence of the group connection to *land* to the group connection to *tourism*. While much of Latin America remains agrarian, many Latin American countries undertook a reorientation of their economies, beginning most recently in the 1980s, from statist to market-oriented models focused on economic liberalization (Stokes, 2001). These efforts at reform occurred for different reasons and with differing degrees of success – Mexico and Guatemala included (Stokes, 2001). This has allowed for additional analysis of Paige’s theory. If the argument holds, that class connection to land influences the type of political mobilization, the same types of behaviors should occur utilizing a similar but different capital resource.

Many economists argue that liberalized economies create increased economic opportunities for all sectors in the state where economic reforms take place. This argument was specifically made in support of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) in 1993. Nash argues that this has not been the case in Mexico, however. When the 1994 World Bank Annual

Report claimed that NAFTA was bolstering the long-term outlook of Mexico's economy, not everyone was so convinced as "the subsistence producers in rural and particularly indigenous areas, were rejecting it in armed uprisings and mass demonstrations" (2001: 9). Why was this so? Cuts in public spending created sectoral imbalances in most of Latin America resulting in 39 percent living below the poverty line in the early 1990s. Further, the position of Mexico's and Guatemala's indigenous population has been steadily declining in relation to other sectors and even to recent past conditions (Inter-American Development Bank, 1997: 150). This type of economic inequality often leads to political action in order to capture a larger share of the resources, however, the type and character of the mobilization can be predicted based on the economic connection of the classes to the land, per Paige's analysis. The current study will show that these predictions hold true with another type of capital influence, i.e. indigenous dependent tourism.⁸ The degree of connectivity to the resource, which is determined by the character of the resource, whether it is tourism or indigenous dependent tourism, informs the political behaviors of the local indigenous population.

Popkin predicts that peasant populations will strive to find new resources and will gamble rationally to exploit those resources for personal gain rather than seek to develop communally (1980). While many argue that the introduction of a new economic resource or globalization and involvement in the liberalized market economy will break down traditional economic structures of the peasantry, Popkin holds no such romantic view. He asserts that village communal life is merely a myth and people existing in villages live in a corporate manner and have done so throughout their histories (1980). This analysis is observed in the current study as well and in other research (Anderson, 1994; Little, 2004). While Little observed competition among

⁸ For a complete discussion of the phenomena of urban migration from rural communities due to the effects of globalization, please read *Indians, Markets, and Rainforests*, Ricardo Godoy, Columbia University Press (2001).

families for tourism business, there is no evidence that this did not occur before the introduction of tourism into the community (2004). While some groups had organized in order to reduce conflict as a result of this competition, as among the souvenir vendors at Chichen Itza, this organization was not consistent where tourism was an economic resource or where agriculture was the economic resource as had been the situation when “moral economy” approaches were studied.

Many anthropologists also study tourism and argue it as destructive of culture and as creating ethnic tension as a result of this cultural deterioration and exploitation by ruling classes. They contend that representations of indigenous people have created or reinforced negative stereotypes of them as “natives” or “primitive” and reestablished colonial influenced expectations of tourists (Hitchcock, 1999). Others have investigated the detrimental effects tourism has on rural migration that has occurred in response to the concentration of wealth and employment in “tourist poles” (Torres & Momsen, 2005). In Cancun, especially, many tourism workers must migrate great distances in order to find work, making involvement and civic engagement in their own communities almost impossible and, for those that do not migrate, urban shanties create their own social problems of waste management, crime, and other health issues (Torres & Momsen, 2005).

Not every researcher adopts a pessimistic view with regard to maintenance of culture identity and exacerbation of economic inequality in the world of globalization and liberalized market economies, however. The research of Leslie Anderson has already been discussed but Martha Van Der Bly similarly theorizes that “micro-phenomenological and conventional culture models stress the tradition-based resistance of local life to the exogenous pressures of modernization” (2007: 235). Van Der Bly studied Ireland and found that dominant economic

globalization can cause a resurgence of local identity and a revival of indigenous language, in this case, facilitated in part by the multinational corporation Intel, which built large facilities in a rural village. While Van Der Bly's analysis of this event is lacking, her conclusion seems to suggest an economic partnership is created when the "localness" of the region is valued for rational economic means. It can be argued; therefore, that in indigenous-dependent tourist areas, "Maya-ness" may serve a similar purpose as Van Der Bly's Irish with their "Home of Guinness" motto, in that, since culture is the *marketable resource*, nonmembers of the cultural grouping will seek to preserve it to maintain that resource stream.

Similarly, Greathouse-Amador found that indigenous dependent tourism in Cuetzalan, Mexico, which is inhabited by 83% Nahua Indian, has given this indigenous population much more power as the mestizos in the region, long the ruling class, must make concessions because both groups depend on the tourism industry (2005). She also suggests that this power has increased solidarity with the indigenous population and has increased their sense of self-worth which has resulted in a cultural resurgence. What has not been studied, and which the current study addresses, is how tourism influences political activity with regard to indigenous populations and whether these behaviors are changed in response to the character of the tourism itself.

