Imperial consumption, cruise ship tourism and Cozumel, Mexico

Christine Preble
University at Albany, State University of New York, CFP357@gmail.com

The University at Albany community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/legacy-etd

Part of the Social and Cultural Anthropology Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/legacy-etd/1240

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the The Graduate School at Scholars Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Legacy Theses & Dissertations (2009 - 2024) by an authorized administrator of Scholars Archive.
Please see Terms of Use. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@albany.edu.
IMPERIAL CONSUMPTION
CRUISE SHIP TOURISM and COZUMEL, MEXICO

by

Christine Preble

A Dissertation
Submitted to the University at Albany, State University of New York
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Anthropology
2014
IMPERIAL CONSUMPTION

CRUISE SHIP TOURISM and COZUMEL, MEXICO

by

Christine Preble

COPYRIGHT 2014
Contents

Contents ........................................................................................................................................ iii

Table of Figures .............................................................................................................................. viii

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ xiv

Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................... xv

Preface to Chapter I. ......................................................................................................................... 1

Ethnographic Vignette: Daily Routine as a Cruise Ship Passenger On Board ............ 1

Chapter I. “Welcome Aboard!” Cruise Ship Tourism: An Introduction .................... 7

Introduction: “Welcome to the First Day of the Most Amazing Cruise Vacation of
Your Life” ....................................................................................................................................... 7

Woman, Tourist, Researcher: “Ethnographer as a Positioned Subject” .................... 10

“Discover Mexico:” Research Issues and Methodologies ............................................... 14

Disembarkation at a Cruise Ship Pier: Methodological Pursuits in the Port-of-Call
Community of Cozumel .............................................................................................................. 15

“Cruizin’ Da Caribbean:” Research Questions ................................................................. 20

Connection and Contrast in the Yucatán Peninsula: Pisté and Cozumel, Mexico ...... 22

A Culture between Two Cities: Hybridity, Indigeneity, and Tourism in Cozumel
and Pisté, Mexico ......................................................................................................................... 24

“Went on Vacation, Left on Probation:” Significance of Research ......................... 28

Navigation of this Text: Itinerary of Each Chapter ......................................................... 32

Chapter II. “Theoretical Frameworks: Consumption, Representation, and Authoritative
Power” ....................................................................................................................................... 37
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: From the Tourist Gaze to Authoritative Power</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tourist Gaze</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Semiotics, Simulacra, and Staging of the Romantic Gaze</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption and Commodification in Mass Tourism</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigeneity for Profit: Themeparking and Ethno-commodities for Sale</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruise Ship Tourism and Hall’s Theory of Representation</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion: The U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry as an Authoritative Power</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface to Chapter III</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnographic Vignette: All-Aboard!</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III. The Structure of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Global Cruise Ship Industry: A System that Cultivates Authoritative Legitimacy</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry’s Structure of Power</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cruise Ship as Sole Entertainment Based on Affordability and Comfort</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Historical Development of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry in the United States</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Early Beginnings of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation &amp; PLC</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Future of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining Market Revenues: Mega-Branding and Simulacrum</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruise Line Branding: The Difference between Carnival and Disney Cruise Lines</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Preface to Chapter IV.

The Cruise Ship Industry Practicing Regulation Evasion

148

Ethnographic Vignette: The Pulse of Daily Life in Cozumel

153

Chapter IV. Manufactured Mass Tourism: A Port-of-Call Defined by the U.S.-based Cruise Ship Industry

159

Introduction: “They could be anywhere:” Cruise Ship Tourist Disembarking at Puerta Maya

159

Society as Spectacle: Cruise Ship Tourism in Cozumel, Mexico

168

The North American-based Cruise Ship Industry: Engineering a Façade

168

Retail, Dining, and Tours in Agreement with the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry: Purposefully Engineering a Façade where Money Matters

172

Cruise Ship Tourism’s Shore Excursions

172

Cruise Ship Contact Zones

182

Structure and Regulation of Cruise Ship “Approved” Spaces for Cruise Ship Tourists

191
Development of Mass Tourism to the Yucatán Peninsula and the Advent of Cruise Ship Port-of-Call Communities as a Façade.............................. 198
The U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry Engineering Spatiality of Anywhere-ness...... 203
Conclusions: The Cruise Ship Industry and the Staging of Mass Tourism ........... 207
Chapter V. Representation and Cultural Commodification Onboard Cruise Ships and in a Port-of-Call Community ............................................................... 211
Carnival Triumph Disaster Exposes How Industry Stages Tourism .............. 212
Cultural Commodification in the Context of Tourists and Expatriates in Cozumel ........................................................................................................ 216
Contestation and Façade of Paradise: Juxtaposing Cruise Ship Tourists and Expatriates.................................................................................. 220
The Cultural Commodification of Cozumel: Cultural Commodification in a Port-of-Call ................................................................................................. 225
The Construction of Power and Cultural Commodification ......................... 243
The Commodification of Sale and Emergent Competition in Cruise Ship Tourism .. 247
The Local Side of the Negotiation of Sale: Vendors in Chichén Itzá Compared to Vendors in Puerta Maya.............................................................................. 252
U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry and the Desperation of Sale in Cozumel ........... 257
Conclusions: Representation and Cultural Commodification Onboard Cruise Ships and in a Port-of-Call Community, A Representation of Safety ......................... 261
Preface to Chapter VI.......................................................................................... 265
Ethnographic Vignette: Selling a Dream .......................................................... 265
Chapter VI. Cozumel as an Internationally Divergent Population .................. 271
Intersectionality of an Island Population: A Study of Sheller’s Asymmetrical Gaze. 275

Donna............................................................................................................................................. 278

Nigel.................................................................................................................................................. 280

Beach Cleanup Organization ........................................................................................................... 282

Kimberly............................................................................................................................................ 286

Eduardo............................................................................................................................................. 287

Conclusion: Perceptions of Space in a Port-of-Call Community .................................................. 289

VII. Confronting Imperialism: Conclusions Regarding Constructs of Spatiality in Cruise Ship Tourism.................................................................................................................................................. 292

Challenging Cruise Ship Tourism’s Construction of “Approved” and “Guaranteed” Spaces ................................................................................................................................................................. 293

Julia’s Walking Food Tour ................................................................................................................ 297

Confronting the Packaged Dream: Independent Success .............................................................. 300

Inclusivity Fraught with Dystopia .................................................................................................... 302

The U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry as an Imperial Subject ....................................................... 305

References.......................................................................................................................................... 311
### Table of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tourist map of Cozumel indicating location of four ship piers; three of the four are controlled by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry (source, GraphicMaps.com)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Map of Cozumel Produced by Carnival Cruise Lines for Cruise Ship Tourists</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;Cruzin' Da Caribbean&quot; Tee Shirt</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Map of Quintana Roo Indicating Location of Relevant Sites (source, Torres 2002:96)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>PortFolio Magazine: The Official Port and Shopping Guide of Royal Caribbean</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;JadesMaya,&quot; Exotification and Essentialization in Port-of-Call Advertising</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Romanticization and Exoticification in Cozumel (source, Mexican Tourism Board 2012)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>All-Inclusive Advertisement from Tulum, Mexico</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Replica of the Pyramid of Kulkulkan (Chichén Itzá) Located at Puerta Maya Cruise Ship Pier and Shopping Center in Cozumel</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Representation, Codes, and Understanding: The Tourist Gaze Manufactured by Royal Caribbean (source, PortFolio 2012)</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Royal Caribbean's Activities and Entertainment Highlights. This image is from the &quot;Cruise Compass,&quot; which passengers can carry with them around on board to attend shows, shopping events, buffets, and more.</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 All figures are author’s photographs unless specified.
Figure 12. Royal Caribbean's Main Dining Menu, Starters. Passengers can choose as many selections as they like, often opting for multiple starters and desserts, as all food is included in the each ticket, prepaid-booking of the cruise vacation. 83

Figure 13. Royal Caribbean's Main Dining Menu, Back Cover. Consumer choice and service with a smile. 84

Figure 14. Map of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry's Structure. 86

Figure 15. Map of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry's Corporate Structure: North American Market. 92

Figure 16. SS Oceanic (1974) Main Deck (top) and Royal Caribbean's Jewel of the Seas (2012) Main Deck. 96

Figure 17. Royal Caribbean's Cruises Ltd.-Owned Shopping Mall, Royal Village Cozumel. 100

Figure 18. SS Oceanic's Advertisement Poster from the 1960s. 105

Figure 19. SS Oceanic's Pool Deck in 1974 (author's mother, center, bottom left and father, top right, looking at the camera). 107

Figure 20. SS Oceanic Buffett, 1974. 109

Figure 21. Carnival Corporation & PLC (green) and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. (blue) Revenue Earnings, 2010-2014 (source, Moskowitz 2014). 113

Figure 22. Cruise Ship Industry Statistics as of January 1, 2014 (source, American Association of Port Authorities, Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association). 116

Figure 23. Cruise Ships Docked at International Pier in Cozumel. 117

Figure 24. CLIA 2014 State of the Cruise Industry Report. 119
Figure 25. Carnival and Royal Caribbean Advertisements, Examples of Mega-Branding (source, Ben Berlin) ................................................................. 122

Figure 26. Carnival Brochure Cover, 2003-2004 (source, Ben Berlin) ...................... 123

Figure 27. 2013 Market Share Graph of U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry (sources, Cruise Market Watch's proprietary Cruise Pulse and Port Pulse databases, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., Carnival Corporation & PLC., NCL Corporation Ltd., Thomson/First Call) ........................................................................................................... 127

Figure 28. 2013 Market Share Graph of Worldwide Cruise Ship Industry (sources, Cruise Market Watch, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., Carnival Corporation & PLC, NCL Corporation Ltd., CLIA, FCCA, and DVB Bank) ...................................................................................... 128

Figure 29. Royal Caribbean Cruises 2002 Marketing Campaign, "The Nation of Why Not?" ................................................................................................................. 132

Figure 30. U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Companies Operating in the Caribbean .............. 136

Figure 31. Graph of the Cruise Ports in the Continental United States (sources, RCL, CCL, NCL, and CruiseWeb.com) ................................................................................................................................. 138

Figure 32. Map of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry's Private Islands in the Bahamas (source, Travel Weekly 2013) ................................................................. 142

Figure 33. Graph of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry's Privately Owned Islands and Beach Resorts in the Caribbean ..................................................................................... 143

Figure 34. Disney Cruise Lines at Castaway Cay in the Bahamas (source, Travel Weekly 2013) ................................................................. 145

Figure 35. Cozumel Outdoor Shopping Area before Cruise Ships Dock .................. 154
Figure 36. View of International Pier and Puerta Maya (far right) from Cruise Ship Deck, January 2012 ................................................................. 160

Figure 37. Mariachi Musicians at Puerta Maya, Cozumel ........................................... 162

Figure 38. Three Amigos Cantina Drink Performance at Puerta Maya, Cozumel ........ 164

Figure 39. Puerta Maya Map (source, PuertaMaya.com) ............................................. 167

Figure 40. Royal Caribbean Map of Cozumel, "Only the Stores Listed on this Map are Guaranteed by the Cruise Line" ......................................................... 180

Figure 41. Duty-Free Pier before Entering Puerta Maya (source, George Schreyer 2012) ............................................................ 181

Figure 42. Cozumel Map of Cruise Ship Piers in Relation to the Island .............. 183

Figure 43. Recommended Store Advertising in Cozumel, "Welcome Cruise Ship Passengers" ........................................................................ 187

Figure 44. Recommended Store Advertising in Cozumel, "Recommended Store on Your Shopping Map" ................................................................. 188

Figure 45. Recommended Store Advertising in Cozumel, "Shop with Confidence" ..... 190

Figure 46. Facade Replicated: Señor Frogs in Cozumel ............................................. 192

Figure 47. Facade Replicated: Señor Frogs in St. Thomas, "Where Anything Can Happen" (source, Tas Bar) ................................................................. 193

Figure 48. Cozumel's Margaritaville: Cruise Ship Tourists’ Revelry, Abandonment, and Drunkenness ................................................................. 195

Figure 49. Making Deals with Locals in Cozumel ...................................................... 196

Figure 50. Graph Depicting the Advent of Mass Tourism to Cancun ....................... 199
Figure 51. Postcards of the SS Ariadne, the First Cruise Ship to Cozumel. Arriving in the Port of Miami (above) and at sea (below) (source, The State Archives of Florida) .......................................................... 202

Figure 52. "Tent City," Carnival Triumph's Main Deck, February 13, 2013 (source, CruiseCritic.com) ............................................................................................................................................. 213

Figure 53. Graph: The Average Length of Time Cruise Ship Passengers Disembark in Cozumel (n=93) .............................................................................................................................................. 216

Figure 54. Cruise Ship Arrivals for Sunday, January 19, 2014 as Published in Cozumel's Newspaper, El Seminario. On January 14, 2014, six cruise ships were docked at once in Cozumel's three cruise ship piers: Puerta Maya, SSA Mexico (International Pier), and Punta Langosta, “Treat visitors well! Smile!” ........................................................................................................... 224

Figure 55. Advertisement for Cozumel's Margaritaville .................................................................................................................. 228

Figure 56. Cozumel Advertisement, “Heaven on Earth” (source, Consejo de Promoción Turistica de México) .............................................................................................................................................. 230

Figure 57. Royal Caribbean's "Jewel of the Seas" Souvenir Portrait in Cozumel (source, CruiseCritic.com) .............................................................................................................................................. 232

Figure 58. "Visit Cuba: Land of Romance" Postcard Produced by the Cuban Tourist Commission (source, Peter Moruzzi) ......................................................................................................................... 234

Figure 59. "Welcome to Cuba" Advertisement Produced by the Cuban Tourist Commission is 1955 (source, Peter Moruzzi) .......................................................................................................................... 235

Figure 60. Carnival Cruise Line's Webpage Advertising Cozumel as a Port-of-Call Destination (accessed March 29, 2014) ........................................................................................................................................... 236

Figure 61. Royal Village Cozumel's Maya Calendar in Contract with Martí Sporting Goods Store .............................................................................................................................................. 239
Figure 62. Signposting and Contrast: Safety, International Retail Store, and Cruise Ship Tourism ................................................................. 240

Figure 63. Cruise Ship Tourists Reaction to Signposting in Cozumel's Royal Village. 243

Figure 64. Tee Shirts on Display for Sale at Fat Tuesday in Puerta Maya ....................... 245

Figure 65. Staging a Photographic Scene in Puerta Maya ........................................... 247

Figure 66. Maya Warriors at Work in Puerta Maya ....................................................... 255

Figure 67. Store Owner in Cozumel's Royal Village ..................................................... 258

Figure 68. Representation of Sale in Cozumel: Internationally Owned and Operated Businesses in Space of Cruise Ship Tourism .............................................. 260

Figure 69. Trash Accumulation on Cozumel's East Side, photograph taken February 23, 2014 (source, Elizabeth Sterne) ................................................................. 283

Figure 70. Cozumel's Terminal Maritima de San Miguel, the Ferry System to/from Playa del Carmen ................................................................. 298

Figure 71. Food Tour in Cozumel, June 2012 ................................................................. 300

Figure 72. One Block Heading Eastward from Melgar Avenue in Cozumel .................... 301

Figure 73. Signposting and Designating Space: Cruise Ship Tourism in Cozumel .......... 304

Figure 74. A Cruise Ship Dwarfs Via Garibalidi in Venice (source, Manuel Silvestri/Reuters) .................................................................................. 308

Figure 75. Mural Found in a Venice Street (source, Elizabeth Feldkamp) ................. 310
Abstract

This dissertation defines cruise ship tourism in the context of a local community. The theoretical manifestations and development of cruise ship tourism are presented and analyzed. This research traces the development of the U.S.-based cruise ship industry (i.e. Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC) and its subsequent effects in one port-of-call community, the island of Cozumel, Mexico. Cruise ship tourism in Cozumel is compounded in San Miguel, the island’s only urban center, at the three cruise ship piers and associated shopping centers. Defining U.S.-based cruise ship tourism in the context of Cozumel is significant as it is the most important cruise ship port-of-call in Mexico, the Caribbean, and the world (APIQROO 2013; CLIA 2013; FCCA 2013). The focus of this investigation examines the ways the development and corporate practices of the U.S.-based cruise ship industry formulate a climate of competition between local and internationally owned and operated businesses in cruise ship port-of-call communities. The U.S.-based cruise ship industry establishes contracts with businesses for a fee and advertise such businesses on a map for cruise ship tourists. These corporate strategies promulgate inequality between local employee, multinational business, and U.S.-based cruise ship industry as well as local and tourists. Cruise ship tourists in Cozumel affirm these “guaranteed and approved” businesses are safer, more easily accessible, and more frequented than locally-owned and operated options.
Acknowledgements

This dissertation, like all of those that have come before it, was not authored by one person but a shared process by many. I would like to acknowledge and thank them here.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the residents of Pisté and Cozumel, Mexico. Without their patience, humor, and generosity this project would not be possible. In Pisté, special thanks to the many families who have accepted me into their homes during celebration as well as during times of stress (and everything in between!): Don Wili, Cecilia and Russel, Ellena and Gaspar, Tere, Rodrigo, Don Tannis, and Victor.