The central controversy associated with tourism is the question of *who* benefits from the industry. It would initially appear that Mexican and Guatemalan tourism is largely controlled by the mestizo or ladino populations. Therefore, one would expect to find that wealth from tourism should be concentrated in these populations with indigenous populations on the periphery and, connected to wealth; all political power should be concentrated in the ruling classes. It can be argued this is not the case, however, in Mexico and Guatemala because of the necessity of the

indigenous Maya population to successful tourism development (Greathouse-Amador, 2005; Little, 2005). After all, tourists want the contact with the “exotic” when they travel from the beach sites of Cancun in the State of Quintana Roo and into the interior of the Yucatan where most of the ruins and Maya villages with handicraft vendors are located (Greathouse-Amador, 2005). Exposure to Maya at these sites offers this and tourists often demand to have the opportunity to see and meet “real” Maya at these places and seek out the “true” Maya experience. Examples of this symbiotic relationship between the ruling class and the indigenous class have been researched with regard to the Pueblo Indian people in the United States (Carey, 2001). Since tourism in these regions is in many ways dependent on the presence of indigenous populations, not only do they share in more of the wealth (even if this is marginal) generated by the tourists than would simply poor people in tourist regions that are not indigenous dependent, they are also able to increase their political presence in subtle and non-subtle ways apart from their increase in wealth.

In tourist destinations where the appeal is not related to indigenous activity (i.e. not “indigenous dependent”), the economic results of tourism are shown to be largely negative or as resulting in no effect to the non-tourist region with regard to the poor that inhabit those regions as the wealth from the industry does not trickle down to them. Additionally, it reveals migratory patterns to more urban areas in order to obtain income from the tourist sector destroying the structure of the poor rural communities (Donaldson, 2007).⁹ This has been shown to be the case in Mexico itself. A study of indigenous street vendors in Tijuana reveals that tourism actually creates a “culture of exclusion” of indigenous women (Nova, 2003). Tijuana has a completely

⁹ Donaldson examines the Guizhou and Yunnan regions of China and reports findings consistent with the Asian proverb: “tourism is like a fire: you can cook your meal with it, or it can burn your house down.”

different dynamic wholly separate from the Yucatan.¹⁰ Tijuana was a tourist destination created by Americans during Prohibition as geographically proximate to the highly populated areas in Southern California and provided a location where alcohol could be consumed legally. Over the decades, Tijuana has evolved into a location where tourists generally spend only a few hours and are typically not interested in indigenous interactions or experiencing indigenous culture (Nova, 2003). Because of this, poor indigenous street vendors do not possess the same power of bargaining due to their “Aztec-ness” that their indigenous sisters and brothers possess in the Yucatan or highlands. This makes a strong argument in support of the symbiotic relationship created in tourist areas that are indigenous dependent. If tourism occurs in areas where there are impoverished indigenous people, their economic marginalization may, in fact, be increased, as we see in China and Tijuana, but where the tourist destination is indigenous dependent, more economic and political opportunity will be available and connection to this resource, as in Paige’s theories regarding the land, sets limits on and provides opportunities for the direction and intensity of class conflict (Paige, 1975).

Much research focuses on an arguably “false” dichotomy between tradition and modernization within the global liberal economic regime. Many researchers reference the push and pull that many societies face in attempting to maintain cultural traditions forestalling modernization. The Maya have accomplished the creation of a hybridization of these two elements and have created an alternative path melding these dynamics. Popkin provides guidance here in returning to his discussion of the Vietnamese revolution which he envisioned not as a conflict between Confucianism and Marxism (which, he argues are the equivalent of

¹⁰ And involves a completely separate indigenous population as well, Aztecs, however, the explanation for the lack of inclusion in the political apparatus, I would argue is not related to their “Aztec-ness” but due to the fact that Tijuana is not indigenous dependent.

tradition and modernity dichotomies) but a melding of these concepts into an alternative conception of Vietnamese development (Popkin, 1985). He notes this especially with regard to the role of the intellectuals in the revolution but implies that this “third path” was also followed by the peasantry as well. It should be noted that this is in evidence today in Vietnam which is a communist controlled state with a vibrant capitalist economy. One could argue that successful societies create a “way” to meld these forces. This phenomenon is evidenced in the relationship between the Maya and mestizos/ladinos and in the Maya attitude with regard to tourism and economic development. In 1997, the first Ecotourism hotel managed by a cooperative of indigenous women was opened in Cuetzalan, Mexico and is argued to be an example of not only a successful indigenous enterprise but also as evidence of Maya working to create a new social position for themselves *within* the mestizo-run polity (Greathouse-Amador, 2005). This is consistent with Paige’s thesis because the indigenous class and the ruling class both received capital directly from tourism and engaged in activity that did not lead to overt revolution.

Guatemalan Mayan handicraft vendor political mobilization has been studied by Walter Little who found that globalization and the increase in Maya-related tourism had opened “new political spaces in which Maya handicraft vendors can organize collectively to increase their personal and economic security” (2005: 81). Little does not provide an unqualified endorsement of globalization as he does recognize the arguments posed earlier in that liberalized markets can further marginalize already marginalized groups. He does offer that these markets can increase opportunities for collective action (Little, 2005). Little posits that because of the increased tourism in Antigua, where his research takes place, is indigenous dependent, the average Maya in Antigua is wealthy compared to other Maya in Guatemala. Additionally, the vendors have

recognized that since tourists are there to obtain a “Maya” experience they have altered their behavior to be more “Maya” in their dress, language, customs, etc.¹¹

Because of the weak government, many of the vendors are harassed by independent sources such as ladino vendors and other business owners who contend that the indigenous vendors take away from business. Little suggests that vendors in Antigua must circumnavigate the state in order to see their goods and must coordinate efforts between vendors in order to collectively seek redress for discriminatory practices against the indigenous vendors. Because of the intense hostile relationship between Maya vendors and the non-Maya business owners who seem to control the political environment in Antigua, Maya vendors often do not seek redress through political mechanisms; instead they directly petition foreign tourists. They hand out leaflets to tourists and petition international human rights organizations which they know tourists are aware of in the hope that tourists themselves will address their grievances to the government (Little, 2005). Little argues that these means have been successful for these Maya vendors. In fact, he discussed one instance in which Maya vendors publicly protested unfair discrimination against them in setting up their vending booths and because the police did not want to create a sense of unease with tourists did not arrest anyone at that time. Instead, the police waited until the end of tourist season and then made mass arrests of those that participated in the demonstrations. The Maya vendors simply informed the tourists at the next season of their vulnerability when the tourists left Guatemala. The tourists responded in kind to the government and the arrests did not occur at the end of that tourist season (Little, 2005). In this