I would like to thank my OSEA family: Quetzil, Lisa, Juan, Edy, and Mateo, and all of OSEA’s past participants for helping me in countless ways to learn and grow as an ethnographer, teacher, and colleague in the field. In Cozumel, I would like to particularly thank Emily and Pawel, Bonita and Sal, and Alejandro and Michelle who have opened up their homes and lives to me so graciously to help me experience life as a Cozumeleña.

I wish to thank my colleagues and mentors at the University at Albany. The University at Albany Dissertation Research Fellowship Award, 2012-2013; Institute for Mesoamerican Studies (IMS); and the Graduate Student Association at the University at Albany have generously funded portions of this research. A special thank you to Dr. Walter E. Little, as a tireless advisor and chair. I cannot thank you enough for fostering my research of cruise ship tourism since its early beginnings in 2007. Thank you to Drs. Jennifer Burrell and Patricia Pinho for their inspirational contributions to this text. The quality of your scholarship, engaged teaching style, and compassion for others are attributes I aspire to achieve. Special thanks to Dr. Quetzil E. Castañeda for your indefatigable advice, fine-tuned edits, along with support and guidance since our meeting
in 2010. Most of all, thank you for reminding me this work is worthy of pursuit. A big thank you also is due to the Office of International Education, Study Abroad & Exchanges, particularly the support of Renée, Danielle, and Lynn. You have each given me the confidence and the opportunity to pursue my academic passions in international education, thank you.

To my colleagues and friends at SLACA and ATIG, thank you for your inspiring work and generous spirit of inclusion. Special thanks goes to Drs. Ross Klein and Robert E. Wood, thank you for your scholarship in cruise ship tourism and encouragement of this project. I hope you find this work valuable and I am eager to collaborate on the subject for years to come.

Thank you to the UAlbany DWG: Katie, Jackie, Sarah, Jess, and Kate. Sharing this time in my life with you has been extraordinarily important and meaningful to me as an academic, woman, and friend. You are all so inspiring. ¡Si se puede! A warm thank you is also extended to Heidi and Sarah, throughout the years you both have helped me in countless ways since we first met at the AAA in San Francisco in 2008. I constantly admire your tenacity, strength, and kindness. Love, peace, health, and happiness to you, always.

This document and the decade or so that led up to it could not have been made possible without the support of my family. To my father, thank you for first introducing me to cruise ship tourism at the age of six. To Uncle Bob, thank you for your unwavering words of encouragement! A huge hug to Tricia, Elizabeth Rose, and Erica: thank you for being my family. I cannot even begin to list the countless ways you each have helped me since childhood. Our relationship means everything to me, thank you for
your unyielding love. To Christopher and Lara, thank you for being so understanding and empathetic to every bump in this journey and, of course, for not throwing me overboard during our first cruise together! I am in awe of you both. A warm hug to Alina, Kiana, Shannon, Joey, Trent, and Kath: I am forever grateful to all of your kind words and open hearts. From the bottom of my heart, a deep thank you to my Mother for her patience, acceptance, and understanding throughout these years by my side—Ma, we did it!

To my partner, Stephen: thank you. This publication, rather, this whole process, would not be possible to complete without your constant support, encouragement, respect, and love. Your kindness and compassion for others is an inspiration. I am so excited for our next chapter.

Last but not least, this dissertation is dedicated to my goddaughter and niece, Shaylen. I hope when she reads these words in the future, she will understand the value of tenacity when completing perceived insurmountable tasks and to always stay true to herself, her beliefs, and her passions along the way.
Preface to Chapter I.

Ethnographic Vignette: Daily Routine as a Cruise Ship Passenger On Board

A cruise ship vacation begins in an often confusing and overwhelming embarkation process not unlike a visit to the Department of Motor Vehicles or trying to catch a plane at a busy international airport. The process is filled with paperwork, long lines, and security checkpoints. Once you set foot on board, however, anxiety melts away with luxurious attention by the ship’s staff. Waiters dressed in crisp white linens pass trays of champagne among the guests who have finally made their way aboard. A live band is often playing soothing piano music or lively “island rhythms” of a steel-drums ensemble. The ship’s sheer size is overwhelming. Navigating its narrow hallways is a skill unlearned by most. After seeking fresh air on the Lido Deck and indulging in the vacation’s first meal of the largest variety of food you may ever see at the all-you-can-eat buffet, you hear an announcement over the ship’s PA that everyone’s luggage should be delivered to their staterooms. Clumsily making your way back into the belly of the ship, still acquiring your sea legs, you open the door to your cabin. In a ship the length of multiple football fields, your stateroom is no larger than a two-person closet. Everything has its place and is secured so as not to fall when encountering choppy waters. A daily newspaper printed by the cruise line welcomes you to your stateroom with the headline, “Welcome To The First Day Of The Most Amazing Cruise
"Vacation Of Your Life" and boldly exclaims that you ought to join together with your fellow passengers to make this the best vacation ever.

By the third day of a seven-day cruise, you usually see your fellow cruise ship passengers settling into a routine.

By 8:00 a.m. a line has already formed, either waiting to get a seat for breakfast in the two-story, glass-enclosed dining room or at the breakfast buffet on the top deck. Breakfast includes juices, tea, coffee; pancakes, French toast, croissants, assorted toasts; scrambled eggs, omelets, hard boiled eggs; smoked salmon, ham steaks, bacon, sausage; yogurt, fruit, granola. As the last passengers are finishing their breakfast around 10:30 a.m., the plates are hurriedly whisked away by an attentive army of servers, as the dining rooms quickly transition to lunch service.

Families gather, children happily splashing in the saltwater pool that was freshly filled in the morning. Honeymooners snuggle close in the sunshine; grandparents are consumed in the newest electronic reading devices; the bars along the deck already are filled with passengers either nursing a hangover or trying to orchestrate a fresh one.

Around noon, a wildly energetic Cruise Director announces on the ship-wide loudspeaker a belly-flop contest happening at the main pool. A huge crowd gathers: young children still splashing carelessly in the pool, teenagers patrolling for their next vacation fling, groups of women in matching homemade tee-shirts proclaiming their vacation independence, and a group of rowdy men in their 40s who proudly strip to their bathing suits, enthusiastically flashing the crowd their muscles (or guts) as they approach the Cruise Director, eager to enter the contest.
Meanwhile, below deck the shopping atrium is busy with passengers shopping for Guess bags, French perfume and cosmetics, ship-themed tee shirts and clothing, candy, diamond and gemstone jewelry, Citizen Watches, and bottles of alcohol (which are sent to your stateroom, carefully wrapped for transport, later on the eve of disembarkation). The gym is nearly empty but the spa is busy with haircuts and color, manicures and pedicures, facials, and massages. A lecture is droning along to a group of mostly young mothers and elderly couples about the merits of a ship-sponsored regimen of vitamins and lotions, claiming to increase vitality, memory, and overall health. The casino thumps with life to the sound of the video game consoles, buckets of quarters continuously being emptied and refilled, glasses clinking, and gamblers shouting out in either joy or loss. A group of elementary-aged children parades the decks, dressed like pirates, as part of their afternoon Kids Zone activity group. The library offers a quiet(er) sanctuary from the raunchy display of skin by the dozens of sunbathers. There are families playing checkers or card games, dads desperately trying to access the $5/minute Internet to check the latest sports scores or email from the office, $8 Starbucks-esque specialty coffees being prepared by a bored-looking barista, and many cozying up to the latest New York Times fiction bestseller.

Late in the afternoon, the ship’s captain makes his daily announcement over the intercom system. His European accent decisively announces the weather forecast and how much mileage has been covered in traversing the Atlantic, steadily hugging the coast of North America, and heading due south. He proudly points out the ship’s sailing speed using maritime specifications, leaving the passengers to openly debate the complex calculation from nautical knots to miles-per-hour. Lastly, the ship’s captain announces
our estimated time of arrival at the first port-of-call and excitement instantaneously becomes palpable as passengers discuss their in-port shopping strategies, pre-booked shore excursions, and overall expectations of their upcoming adventures on land.

Dinnertime signals a jovial atmosphere of decadence. The two-story dining room hums with activity. The armies of servers are taking part in an intricate dance: presenting menus, taking dinner and drink orders, clearing unnecessary tableware, pouring coffee, placing main courses, offering bread, shouldering stacks of nearly twenty covered plates on large trays, and continuously running back and forth from the kitchen (sometimes two decks below) to the main dining room. A plethora of options is given to each passenger for their meal: roasted duck, Caribbean lobster tails, N.Y. strip steak, spinach and endive salad, shrimp cocktail, gazpacho, and vichyssoise. Courses are formally presented—sometimes as many as four of them, since dessert and after-dinner drinks are rarely declined. While there are other options for dining on board (complimentary room service, informal buffets, and upscale restaurant-like rooms for an additional charge), the main dining room is lavish in its excess yet not stuffy enough to deter the masses from enjoying the spoils of all-inclusivity.

Passengers are usually seated round large tables with other vacationers, mixing and mingling through a varied account of their jobs, families, and hometowns. Servers help break the ice by performing choreographed dances around, or sometimes on top of, the tables to international hits like “La Macarena” or “O Sole Mio.” Passengers are encouraged to sing, clap, and sometimes dance along with the servers, hastily breaking down the division between servers and serviced. The dress code among passengers in the main dining room changes at least once a week from Hawaiian-inspired garments and
sandals to formalwear. These ship-designated “formal nights” in the dining room are a nod to days gone by, when evening gowns, tuxedos, and orchestral music were features of daily maritime travel. Photographers are stationed around the ship to capture the latest fashions with dramatic backdrops of the ship lit at night in a black sea, a Grecian landscape with urns and archeological ruins, to the infamous staircase from Titanic. Formal nights are pageantry at its best. Women spend the afternoon in the salon, men polish their patent leather shoes, and children are scrubbed till shiny. Wealth is displayed in the form of jewelry, designer clothing, and prowess to meet the dress code’s expectations.

After dinner, passengers move lethargically from the dining room to the main theater to enjoy a Broadway-inspired production (usually including a review of popular show tunes) full of costumes and chorus line singing and dancing. The casino remains packed with people, growing more intensely wild with shouts as the night progresses. There is a multitude of live music and dancing opportunities available around the decks, from Beatles-inspired oldies, karaoke, piano sing-along, and dancing to Top-40 pop hits in the ship’s club (disco). Late-night movies shown on a large screen outside in the pool area or in the ship’s theater and the ubiquitous all-you-can eat midnight buffet are the two most popular nightly events. The flurry of nighttime activity finally eases close to sunrise.

If you’re still awake to witness the sunrise over the ocean, you’re likely to spot the slow arrival of land on the horizon. In the quiet serenity of the morning, the ship slowly makes its way closer to the first land it has encountered, days after leaving the
embarkation port in the United States. Stealthily lurching forward, like a lion hunting its prey, the ship gets closer and closer to land.
Chapter I. “Welcome Aboard!” Cruise Ship Tourism:
An Introduction

Introduction: “Welcome to the First Day of the Most Amazing
Cruise Vacation of Your Life”

The cruise ship tourism industry is a unique genre of mass tourism as cruise ship passengers are involved in a complex web of consumerism, consumption, display, and performance. The observations, descriptions, and analyses of the cruise ship industry in this ethnography suggest it is a quintessential North American phenomenon. Built in the U.S. by the hands of a few shrewdly capitalistic businessmen, cruise ship tourism in terms of its relation with and history in the U.S. is a replica of U.S. consumer habits including, but not limited to, conspicuous consumption, the production of excess and waste, and the sanitization of the commodities and the environment where consumption takes place. Colonial “contact zones” are spaces of “coercion, racial inequality, and intractable conflict” (Mary Louise Pratt 2003:8). I extend the use of “contact zones” as a foundational concept to analyze cruise ship mass tourism as a colonial construct of U.S. entitlement over port-of-call communities.

This ethnography focuses mainly on cruise ship tourists from the U.S. and Canada and the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, particularly the two largest grossing
corporations, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC.\textsuperscript{2} These companies are the leaders of the cruise ship industry and, as such, U.S.-based cruise ship tourism. Throughout this text, I will delineate between the U.S.-based cruise ship industry (i.e. Royal Caribbean International and Carnival Corporation & PLC) and the broader term of cruise ship tourism (i.e. \textit{all} cruise ship companies operating as a single entity) to refer to two separate objects of inquiry and analysis.

A crucial political/economic structure of the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, which is fundamental to this text, is represented in the dichotomy between spaces regulated by the industry for sale and those that are not. The former spaces are “guaranteed” to cruise ship tourists as they disembark their cruise ship at any port-of-call but especially contentious as they are mostly owned and governed outside of the local economy and political structure. I will argue that these spaces are specifically engineered and maintained to strategically keep the local out of the global economic equation. This strategy of manipulation is embedded within the tourist psyche as “safe” to benefit the corporations in charge of cruise ship tourism: mainly the U.S.-based cruise ship industry.

The history and structure of cruise ship tourism (see Chapter 3 for a complete history), specifically the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, is representative of U.S. imperium, a “project to transform into white republics…a project by and for agents of the U.S.

---

\textsuperscript{2} The “U.S.-based cruise ship industry” refers to both Royal Caribbean Cruises Limited and Carnival Corporation & PLC as corporate entities. Both own and operate their own cruise line brands. Carnival operates eleven including Holland America, Carnival Cruise Lines, Princess Cruise Lines, and Seabourn Cruises that operate in the U.S. Carnival Corporation uses “& PLC” as its official moniker. “PLC” refers to a “publically limited company.” Royal Caribbean International, owned by Royal Caribbean Cruises Limited, operates five cruise lines around the world, including the Royal Caribbean brand which operates in the U.S. For more detail about this organizational structure, please see Chapter 3.
Empire” (Skwiot 2010:7). This project is implemented at cruise ship ports-of-call, especially in the Global South, and as evidence proves in Cozumel, Mexico.

In order to situate the reader within the dynamic nature of cruise ship tourism, as a preface to every chapter I will provide observations in the style of an ethnographic vignette to convey the perspective of a cruise ship tourist from the United States. It is in effort to blend ethnographic vignettes, assuming the role as cruise ship tourist, visitor, and local of Cozumel, along with theoretical frameworks of visual anthropology, tourism studies, and Mesoamerican ethnography that combine to inform this text. The effect I hope to produce with these opening vignettes is to communicate a visceral sense of what it is like to assume the role of cruise ship tourist on a cruise vacation, both on board and while disembarking on land at a port-of-call community. The purpose of each vignette is not merely to place the reader in a temporal role of cruise ship tourist, but moreover, a literary device for the reader to experience the excess, hedonism, escape, and debauchery the cruise ship industry provokes.

This chapter will welcome you as a cruise ship passenger, describing what it is like as a tourist experiencing daily life on board. Next, I will situate myself as a researcher in relationship to the context of this study. I will also lay out the research issues, questions, and methodologies used to complete this ethnographic study. I will situate my fieldsite of Cozumel within the broader geographical context of tourism in Mexico. Lastly, I will introduce the significance of this ethnography and formulate a summary of each chapter for easy navigation.
Woman, Tourist, Researcher: “Ethnographer as a Positioned Subject”³

I have been a cruise ship tourist on thirteen cruises, beginning in 1990 at the age of six. The very first time on board, I remember falling out of my bunk bed, along with my brother, because of the strong waves and thinking it was the greatest thing ever, until we were left sobbing, seasick, at the edge of the toilet. Although this era was presumably before the mandatory inclusion of ship stabilizers,⁴ the late 1980s and early 1990s marked an era of glamour for the cruise ship industry (Dickinson and Vladimir 1997). My mother, usually a very modest and understated woman, dressed for dinner in her fanciest gold lamé dress, complete with shoulder pads, high heels, and teased hair. We were introduced to different culinary tastes, veering far from the normal Italian-American fare to which we were accustomed in upstate New York. We dined on vichyssoise, a chilled leek and potato soup; escargot, warm snails with garlic and butter; and gluttonously enjoyed two servings of broiled, whole lobsters. I never wanted to get out of the salt water pool, jumping in continuously for hours, while my brother seemed glued to the onboard basketball court. The crew was generous with their time and attention, posing for pictures, asking us about our lifestyles back home. These daily routines on board, while differing greatly from our home life, seemed to organically create an atmosphere of leisurely fun, warmth, and acceptance.

⁴ A cruise ship stabilizer is a “gyroscopically controlled system used to reduce the rolling of a ship.” In Merriam-Webster.com. Retrieved February 17, 2014.
Vacationing on cruise ships for over two decades, I have observed and participated in the daily life of cruise ships and witnessed its evolution over time. While the grandeur of the ships’ opulent dress code has changed, the level of service has continued to be personalized and professional. Jeans, cut off shorts, and sandals have replaced glitz dresses for dinner attire. The basketball court now competes with rock climbing walls, pools where you can learn how to surf, mini-golf courses, and ice-skating rinks. The array of dining choices and activities has exponentially grown as variety of choice becomes paramount to each cruise line’s success. The midnight buffet, once the hallmark of each cruise vacation, now pales in comparison to dining at an intimate steakhouse, sushi restaurant, or cupcake bakery. Parents have the opportunity for their children, from infant to late-teen, to participate in age-appropriate daycare and activities like Royal Caribbean’s “Barbie Experience,” during which children can walk the runway like Barbie and enjoy a tea party with their dolls.