¹¹ The vendors actually tend to be female because they have discovered that tourists feel less threatened by women and will buy from these vendors especially. The argument can be made that this may open up more opportunities for women in the political realm as their economic independence grows but that discussion is outside the scope of this paper.

regard, Little's research is consistent with the findings of Paige and which the current study seeks to explain.¹²

The current study seeks to explain indigenous political choices as influenced by tourism in areas where tourism is the primary economic resource. As discussed, much of the research in tourism development has been focused on the economic benefits that are derived from this economic resource or, with regard to indigenous populations, how tourism has influenced their cultural development. What has not been addressed, and is addressed by the current study, is how tourism affects political behavior and does the character of the tourism development produce different choices? The current study suggests that where tourism is indigenous development, indigenous populations will make political behavior choices that are significantly different from areas where tourism development is focused on other attributes, such as sun, sand and sea tourism. Further, significant differences can also be observed in political behavior choices in areas where there is no significant effect of tourism on the local indigenous populations. By holding the influence of the state as constant, in examining three similar areas of capital influence in each state, Mexico and Guatemala, we can examine how the influence of different types of tourism and non-tourism areas interact with the state to allow for causal suggestions (Anderson, 1990).

The Study

This study employed a qualitative design with a political anthropological method of inquiry, in which data were collected utilizing in depth semi-structured interviews with

¹² It should be noted that when I visited Antigua in 2010, not only did I not notice any Maya street vendors, I spoke with several vendors who informed me that they were aware of Little's research and informed me that the government had targeted them shortly after Little left Antigua and forced them to relocate away from the city's center parks.

individuals and, in some cases, small groups in fieldwork in Mexico and Guatemala.¹³ Questions were asked of the participants using a semi-structured interview guide that had considerable flexibility and allowed for follow up questions and digressions (Bernard, 2006). Written questions were not utilized, however, the types of questions were discussed *a priori* with the translator so that, when necessary, the translator might be able to discuss linguistic idioms that might capture the question in a better manner (the semi-structured question list is provided as Appendix A). The subject matter lends itself to qualitative study rather than quantitative study because standardized questionnaires and written surveys often put marginalized populations on guard and inaccurate information would be revealed. Additionally, newspaper reports, as researched by Paige can be argued to reflect media bias and would not fully describe the actions taken or the goals achieved. For marginalized populations in particular, it is unlikely that media reports will be accurate.

Additionally, subtle political behaviors, such as discussing the actions of the local police and business people with tourists in order to gain confederates, as in Little's Antigua market study for example, would not be reported in media accounts or police records (Little, 2005). In depth interviewing can assist the researcher in asking sensible questions regarding the ethnicity of an informant, the sources of his or her income, the rationale behind political activity, the ability to cooperate with others and set agendas and whether the intended results were realized (Bernard, 2006). Further, in depth interviewing can build trust so that additional interviews from referrals with different participants can be taken regarding the same event building nuance in the description of the event and increasing validity through repetition and increasing detail. In depth interviewing also allows the researcher to understand the *meaning* of behaviors, extending both

¹³ Qualitative fieldwork is the foundation of anthropology but often gets applied by researchers to other social sciences, including, more and more often, political science (Bernard, 2006).

the internal and external validity of the findings (Bernard, 2006). For example, subjects routinely reported that they were “not political” only to discover upon continued questioning that they boycotted mestizo restaurants with Maya names designed to exploit tourist’s interest in “real Maya” food, not because they owned a restaurant or that their friends did, but because they wanted mestizo businesses in general to fail. Additionally, behavior that one may not have characterized as “political” such as pilfering electricity from a telephone pole in the center of town was reportedly done so purposefully in view of mestizo homeowners and the electricity provider in order to protest consumerism and industrialization, considered anathema to the Maya Cosmovision. Repeated “urban legends” also took on the character of political behavior when these narratives were told in order to serve as a subtle warning that past tempestuous political behavior might be repeated and also reinforced the sense of community through references to past collective behavior. These behaviors were only discovered upon extensive interviewing and repeated contacts with members of the community and resulted in new questions to be asked in subsequent interviews.

The current study incorporated the comparative perspective in examination of Guatemala and Mexico, where the historical civilizations of Maya continue to exist. King, Keohane and Verba (1994) find that comparative case studies can yield valid causal inferences when a method of “structured, focused comparison that emphasizes discipline in the way one collects data” is used (1994: 45). They note that all extraneous variables should be held constant, such that one is confident that any differences observed are the result of true differences between groups on the independent variable, and not due to some extraneous third variable. In the present study, the individuals surveyed were of the same indigenous group, thus holding constant the “Maya” cultural dimension of the population. Mexico and Guatemala are cases that yielded many

observations with regard to the dependent variables examined, that is, indigenous political activity and results of political activity as interpreted by indigenous populations. The large numbers of observations occurred because Guatemala has one of the highest ratios of indigenous populations in Latin America and Mexico has the highest real number of indigenous citizens (Brady & Collier, 2004; Greathouse-Amador, 2005).¹⁴ The state of Yucatan has the highest proportion of indigenous population in Mexico, with numbers ranging from a low of 34.3% in some studies (e.g. Yoshioka, 2006) to a high of 37.9% in others (INEGI, 2005).¹⁵ As discussed by Anderson, Wolf, Scott, Popkin, Migdal and Paige, all forms of political activity from the barely detectable to the open and aggressive should be analyzed to determine overall protest behavior with no emphasis on one form over the other (Anderson, 1990).

The Yucatan region of Mexico and Guatemala were also particularly appropriate places for this study because they offer extraordinary opportunities to study indigenous political activity of several kinds. In both states, there have been very overt forms of political protest as well as more subtle. In both states, indigenous political protest has been largely non-violent, especially in recent years, and has relied primarily on cooperation and collective action. Both states are democracies, holding constant state polity and both have an active press that investigates and reports on indigenous political matters. Both states have worldwide recognition as being sites for opportunity of living cultural experiences with Maya and both have highly recognized ruins sites which international visitors associate with as having a historical connection to Maya cultures. Both regions offer education in contemporary Maya issues and lessons in learning Maya languages for international visitors. Because of this international recognition, both of

¹⁴ Again, of note is the difficulty in determining who is indigenous.

¹⁵ Yoshioka's research utilizes a language category and indicates that Oaxaca is the Mexican state with the highest proportion of indigenous people at 43.2%.

these areas offer interactions between indigenous populations and people from many different countries on a daily basis and yielded numerous areas of the capital resource of tourism influencing political behavior.

Further, the identification of what is sought by the political behavior is consistent. Since both Maya in Mexico and Guatemala have suffered long histories of oppression with regard to their cultural and social independence, the goal of the people is for a sense of “justice” and a voice with regard to the manner in which they live their lives. For example, an indigenous person living in Mexico and an indigenous person living in Guatemala essentially desire the same outcome from their political activity, although the mechanism of the behavior may be different and the specific outcome different, they would mutually recognize the macro goal of the other – a recognition of their right to exist as they wish and support for this goal.

Additionally, the recognition of the oppression is the same: ruling classes wishing to subjugate them and deny them justice and a voice in their destinies. This is a significant contextual and consistent variable – the indigenous people across the geographical region of study all recognize the goals of each other as being consistent with each other and all recognize the oppressor or denier of these goals and direct their actions toward these universally recognized oppressors.

The current study explored three region “types” in Guatemala and three in Mexico and allowed anthropological analysis of the interviews conducted in those areas. Specifically, areas were examined where indigenous dependent tourism was a significant source of income for local indigenous populations. In Guatemala these sites include Quetzaltenango (often called by its shortened name “Xela”) the second largest city in Guatemala and considered the gateway to the highlands, Antigua and Totonicapan (CAMTUR 2003; INGUAT 2000, 2001). Both INGUAT (Guatemala’s National Tourism Institute) and CAMTUR (Guatemala’s Association of Tourism

Related Businesses) have developed and have begun to execute national tourism development strategies which they hope will result in over 1.3 million international tourists visiting Guatemala in 2012. These strategies involve developing indigenous related tourism specifically.¹⁶ In Mexico “indigenous dependent” tourist sites included Chichen Itza/Piste, Tulum, and Izamal. Each of these sites have significant ruins regulated by INAH (Mexico’s National Institute of Anthropology and History) and GMAP (organization founded by Roberto Hernandez for tourism development) investment (INAH, 2003; FONATUR, 2008).

The study included areas with tourism development that did not have indigenous interaction as a key component in both states. In Guatemala these sites include Guatemala City, Iztapa/Monterrico and Zunil. In these areas tourism development focuses on ladino/colonial culture, sun/sand/sea or eco-tourism respectively. In Mexico these sites include Merida, Cancun and Progreso where, again, the development of tourism focuses on ladino/colonial culture and sun/sand/sea incentives.¹⁷

In order to create more leverage with case selection the current study also investigated cases where tourism is not a factor driving the economy in any appreciable form but where significant numbers of indigenous people live and work (Brady & Collier, 2004). In Guatemala these areas include Uspantan, Nebaj, and Coatepeque. These communities rely on agricultural and manufacturing industries for employment although many people still grow *milpa* (small home farms) for much of their food. In Mexico these areas include Dzun, Kimbila and Felipe

¹⁶ CAMTUR’s signature project is titled “B’yanik” which means “pathway” in K’iche and involves several “Maya routes” (las rutas mayas) in which visitors can take several trips throughout the country and visit key Maya heritage sites. “Living” Maya projects, such as craft making, are developed along these routes with special emphasis in making them hospitable to North American and European tastes.

¹⁷ The character of these locations was confirmed by the same parties as had confirmed the designation of the indigenous dependent sites.

Carrillo Puerto. These communities rely on agriculture, textiles and agriculture/migratory labor respectively.¹⁸

Information regarding the comparison of the areas of study regarding the number of interviews conducted and the population sizes of the cities is reported in Table 2 below

(population statistics INEGI 2005 and CENSO 2002):

Table 2

Population Statistics and Number of Interviews Conducted by Economic Environment and State Strength