This array of choice has replaced the former single-option opulence of being a cruise ship tourist. Since the 1990s, on board options for dining and entertainment have grown exponentially. In lieu of afternoon tea service with formal attire, manners, and particular traditions, the popular restaurant chain Johnny Rockets is now available to diners for an additional fee. The one constant that remains steadfast throughout cruising is the fact that the ship is intended to be the sole destination, rather than each port-of-call (Wood 2000). A port-of-call is any destination or stop where cruise ship tourists disembark during a cruise ship vacation. The number and location of ports-of-call depend on the cruise ship’s route, often situated in close geographic location (e.g. “Western Caribbean” includes ports-of-call like Cozumel, Grand Cayman, Roatán, and
Montego Bay). I have vivid memories of one particular explosive episode in the pink-sand beaches of Nassau, Bahamas, screaming at the top of my lungs to my parents, “I’M NOT LEAVING!” Yet this is the only early childhood memory of my time as a cruise ship tourist on land. The colorful, fruity drinks with umbrellas, my gold medal from a dance contest, and the arts and crafts I made on board cloud the totality of my memory. The ship’s iconography and its sheer size impede my vision of any tropical location until about 1996. I have traveled to many ports-of-call throughout the Canadian Maritimes, Western and Eastern Caribbean, Mexico (Pacific and Atlantic coasts), Belize, Costa Rica, and Panama. Yet my early experiences as a cruise ship passenger on Royal Caribbean, Carnival, Holland America, Princess, and Celebrity cruise lines shadow my corresponding journeys on land at each port-of-call.

A port-of-call community is a location where a cruise ship docks. Docking time is limited and many locations must support the technical infrastructure (i.e. a deep-water pier) for each ship to anchor. The location and environment of each port-of-call community is varied. Islands like Cozumel in Mexico, Nassau in the Bahamas, or St. Maarten in the Eastern Caribbean welcome hundreds of thousands of the cruise ship passengers to their shores annually. Other port-of-call communities are part of a larger national landscape, like Belize City in Belize, Colón, Panama, or Colombia’s Cartagena. These port-of-call communities are defined by the specific location where the cruise ship dock is not the primary focus of the local economy or culture. The third type of port-of-call community consists of autonomous spaces, owned and operated by each cruise ship line, and is a privatized space, excluding the general population from entry. Some are
islands, such as Half Moon Cay. Others are parcels of land of bigger nation-states including Labadee in Haiti and Costa Maya in Mahuaual, Mexico.

This absence of experiences disembarked at port-of-call communities from my young memory has led me to pursue research on how the cruise ship industry excludes localities from tourists’ experiences on cruise ship vacations. I have been interested in hearing about the lives of fellow passengers, ship employees, and locals working in the tourism sector, providing services to cruise ship passengers, since the age of twelve, when I began to fight my dad over not wanting to go on another cruise, as I was convinced I would be the oldest kid on board. My formative teen years were spent as a cruise ship passenger visiting Cozumel, which mostly involved a host of lewd and often illegal behaviors both on land and on board. We disembarked before and after 2005, a poignant place in history for the island, as the arrival of Hurricane Wilma left the malecón, or oceanfront esplanade, devastated with damage. The hurricane’s impact again led me to question the relationship between the cruise ship industry and the local economy, politics, and everyday livelihoods.⁵

⁵ While I have taken thirteen cruise vacations throughout my life, this ethnography is specifically generated from my experiences as a cruise ship tourist to Mexico, the Caribbean, and Cozumel. Compiling data from the tourist perspective is important to understand the cruise ship industry from the tourist’s lens. Most recently, I was a tourist on Royal Caribbean’s “Jewel of the Seas,” a five-day cruise which left Tampa, Florida on January 2, 2012. The itinerary included stops at Cozumel and Costa Maya, which is Royal Caribbean’s privately owned port at Mahahual, Mexico, south of Tulum in the Riviera Maya. During this time, I conducted interviews (formal and informal) with fellow tourists, crewmembers, tour operators, and shop employees both on and off the ship.
“Discover Mexico:”6 Research Issues and Methodologies

This ethnography is an analysis of the socioeconomic manifestations of cruise ship tourism in the port-of-call community of Cozumel, Mexico. It contributes to the knowledge and theory of tourism studies as the transcultural experiences and transnational political economy of tourism, as expressed in a cruise ship port-of-call, is first defined within the body of tourism and Latin American and Caribbean studies. This work defines cruise ship tourism as a viable subject of study to the discipline that has previously been ignored. Specifically, this text introduces the anthropology of tourism to the cruise ship industry and cruise ship tourism in an ethnographic approach that is unique from former market studies, European-based tourism studies, or cruise ship industry texts. In contrast to such texts, I present both the historical framework and ethnographic context of U.S.-based cruise ship tourism as a legitimate area of anthropological and ethnographic concern.

This ethnography explores an issue that represents an important gap and shortcoming in the anthropological study of tourism. The pragmatic and conceptual differentiation of mass tourisms is absolutely crucial for tourism developers, industry based tourism scholars, planners and policy makers. Data generated from my time aboard cruise ships and in Cozumel reveal the complex nature of the industry. Reality, both on and off the ship, is often manipulated, tailored by the industry to tourists’ preconceived notions of exoticism, paradise, and leisure.

6 “Discover Mexico” is a popular cruise ship shore excursion in Cozumel. It is a “museum” with replicas of famous Mexican archeological zones, festivals, and traditions.
This ethnography is an investigation of the following issues related to power and consumption and cruise ship tourism: (1) the historical development the U.S.-based cruise ship industry and its initial manifestations of power and control over port-of-call communities. To produce this information, I survey the literature presented about cruise ship tourism in relation to Royal Caribbean International and Carnival Corporation & PLC; (2) the processes the U.S.-based cruise ship industry uses to manifest its power and control at the port-of-call community of Cozumel, Mexico. I first formulate the historical background in which Cozumel as has shifted from an international tourist destination to its current state as one of the most prominent port-of-call communities in the Caribbean. Using the ethnographic methods of participant observation, interview, and visual representation, I generate evidence that analyzes wage labor and local negotiation within the context of cruise ship tourism as a constant daily influx of people and money (mainly U.S., Western bodies) to Cozumel. (3) I provide evidence that Cozumel is a purposefully crafted, spatially segregated port-of-call community that operates for the cruise ship industry. This evidence is garnered through participant observation, interview, and visual representation from both residents and cruise ship tourists in Cozumel.

**Disembarkation at a Cruise Ship Pier: Methodological Pursuits in the Port-of-Call Community of Cozumel**

This ethnography employs a longitudinal study of fieldwork conducted between 2010 and 2014, based on participant observation of cruise ship tourists, locals working in the service industry, and the general population of Cozumel. While living on the island, I
engaged vendors along each pier in discussions about their interactions with cruise ship tourists, owners of tour companies who have brokered contracts with the cruise ship industry, and hotel employees working timeshare sales at all-inclusive resorts. While living and researching in Cozumel, interviews and observations for this project occurred mostly at or near the island’s three cruise ship terminals. These terminals are representative of spaces where economic, social, and cultural interaction takes place on land. Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Princess cruise lines dock at the island’s three piers: Punta Langosta, International, and Puerta Maya. These are commercialized piers, which serve these three most popular cruise lines in the world, all of which primarily carry tourists from the United States and Canada. These piers offer shopping, dining, and shore excursions (island tours) only steps from where cruise ship tourists disembark. They provide an immediate guest/host dynamic, instantaneously established upon the docking of each cruise ship. Once cruise ship tourists set foot off the ship, they are immediately met by local vendors who are selling island tours, transportation, and handicrafts (see Chapter 3 for more details regarding disembarking).
Due to the limited time each cruise ship is docked, participant observation serves as the most feasible and successful method of acquiring data on land. I subsequently created an online questionnaire accessible to cruise ship tourists to be completed after their time disembarked in Cozumel. The survey asks respondents to assess their time disembarked in Cozumel (e.g. how much time they spent on shore, what kinds of activities they engage in, did rumor about Mexico and Cozumel inform the decision of which activities to partake in and if so, what were they, and would they come back to Cozumel as a non-cruise ship tourist). 93 cruise ship tourists responded to this survey.