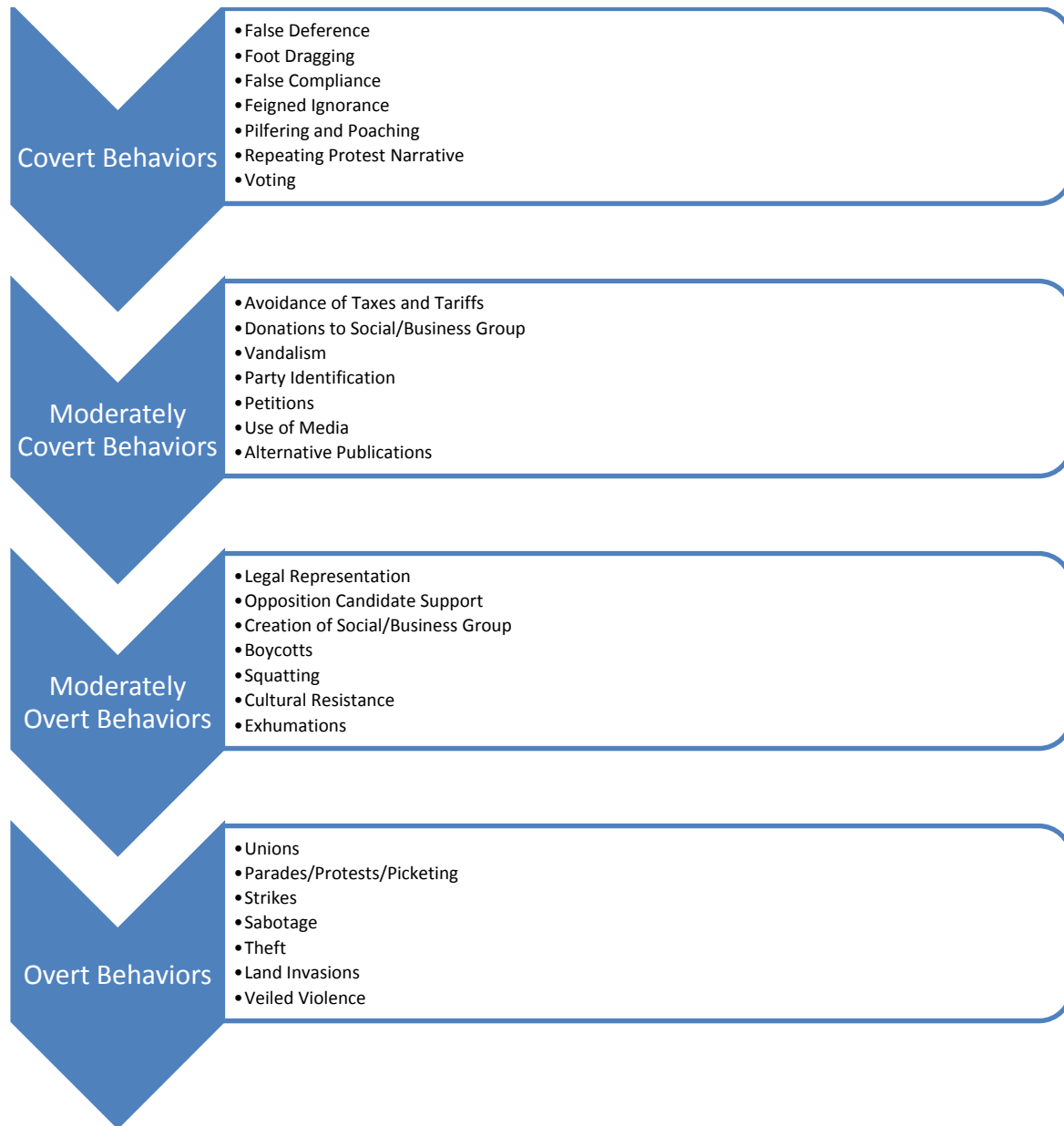
Economic Environment		State Strength	
		Strong (Mexico)	Weak (Guatemala)
Indigenous Dependent Tourism	City	Chichen Itza / Piste	Quetzaltanango
	Population	7,000	132,000
	Interviews	28	22
	City	Tulum	Antigua
	Population	8,400	39,400
	Interviews	6	18
Other Types Tourism	City	Izamal	Totnicapan
	Population	15,000	70,000
	Interviews	10	11
	City	Merida	Guatemala City
	Population	735,000	995,000
	Interviews	22	12
	City	Cancun	Iztapa
	Population	527,000	15,000
	Interviews	10	8
	City	Progreso	Zunil
	Population	47,000	10,000
	Interviews	8	9

¹⁸ Municipal employees and local Chambers of Commerce were consulted in Nebaj and Uspantan as well.

No Tourism	City	Dzan	Uspantan
	Population	4,600	2,800
	Interviews	6	8
	City	Kimbila	Nebaj
	Population	35,000	23,300
	Interviews	12	10
	City	Felipe Carrillo Puerto	Coatepeque
	Population	21,500	45,600
	Interviews	8	12

The study identified 28 types of behaviors in ascending order from covert to overt as shown below as Figure 1. The behaviors were coded and then placed in tables for analysis.

Figure 1



Findings

In order to determine what influences political behavior choices of a population a working definition of what constitutes “political behavior” from other types of social behavior must be specified. Klesner, drawing on Booth and Seligson, offers that political behavior is “behavior influencing or attempting to influence the distribution of public goods” (Klesner,

2009: 62). Klesner notes that behavior to be included in this definition need not be intentionally political. In examining states where the government is unable to reach members of society, as I would argue occurs in the “weak” state of Guatemala, the behavior is often not intended to influence the distribution of “public goods” per se. In Guatemala, the protest activity is often directed at “ruling classes” of businesses or other ladino interests which may not have control of public goods. Additionally, even in stronger states, like Mexico, the protest may be directed at governmental institutions, like INAH in the Chichen Itza land invasion, but the ancillary target is also the private owner of Itza itself, Fernando Barbachano. Because of this, the definition of political activity for the purposes of the current research more closely resembles Scott’s i.e. any act that is intended either to mitigate or deny claims made on that class by superordinate classes or to advance the protestor’s claims vis-à-vis these superordinate classes (Scott, 1987: 419). Scott discusses this activity as an act of the “peasantry” but, as has been argued previously, indigenous populations resemble the peasantry as discussed by Scott and others and, therefore, the definition is workable to this population as well.