Figure 1. Tourist map of Cozumel indicating location of four ship piers; three of the four are controlled by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry (source, GraphicMaps.com)
Several predominant themes emerged regarding tourists’ general perceptions of the cruise ship industry. Tourists noted prominently their enjoyment of all-inclusivity, the ease of cruise ship travel from each port-of-call, and the general feeling of being “carefree” while on board. Analyzing data from interviews and participant observation while cruise ship tourists were on board and while on land, docked in Cozumel, offers an important juxtaposition between tourists’ time spent on land and at sea. Cozumel is the most important cruise ship destination in Mexico, and one of the most important port-of-call communities in the world (APIQROO 2013). The island welcomes nearly three million cruise ship tourists annually as thousands of passengers disembark every day among its three piers. These piers are concentrated in downtown San Miguel, off Rafael E. Melgar Avenue, a road from which few cruise ship tourists stray. Each pier is a terminal, essentially a mall-like environment in the form of a large commercial building (see Figures 1 and 2), housing a multitude of storefronts, restaurants, and kiosks.
Figure 2. Map of Cozumel Produced by Carnival Cruise Lines for Cruise Ship Tourists

Punta Langosta Pier has a sign welcoming passengers that exclaims, "Welcome to the only shopping mall in Cozumel!" Starbucks, Hard Rock Café, and Pizza Hut are located steps from where cruise ship tourists disembark. Señor Frogs and Carlos 'n Charlies, infamous destinations for tourist debauchery, are located on the far side of the mall. International chains make up the majority of retail and dining options in each cruise ship
pier: Diamonds International, Del Sol apparel, Hooters, and Fat Tuesday are the locations to which each passenger is steered.

The cruise ship industry has constructed these piers to generate an immediate guest-host dynamic, yet in an ultimately sanitized and controlled way. Such homogenization of experience is deliberately undertaken to create safe and recognizable expressions of paradise. The cruise ship industry has instilled the idea that familiar brands ensure a safe experience, which means no hassling from locals, threats of insecurity, or illness while ashore. These terminals also provide an environment of reckless abandon for cruise ship tourists, sentiments first generated on board, extending the cruise ship’s hedonistic culture to land.

“Cruizin’ Da Caribbean:” Research Questions

This ethnography answers the following research questions: How are spaces of mass tourism, specifically cruise ship tourism in Cozumel, branded and marketed for public consumption? How has the cruise ship industry developed alongside or in conflict with the local community of Cozumel? What is the relationship between the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, Cozumel, and the larger region of the Caribbean? Finally, how has U.S. imperialism and consumption (i.e. tourists and the U.S.-based cruise ship industry) created, and continue to shape, such a space? Can this process be characterized as a

---

7 “Cruizin’ Da Caribbean” is a saying taken from a tee shirt sold on board a Royal Caribbean cruise (see Figure 3).
dynamic, mutually constitutive relationship between the U.S.-based cruise ship industry and port-of-call community of Cozumel; between local and cruise ship tourist?

Finally, this ethnography works to further demystify the way anthropology, tourism, and Maya society are “interwoven over a long history of interaction, collusion, mutual influence, and even opposition” (Castañeda 1996:9). In particular, this research analyzes the everyday life and intersections among cruise ship tourists and locals of Cozumel, whether they are of Maya ancestry or not.

Figure 3. "Cruzin' Da Caribbean" Tee Shirt
Connection and Contrast in the Yucatán Peninsula: Pisté and Cozumel, Mexico

The island of Cozumel and the town of Pisté differ greatly in terms of population size, governance, and importance as tourist destinations. Cozumel has a population of approximately 100,000 permanent residents in 2014, in a total geographic area that is roughly 30 miles long and nine miles wide. The main urban center, the city of San Miguel, is where most residents live as most of the island remains uninhabited, protected by a national registry of ecological reserve. San Miguel’s “downtown” welcomes a daily influx of cruise ship tourists to its many restaurants including cafes, small bodegas, and comida económica (similar to “fast food”), its retail stores, and services like car rentals, banks, a post office, museum, gyms, grocery stores, and a mercado municipal. Cozumel is its own municipality in the state of Quintana Roo with an elected president (Fredy Efrén Marrufo Martín, 2013-2016) and cabinet. Cozumel mainly welcomes cruise ship passengers and stay-over tourists. In 2014, Cozumel is scheduled to host “3,134,000 passengers sailing on 1,067 ships, which is up 26% and 23%, respectively, from 2013” (CruisePortInsider 2014). According to 2010 census data, the total number of tourists who stayed “in establishments” (i.e. hotels and resorts) is 526,151 (INEGI 2010).

---

8 2010 census data reports a population of 79,535 people (INEGI 2010)
In contrast, Pisté is a town of approximately 6,000 residents\(^9\) (Castañeda 2009:265). The town of Pisté is one of 21 *localidades*, or towns, in the municipality of Tinum. Pisté is located within the state of Yucatán, the state adjacently west of Quintana Roo. It is also located approximately three kilometers from the international tourist destination, Wonder of the World, and a World Heritage Site, famous for its Maya

\[\text{\footnotesize \(^9\) 2010 census data reports a population of 11,421 in the county of Tinum where Pisté is located (INEGI [year]).}\]
iconography—Chichén Itzá. This one mass tourist attraction welcomes an average of 1.2 million tourists annually and a “minimum of 3,500 tourists per day, a number which can reach 8,000 daily visitors in the high season” (UNESCO 2014). According to 2010 census data, the total number of tourists who stayed in “establishments” (i.e. hotels and resorts) was 47,541 in the municipality of Tinum (INEGI 2010).

A Culture between Two Cities: Hybridity, Indigeneity, and Tourism in Cozumel and Pisté, Mexico

I first came to this ethnographic research project as I wanted to explore cruise ship tourism based on my experiences as a cruise ship tourist. Since this has previously not been explored in the canon of anthropological study, I have pursued fieldwork independent of any other researcher and as such created a project that is wholly of my own construction and execution. As such, I have intermittently conducted research on the island of Cozumel since summer 2010. On the island, I have had the pleasure of spending time with Australian scuba diving instructors, practicing the Yucatec Maya language with kiosk owners in Puerta Maya cruise ship terminal, interrogating countless taxi drivers, and being welcomed with open arms by the vibrantly connected expatriate community. I have formed relationships with different interlocutors which have allowed me to gain a sense of which cultures, personalities, and attitudes combine to form the permanent community of Cozumel. I have also been fortunate to stay at various hotels, resorts, apartments, and private homes around the island. The differences between each resort, daily life further inland, and actually living on the island are stark. Each of these different perspectives informs the realities of what it is like being a cruise ship tourist,
physically on the island for mere hours, or spending a week or more as a land-based tourist, and finally to living with and being accepted into the permanent community of Cozumel.

This project is also informed by my work inland on the Yucatán Peninsula. I have lived and worked in town of Pisté. The relationship between the town of Pisté and the archeological zone of Chichén Itzá is historically significant as well as economically and culturally close (Castañeda 2003:266-9). For example, “Some Pisté men develop careers as masons and work at other archaeological sites, some become INAH, The Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, custodios living inside Chichén, while others found employment in the Mérida office of INAH in restoration and care-taking” (Castañeda 2003:266). Due to the increased volume of tourists to the site, especially for “New-Age” tourists during the Spring Equinox to the archeological zone, the restaurants, handicraft shops, and vendors who supply Chichén its souvenirs in Pisté vie for tourism dollars. Local control of tourism benefits of Chichén has been a persistent political struggle for the residents of Pisté.

This relationship between a mass tourist site like Chichén and a local community like Pisté has parallels to the relationship between the cruise ship tourist industry and Cozumel. The physicality of mass tourism in both locations is tightly controlled, contained, and often manipulated by public and private interests. Each is dependent on the other for economic stability in the local community, including service-sector employment (i.e. restaurants, bars, handicraft vending, and tours). Pisté, with its predominantly Maya population, is an economic nucleus of a mini-region that

\[10\] “30,000–60,000 visitors to the one-day event on March 21” (Castañeda 2003:267).
encompasses eleven neighboring municipalities (Castañeda 1996; 2003). An economic ripple effect is produced at the archeological zone of Chichén and the three cruise ship terminals in Cozumel as these mass tourism environments represent nuclei of economic prosperity. Lastly, international tourism to each of these localities is popular and massive in scale. Each is marketed with iconic images of Mexican culture exemplified in the production and sale of souvenirs.

Unique to Pisté, as described by Quetzil Castañeda (1995:115-147) is its state of being a “zero-degree culture,” meaning an environment which could not be easily condensed by previous anthropologists focused on the archaic relics of archeological monuments (Steggerda 1941; Redfield 1950). A religious, political, and economic pluralism exists in Pisté, which stands as “anomalous and deviant: here is a non-Folk folk that is also non-Modern modern; neither vestige nor new and ‘not hybrid,’ Pisté is a nonculture community, a noncommunity culture” (Castañeda 1996:42). While Pisté is not the main tourist attraction for international mass tourism, it historically represents a space that cannot easily be classified, as its autonomy (or lack thereof) is complex when placed in relation to the archeological zone. “Zero-degree culture” can also be ascribed to Cozumel. Cozumel as a culture is not the main tourist attraction during a cruise itinerary. Rather, mostly internationally owned stores, restaurants, and tours along the malecón are presented for cruise ship tourist consumption. Cozumel dually represents a space for cruise ship tourists as a port-of-call, a stop in a string of localities on a cruise ship itinerary, and a space autonomous from cruise ship tourism, represented a few blocks inland from the malecón. This space is not designated by cruise ship industry as safe for cruise ship tourists to explore, as its stores, restaurants, and tours, and therefore the
people who inhabit this space at any time, are not “guaranteed,” or endorsed by the cruise ship industry.