Further, Klesner’s analysis of the International Social Survey Programme’s 2004 survey on citizenship and the ENCUP 2003 survey designed to measure political activity reveals the difficulties in utilizing survey data and making inferences about a group’s political behavior especially with regard to institutional influences (2009). These types of inquiries, as Klesner and Nam (2006) discuss in their respective research, can be difficult to quantify due to difficulty in the definitions of the categorizations of behavior, the limited number of sources often utilized, and, most importantly, what “counts” as political behavior.¹⁹

¹⁹ Of course, none of these empirical analyses discuss the factors that influenced these behavioral choices; the influences could merely be speculated.

Political behavior is more difficult to measure, especially when it takes the form of protest, as arguably, any political activity can be characterized as protest (even voting which may be a form of protest against a candidate) than other institutionalized activities because they are not usually reported in government statistics, especially in states where it is not desirable to report discontent (Sickle and Dalton, 2005). Additionally, as Scott, Joseph (1990), Dosh (2009), Anderson (1990) and others argue these surveys and other data collection sources such as newspapers, police records, party records, and NGO reports only report “overt” behaviors or behaviors that people will report. In order to measure all types of political behavior (including subtle and, potentially, illegal and dangerous activities) and to understand how the organization of the state and how tourism as a resource influences behavior choices, interviews with participants is the logical choice (Anderson, 1990). Dosh specifically discusses the alternative conundrum in understanding mixed motives behind the selection of political behaviors – while there is often an economic component, there are also altruistic and social components to many political activities as well, especially those that last for significant periods of time (2009).

Adding the additional factor of measuring political behaviors along a continuum allows for greater richness in my investigation because the current study does not focus on particular types of political activity but on the degree of “covert” to “overt.” As Scott argues, little coordination is necessary to constitute an organized action by many players and broad policy goals may not be the objective (1987). Scott recognizes that there is a continuum, as the current study also suggests, that may be organized to achieve the same goal – he suggests that quiet squatters have the same goal of encroachment as open invasion of lands (1987). These behaviors are not readily recognized in the empirical data on political behavior and would not necessarily be reported on surveys regarding forms of protest, although both would ultimately achieve the

same goal: encroachment on previously withheld land. Refusal to pay a tax on food and beverage sales, for example, which routinely occurs with indigenous restaurant owners in Guatemala has the same effectiveness as open protest of taxation but follows the path of least resistance and does not suffer the same retribution in states where retribution might result in violent reprisal.

Because of the broadness of the Scott definition of what constitutes political action, the interview process was necessary to induce all of the variety of behaviors that could be recognized as protest behavior. This was subjectively decided upon by the interview subjects and not predetermined although the literature did inform me as to what behaviors had been previously investigated by Scott, Anderson, Dosh and others. This informed investigative process allowed me to have a starting point to know what to focus on in the interviews but several other behaviors that I had not discovered in the previous literature were also discussed with the interviewees. Behaviors such as publication of alternative media, blogging and refusal to be “recognized” by the state in paying fees for legal recognition of various social organizations have not been recognized in the previous literature as forms of political or protest behavior and would be novel in the current research.

Tables 3 and 4 below reveal the behaviors observed in Mexico and Guatemala respectively:

Table 3 *Social Protest Behaviors Observed or Reported: Mexico*

Behavior	Mexico					
	Intra-State			Extra-State		
	IDT	OT	NT	IDT	OT	NT
False deference						
Foot dragging						
False compliance						
Feigned ignorance						
Pilfering and poaching						XX
Repeating protest narrative				XX		XX
Voting	XX	XX	XX			
Avoidance of taxes / tariffs				XX		
Donation to social/business grp.	XX	XX	XX			
Vandalism						
Party identification	XX	XX	XX			
Petitions	XX	XX	XX			
Use of Media	XX	XX	XX			
Alternative publications	XX	XX	XX			
Obtaining legal representation	XX	XX	XX			
Opposition candidate	XX		XX			
Creation and overt support of social / business group	XX		XX			
Organized boycotts						
Squatting						
Cultural resistance				XX		
Recognition of past crimes						
Union creation / membership		XX				
Parades, protest crowds, and Picketing				XX	XX	
Strikes						
Sabotage						
Theft						
Land invasions				XX		
Veiled violence						

Table 4 *Social Protest Behaviors Observed or Reported: Guatemala*

Behavior	Guatemala					
	Intra-State			Extra-State		
	IDT	OT	NT	IDT	OT	NT
False deference					XX	XX
Foot dragging					XX	XX
False compliance					XX	
Feigned ignorance					XX	XX
Pilfering and poaching						XX
Repeating protest narrative						XX
Voting			XX			
Avoidance of taxes / tariffs				XX		XX
Donation to social / business Group			XX			
Vandalism				XX	XX	
Party identification						
Petitions						
Use of Media						
Alternative publications	XX					
Obtaining legal representation						
Opposition candidate	XX					
Creation and overt support of social / business group	XX					
Organized boycotts				XX		
Squatting				XX	XX	
Cultural resistance				XX	XX	XX
Recognition of past crimes				XX		XX
Union creation / membership		XX				
Parades, protest crowds, and Picketing				XX	XX	
Strikes						
Sabotage					XX	XX
Theft				XX	XX	
Land invasions						
Veiled violence			XX			

Why Tourism Matters

There are several arguments in support of the idea that tourism is harmful economically, socially and culturally to the host destination residents. These include environmental destruction, cultural homogenization, forced migration in order to reap the benefits of tourism locales apart from the living area of the host people, harmful introduction to capitalist or competitive economic structures to “communal cultures” and increased economic and social inequality (Torres & Momsen, 2005). The studies that examine these outcomes, however, are almost always quantitative and rarely address the opinions of the host destination residents and non-quantifiable gains and losses nor do they address the first step in obtaining these gains, that is, increased political activity that may be occurring at the current time which will eventually lead to more quantifiable gains in the future.²⁰ Further, economic gains in informal markets are often immeasurable through traditional means. These studies are significant however because they have led to the quest to educate tourist partners about these issues and find paths toward sustainable tourism. This has been especially true in indigenous tourism because of increased cultural sensitivity and because, rationally speaking, the “indigenous-ness” of the region is the commodity; therefore, its destruction will reduce or eliminate its marketability benefitting no one. The findings are summarized in the following Table 5:

²⁰ There is ample literature in anthropological studies and sociological studies that suggest that conversion to a tourism-based economy “demeans once proud people” without actually asking how the people themselves felt about their economic opportunities or whether this work benefitted them in ways less observable by the sensitive researcher (Elkan, 1975; Peppelenbosch and Tempelman, 1989; Torres and Momsen, 2005).

Table 5

Political Behaviors by Economic Environment and State Strength: Findings

Economic Environment	State Strength	
	Strong (Mexico)	Weak (Guatemala)
Indigenous Dependent Tourism	Mod. Cov. to Overt ---- ----- (Chichen Itza/Piste, Tulum, Izamal)	Mod. Cov. to Overt ---- ----- (Quetzaltanango, Antigua, Totnicapan)
Other Types of Tourism	Moderate ---- ----- ---- (Merida, Cancun, Progreso)	Covert and Overt ---- ----- ---- (Guatemala City, Iztapa, Zunil)
No Tourism	Covert to Moderate -- ----- ---- (Dzan, Kimbila, Felipe Carrillo Puerto)	Covert to Moderate ---- ----- (Uspantan, Nebaj, Coatepeque)

Note. Areas in red indicate intensity of political behaviors.

The current study suggests that indigenous people in Guatemala and Mexico have an increased sense of their importance and uniqueness in the collection of world cultures through the connection to tourism. Many people who lived in the non-tourism regions reported that they did not think that they had support outside of their immediate community while this clearly did not reflect the opinions of the majority of indigenous people who lived near indigenous dependent tourist sites. One vendor on the grounds of Chichen Itza reported “who would come all the way here if it was not for us?” While one could argue that tourists would visit to view one of the newly designated Wonders of the World without the presence of Maya vendors, it is telling that many assume that they are in fact the attraction for the millions of tourists and their millions of dollars/euros. The attention that indigenous people receive does seem to give them a

greater sense of worth or at least the recognition that any physical or political harm that would befall them would have the attention of a sympathetic audience that may have more power to press the governments of the tourists or even the host country government to redress the grievances of the indigenous. Little reported that female indigenous vendors in Guatemala in particular have learned this lesson quite well and have strategically involved their international customers and tourist contacts to assist them in their political goals (Little, 2005).

Some researchers have argued that tourism development projects that allow for host partners to work in close proximity to each other allows them to work collectively to make better demands of their government and ruling classes (Cross, 1998). This is, of course, the case with indigenous dependent tourism as these sites are usually very geographically concentrated near indigenous villages or surrounding a cultural landmark such as a ruin. If this finding was generalizable, however, maquiladora industries would also generate similar organizational opportunities for political or economic gain, however, neither the current study nor does other research suggest that this occurs with the frequency as in indigenous dependent regions. The current study suggests that tourism does provide an increased sense of worth among the indigenous as to their value as a culture, supporting the findings of other researchers of indigenous tourism, rather than simply re-establishing negative stereotypes of “natives” or creating a “commodified” cultural “Disney” product (Howes, 1996; Gladney, 1994 and MacCannell, 1992). Further, others have found that this revitalization of culture also strengthens social structures and “ultimately it has facilitated the creation of a new social balance between indigenous and mestizo groups” (Greathouse-Amador, 2005). In fact, I was “warned” on several occasions that ladinos and mestizos would claim to be Maya in order to “impress” me but that I should ask them to speak Maya or ask them about the Maya Cosmovision in order to determine

whether they are truly Maya. When asked why someone would try to deceive as to their indigenous status one tour guide in Xela told reported “they (*kaxlan*) want to take everything good from us, they always have and they always will because they do not understand sharing benefits everyone and they know they cannot share our heritage, our culture, our ancestors and our greatness because they are only corrupt and destructive.” When asked if he ever would try to deceive as to his identification and report that he was ladino he reported “a long time ago I would have, of course, it was better to be ladino, of course!”

The current study is instructive to the developer of tourism projects or those investigating the effects of sustainable tourism in order to promote better planning of programs to benefit host populations and instruct visiting populations in identification of preferable providers that benefit host populations. Further, researchers in globalization and the effects of market liberalization should be influenced as well to include self-identified costs and benefits of these mechanisms understanding that traditional economic indicators and records of popular protest may not capture the full picture of the social and economic changes that these developments may bring to a region. What seems to be thematic with reported “successful” tourism development projects is the role of the indigenous themselves in determining the product and the distribution of resources. If too much marketization of culture occurs in order to develop more economic gain without considering the cultural risks may lead to resentment and rejection by the host population (Crystal, 1989 and Willett, 2007).

Further, involving the community in allocation of resources gained from tourism development is key in order to obtain collective support for the project and decrease potentially harmful migration in order to obtain “more fair” employment (Alococer, 2007). In areas where there is less state strength and a more centralized government exists with reduced democratic

social norms, as in Guatemala, even more care should be given in encouraging an active engagement of all citizens in the development of economic projects. This increased involvement in which full participation is supported and where citizens are also encouraged to organize “in pursuit of diverse private interests that collective life generates, citizens who are informed, who can express their views, and who can participate in numerous others ways in accordance with the diverse roles involved in cultural, political and social life” (Rivas, 2001). Simply voting or other traditional methods of democratic development are not the path to democratization accepted by many in Central America and other methods of creating and supporting democracy must be found, the current study argues that responsible tourism development can be one mechanism by which increased political behavior is created and can lead to considerable gains for marginalized communities.