Neither community is purely “Maya,” as historically classified by archeologists, anthropologists, or even the common tourist. Each community is dynamic as a hybrid of political, social, and religious beliefs all intercommunicate and remain interwoven. Pisté is progressive: from accepting transgendered persons on the streets, intermixing and mingling with the general population, to protesting the subversive reelection of the conservative party (PAN) with public demonstrations and rallies. Cozumel is a haven of transplanted residents from all over Mexico to as far away as Europe. Each comes hoping for a rebirth of sorts through connecting with the island’s pristine climate, water, and easy-going island lifestyle.

Overall, working in Pisté has deepened my understanding of Maya language and peninsular culture. Dancing the jarana, forming hand-made masa into tortillas in a dimly lit hut while inhaling the fumes of plastic bottles burning in backyard garbage disposals, and sharing stories with masons, gardeners, and painters have all informed this research. These oral histories and experiences have given me the experiential knowledge necessary to navigate the intersection between Maya society, anthropology, and tourism.

My connections with and experiences in these two locations, Cozumel and Pisté, inform this ethnography. They are representative of an overall framework of thinking, melding together to form the basis of understanding and analysis of issues related to indigeneity, politics and heritage, and mass tourism central to these two tourist localities. This text focuses on the broader research issues related specifically to cruise ship tourism.
rather than expanding upon the differences, similarities, future implications of tourism and culture between these two tourist epicenters.

“Went on Vacation, Left on Probation:”11 Significance of Research

It is important to begin the discussion of the relationship between the cruise ship tourism industry and Cozumel at the very beginning by defining the theoretical framework. The field of tourism studies in anthropology has a difficult historical trajectory of establishing itself as a viable subset of cultural studies. The landmark text, Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism, edited by Valene Smith, provides a succinct definition of a tourist as a “temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change” (Smith 1989:4). This academic definition has led many scholars to question the politics, economics, identity, cultural representations, and authenticity surrounding the act of being a tourist. The social effects of tourism on communities are central to tourism studies in anthropology. This ethnography adds to that body of literature by examining the social effects of cruise ship tourism in Cozumel. Moreover, I define what it means to be a cruise ship tourist and analyze the cruise ship industry through the lens of cultural anthropology and tourism scholarship.

11 “Went on Vacation, Left on Probation” is a saying taken from a tee shirt sold at Fat Tuesday (restaurant and bar) in Puerta Maya cruise ship pier in Cozumel.
It is important to note the emergence of cruise ship tourism studies in the social sciences. This field spans a range of localities all over the world from researchers in many different disciplines. Robert E. Wood (2000, 2004, 2006), Professor Emeritus of Sociology from Rutgers University, has written extensively on the globalization of tourism, specifically citing cruise ships as modern spaces of deterritorialization and physical manifestations of neoliberal politics (see also Giddens 1991; Appadurai 1996; Bauman 1998; Tomlinson 1999). Ross K. Dowling, on the faculty of Business and Law from Edith Cowan University in Australia, has edited Cruise Ship Tourism (2006), an expansive collection of various scholarly endeavors from around the world, yet mostly centered on statistical data related to the history and current economic influences of the industry. Ross Klein (2009, 2007, 2002), Professor at the College of Social Work at Memorial University of Newfoundland, has published about the safety, security, and environmental effects of cruise ship tourism mainly in regard to the Canadian Maritimes.

Caribbean cruise ship tourism has been studied in stand-alone chapters and references in at least two publications exploring the Caribbean’s linkages to political and economic influences from abroad (mostly Northern). Mimi Sheller’s Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies (2003) introduces the narrative of the sale and packaged product of the Caribbean as a regional commodity and Caribbean communities as specific representations of a “salable otherness” for tourists to consume. Sheller explores the Westernization and consumption of exoticized images of the region for tourism: “Caribbean tourism is vested in the branding and marketing of Paradise” (Sheller 2003:24). Polly Pattullo’s Last Resorts: The Cost of Tourism in the Caribbean (2005) explores the history of tourism development in the Caribbean while tracing the
region’s linkages to cruise ship tourism. In the chapter “Sailing into the Sunset: The Cruise Ship Industry,” Pattullo notes the industry’s prolific popularity among Northern vacationers while the industry’s history and reign over the political interests of the region remain shadowed by the fact the industry is “using the Caribbean islands as a chain of low-charge ‘parking lots,’ coming and going as they see fit” (Pattullo 2005:171). The chapter ends on a cautionary note, leaving the reader questioning the longevity, the long-term sustainability, of an industry that continually abuses the environment at the expense of the ocean, wildlife, and flora of the region. My research pushes beyond the obvious environmental concerns of cruise ship tourism and instead focuses on the social and cultural implications.

While cruise ship tourism research may not have been at the forefront of anthropological tourism or Latin American and Caribbean studies, the aforementioned scholars nonetheless push the discussion into a rich theoretical realm of analysis and discovery about this undeniably popular and profitable genre of tourism. Tourists’ literal and figurative consumption of the environment, people, and resources during a vacation remains a viable foundation of recent tourism scholarship (Taylor 2012). The ways in which the tourism industry commodifies culture, language, and physical spaces are also paramount to tourism studies. Taking this argument one step further, I argue that corporate greed and local manipulation are historically rooted and manifest themselves in multiple ways in the context of cruise ship tourism and Cozumel, Mexico.

This ethnography fills an important gap and shortcoming in the anthropological study of tourism. The pragmatic and conceptual differentiation of cruise ship mass tourism among other tourisms bridges the absence of this genre of tourism in current
ethnography. I highlight the cultural and economic intersection between cruise ship tourists and a local community. This is accomplished in the context and spaces where cruise ship tourism takes place which ultimately contributes to cross-cultural understanding of one of the most popular forms of tourism in the world.

Various structural and theoretical processes define the cruise ship industry. I illustrate the complex nature of the cruise ship industry with data generated from my time aboard thirteen cruise ships and within the local context in Cozumel. I analyze local negotiation within the lens of a constant, daily influx of people (cruise ship tourists) and money (U.S. dollars). I explain the daily convergence of multinational and multiethnic identities, economies, and socioeconomic statuses. This complex intersection of race, class, and privilege between host and guest adds to the discussion of tourism studies, citing ethnographic evidence of multiple processes of racial and labor hierarchy as well as dominant U.S. imperialism that occurs in a mass tourism zone.

Cruise ship tourism is not merely “significant” or “meaningful” but representative of a power-driven, multidimensional dynamism. “Tourism is not that which impacts, but is the desired culmination, result, and means of something else, here, of anthropology in relation to the politics of identity construed at regional, national, local, and international levels” (Castañeda 1996:7). It is this precise construction of not merely identity, but physical spaces that informs this research. I argue that port-of-call communities are spaces specifically tailored to the cruise ship industry’s agenda of continued profits.

The theoretical underpinnings of this project are broad in scope. The relationships between the international cruise ship industry, regional and state governments, cruise ship and stay-over tourists, and the local population of Cozumel
weave a dynamically interrelated narrative. The social processes and construction of the
tourist gaze, consumption and commodification, and imperial power combine and
overlap—all of which define the complex association between the cruise ship industry
and the local community. I will define and describe this important theoretical framework
in more depth in the following chapter, which will help to illuminate its ethnographic
presence throughout this text.

**Navigation of this Text: Itinerary of Each Chapter**

The larger objectives of this ethnography that I am able to contribute, based on
this organization of the book, include the historical foundation, current manifestations,
and analysis of cruise ship tourism in the context of Latin American and Caribbean
tourism studies in anthropology with particular focus on Cozumel, Mexico. This
dissertation is comprised of seven chapters including a conclusion.

The first two chapters orient the reader to cruise ship tourism from the tourist and
researcher’s perspective by addressing the theoretical underpinnings of the study of
cruise ship tourism. This chapter, “‘Welcome Aboard!’ Cruise Ship Tourism: An
Introduction” has welcomed you as a cruise ship passenger, describing what it is like as a
tourist experiencing daily life on board, and introducing you to the research issues,
questions, methodologies, and field site that are central to this ethnography. This chapter
also describes my role as researcher including an ethnographic account of daily life as a
cruise ship tourist both on a ship and the context of visiting the island of Cozumel as a
cruise ship destination (port-of-call).
Chapter two, “Theoretical Frameworks: Consumption, Representation, and Authoritative Power,” defines and describes essential theoretical arguments fundamental to the analysis of cruise ship tourism. These arguments include a discussion about the tourist gaze and how the semiotics of staging creates the tourist experience in the context of cruise ship tourism. Further, the politics of representation are introduced as indigeneity, specifically Maya and Mexican culture and identity, are presented as ways of understanding how cruise ship tourism brands port-of-call communities for cruise ship tourists. Hall’s theory of representation is also presented in examination of cruise ship tourism advertisements and creating an intentionally engineered environment for cruise ship tourists both onboard and on land. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce Weber’s concept of authoritative power as a conceptual framework to describe the system of power that the U.S.-based cruise ship industry cultivates at port-of-call communities as evidenced in Cozumel and the development of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC as a transnational corporate entity.