Why the State Matters

Statist development strategies allow for state agencies to conceptualize and initiate large projects, and then bring in the private sector in a controlled manner, allowing for successful project development (Torres & Momsen, 2005). Mexico has been able to create and implement national strategies in order to develop tourism as a major industry over a relatively short period of time. State funding of tourism projects through FONATUR (National Tourism Promotion Fund), identification and regulation of these projects through SECTUR (Department of Tourism), protection of historical tourist sites and artifacts through INAH (National Institute of Archaeology and History) and promotion efforts through SECTUR (Secretary of Tourism Promotion) combined with strong party systems supported by the state, Mexican tourism has thrived in the context of a strong state. While development has been uneven, in the states of the highest concentration of indigenous populations (Yucatan 37.9%) and (Quintana Roo 23.0%),

one would expect even greater levels of economic inequality with the very richest and very poorest concentrated in two states and, therefore, more overt extra-state political protest from the historically marginalized populations of the indigenous as had occurred in Chiapas in the 1990s would be expected (Yoshioka, 2006). The current study suggests that these indigenous populations have been able to direct their political energies in intra-state mechanisms and have been able to do so with a great deal of effectiveness as they have reported repeatedly in the current study.

The Guatemalan state is much weaker and security, legitimacy of the judiciary and other government institutions and support for economic and political development is constantly threatened. While Guatemala does have a national tourism board, INGUAT, it is not funded and is incapable of creating, providing and implementing a national strategy of tourism development. Most government “reach,” if there is any at all for much of Guatemala’s people is from the municipalities. Municipalities, however, lack any sort of concrete plans or development projects (Amaro, 2001). Further, municipal administrators do not have a clear hierarchy nor clearly defined functions. They are often simply land owners or businessmen in the community who are “elected” by patrons who wish to establish financially beneficial relationships with the bureaucracy (Amaro, 2001). In the current study, this was repeated throughout Guatemala. Local INGUAT offices were designed to help tourists in the region, not tourism providers, and even this assistance was minimal. Most tourism businesses had organized in some fashion but even these relationships were based on clientelist-like models. Political protest in Guatemala more often took the form of extra-state activity and was often more overt with less beneficial results than were experienced in Mexico. Further, those in regions where they did not have a

sense of cultural resurgence or the protection of tourist populations, often resorted to destructive methods of protest, both covert and overt.

The current study supports the concept that the state does matter. This should serve as a warning to non-governmental agencies operating in Guatemala for the benefit of marginalized populations, especially those seeking to develop economic opportunities for these populations in the hope that it will reduce economic inequality and promote democratic development. This study reveals that even with economic development and cultural reinforcement from indigenous tourism may still yield limited and restricted forms of political expression and limit the results of those behaviors where state mechanisms are weak. There is little effort to develop rooted party systems and there is little party discipline allowing voters to vote for mandates and punish leaders who deviate from those mandates (Isaacs, 2010 and Stokes, 2001). Political groupings or “whipping” of votes in Congress is likely motivated by personal calculations than on programmatic or ideological grounds (Isaacs, 2010). The current study involved numerous interviews with “political activists” throughout Guatemala who supported candidates not based on ideology but who they felt would support their platform through financing or protection based on how much support that the group could obtain for the candidate.

Because strong states allow for more effective development planning and develop effective structures for encouraging legitimacy among citizens allowing for more productive means for seeking redress of grievances, NGOs should be encouraged to lessen their involvement in providing services that replace the role of the state in a controlled and methodical manner. Of course, simply creating a strong state will not necessarily encourage democratic protections, however, state apparatuses should be developed that will act according to their own interests where there is conflict between the state’s interest and the interest of the

political/economic elites for the benefit of the majority of citizens (Krasner, 1984). NGOs in Guatemala have taken over these roles and the citizens of Guatemala often seem too willing to abdicate their role in creating a state to fulfill these duties. NGOs do not elect their leaders and are prima facie non-democratic regimes. NGOs in Guatemala are often internationally based (the UN and USAID being prime examples) and issues of cultural understanding or “one size fits all” mentality of developed countries in the developing world can frustrate the desired ends of well-intentioned economic and political development programs. Further, this may lead to potential backlash by frustrated voters in NGO home countries in funding development programs that seem to throw money into a vortex where nothing seems to “get better.” NGOs should be encouraged to slowly disengage from providing state services in developing countries and encourage political participation of marginalized populations in creating their own mechanisms.

Conclusion

Tourism is an important and growing economic resource. Even with the global economic crisis of the past two years, tourism as an industry, especially in the developing world where tourists can often get “more bang for their buck,” has continued to flourish. More and more states are trying to get in on this game and promote their own cultural attractions as different and special from other areas in order to gain a larger portion of tourism largesse. Further, the long history of the tourist industry has now produced a consumer who is willing to travel to more and more exotic locales in order to explore something “new.” Because of this, indigenous-dependent tourism will continue to be an important economic resource that can have positive or negative consequences for host populations. Focus on sustainable development has entered into this discussion and the importance of understanding how tourism influences populations and expands or limits their role and influence in their government and, if applicable, ruling classes is

important to understand for tourist businesses who wish to support host populations, to tourists who wish to spend their currency on businesses that promote their global development vision and to NGOs who have as their creed to support economic, political and cultural development.

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