“The Structure of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry,” chapter three, explains the development of the U.S.-based cruise ship industry in the United States and at Caribbean port-of-call communities. This chapter orientates the reader to the structure and development of the U.S.-based cruise ship cruise ship industry and its relationship with port-of-call communities in the Caribbean and Riviera Maya. Evidence is presented that multinational business and the private U.S.-based cruise ship industry work in tandem to create and sustain profits while evading U.S. tax and labor laws. This chapter establishes a trajectory of how the U.S.-based cruise ship industry has established itself as an omnipresent source of authoritative power in Caribbean ports-of-call. The purpose of
this chapter is to define and describe the U.S.-based cruise ship industry and how it has created a structure of corporate power in the context of Caribbean cruise ship tourism.

Chapter four, “Manufactured Mass Tourism: A Port-of-Call Defined by the U.S.-based Cruise Ship Industry,” describes how the U.S.-based cruise ship industry engineers replicated experiences for cruise ship tourists onboard and on land while disembarked in Cozumel. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze how the U.S.-based cruise ship industry constructs the physical environment of port-of-call communities to promulgate cruise ship tourism in economic favor of the industry. “Approved” and “guaranteed” spaces are described as evidence of systematic structure and regulation of port-of-call community. This structure creates a sense of competition between locally owned and operated tours, restaurants, and retail businesses in Cozumel with those that have an established contract with the U.S.-based cruise ship industry. It is described how these contracts are mainly with multinational businesses and replicated throughout Caribbean port-of-call communities. This chapter explains how the cruise ship industry engineers a façade, presents the local region as a spectacle, and employs frameworks of staging that ultimately create a fabricated environment, an atmosphere of sale, to cruise ship tourists.

Theories of cultural commodification and staged tourism are discussed in chapter five, “Representation and Cultural Commodification Onboard Cruise Ships and in a Port-of-Call Community.” The façade of cruise ship tourism, first produced on board, extends on land by shaping port-of-call communities into culturally homogenized, controlled, and sanitized spaces of sale. This chapter historically contextualizes the rise of the “all-inclusive” genre in tourism and how it purposefully engineers or recreates cultural stereotypes for profit and ultimately a culturally homogenized tourist experience in most
cruise ship port-of-call communities such as Cozumel. This chapter details ethnographic exemplifications of the tourist gaze in Cozumel, including prior arguments about how the tourist gaze and the socio-political landscape of representation have emerged.

Chapter six, “Cozumel as an Internationally Divergent Population” explains the different population segments of Cozumel: stay-over tourists, expatriates, and Mexican nationals and how they navigate living in a cruise ship port-of-call community. This goal of this chapter is to describe ethnographically how particular segments of Cozumel’s population adopt the asymmetrical gaze as a perspective to interpret the ways they adapt, negotiate, interact with, communicate in, and, overall, the way they live in a port-of-call community. The different population segments in Cozumel are comprised of cruise ship tourists, tourists who stay in the island’s resorts and hotels, expatriates from the U.S. and Canada, other Mexican nationals who are either from the mainland or other regions of the country, migrants working in the tourism service sector, and native Cozumeleños. The focus of this chapter is analyzing the ways the “authoritative gaze” is actually a “perspective” rather than an object, “like a camera, an instrument that is used or not used, left in the hotel room.” The objective of this chapter is to describe how these particular population segments use this perspective to define both their existence within Cozumel and cruise ship tourism, Mexico, and the Caribbean as a whole.

In conclusion, chapter seven, “Confronting Imperialism: Conclusions Regarding Constructs of Spatiality in Cruise Ship Tourism,” describes how a locally owned and operated tour company in Cozumel works independently from the U.S.-based cruise ship industry in Cozumel. The purpose of this chapter is to present evidence of local agency among non-“guaranteed” and “approved” spaces for cruise ship tourism. The
importance of TripAdvisor is also detailed as a form of contestation to the prominence of multinational businesses in Cozumel, especially found in the three cruise ship piers and associated shopping centers. This chapter concludes with a framework of understanding how the U.S.-based cruise ship industry symbolizes an imperial subject. The power of the industry is contextualized as a form of U.S. imperialism as a multinational corporate entity. Further ideas for analysis and data collection concerning the subject of cruise ship tourism in anthropology are presented.
Chapter II. “Theoretical Frameworks: Consumption, Representation, and Authoritative Power”

Introduction: From the Tourist Gaze to Authoritative Power

This chapter defines essential theoretical arguments as a framework for this text. These theories are foundational to tourism studies, starting with Urry’s “tourist gaze,” Baudrillard’s “simulacra,” Adorno and Horkheimer’s “culture industry,” and Hall’s processual frame of “representation.” I define and describe these theories as they relate and contribute to the understanding of cruise ship tourism, which includes the tourist gaze, consumption and commodification, and the politics of representation.

My theoretical contribution adds to the anthropological discussion of power and authority, first introduced by Max Weber (1968). I employ this theoretical underpinning and argue that it provides an illuminating framework to define the spaces of cruise ship tourism at port-of-call communities in terms of a spatially segregated, economically unequal, and historically colonial mass tourism environment. This stratum is hierarchically ordered based on race, class, and socioeconomic status. The cruise ship industry engineers a façade, presents the local population as a spectacle, and employs frameworks of staging that ultimately create a fabricated environment, an atmosphere of sale, to cruise ship tourists. I argue way this model is purposefully created for cruise ship tourists, most of whom hail from the U.S. and Canada, to only spend money in the stores, restaurants, and tours that are approved by each cruise line.

This theoretical framework, including my own contribution, also highlight the homogenization of experience a cruise ship tourist experiences onboard which is
translated at each port-of-call they visit on their cruise itinerary. Cruise ship tourists expect to consume the extraordinary, even while onboard with thousands of fellow passengers and all-consuming the same experience.

Jerry, a piano player on Norwegian Cruise Lines, confided in me during one visit to “Coconuts,” Cozumel’s popular bar on “the other side” of the island, the eastside. He was once a finalist on American Idol and markets himself as such onboard to help get cruise ship passengers to see his daily show. Although he mentioned his job, as a “sing-a-long, jazzy, lounge act,” was one of the “best jobs onboard” he was ready to pursue work back home at a fine dining restaurant. Confessing over margaritas, he said, “They’re all the same, the people, the places, the songs, the routine” (interview 28 November 2011). This chapter examines the ways the cruise ship industry purposefully constructs this sameness of routine by playing into common U.S. constructs of exotification, romanticism, consumerism, consumption, and ultimately, power.

This chapter is a review of literature in order to highlight an accumulation of key concepts (i.e. exotification, romanticism, consumerism, consumption, and power). These concepts work together to build a conceptual framework of cruise ship tourism. As such, through a review of the literature, we will gain and understanding of the complex cultural processes happening during all phases of cruise ship tourism, from the point-of-sale to disembarkation at a port-of-call community.

The Tourist Gaze

John Urry, Professor of Sociology at Lancaster University in the U.K., published the seminal text on the complex relationship between host and guest in the work *The
Tourist Gaze (1990, 2002). Building on the work of MacCannell (1976, 1999), Urry makes an argument about the complex notion of how reality is displayed and digested for tourists on vacation. The tourist gaze describes how tourism constructs experience specifically, how the gaze of the tourist is systematized and socially constructed. A tourist gaze refers to the tourist’s lens of viewing the “touree,” or host, and the environment in which they have sought to spend their leisure time.

Critics of Urry’s concept of the tourist gaze have pointed out that the concept risks suggesting that the local population, host environment, or “gazee” is a “passive pawn” (Taylor 2012). As recent anthropological tourism scholarship suggests, the local, host community often negotiates the way places and people are packaged or displayed for tourist consumption. Ethnography has shifted to incorporate a more nuanced view of tourism by including examples of local negotiation and agency that challenge structures of power in tourism (Castañeda 1996; ReCruz 1996; Little 2004; Breglia 2006; Castellanos 2007, 2010; Taylor 2012). These structures of power in tourism include governmental involvement in the sale and exchange of culture, handicrafts, and souvenirs in tourism zones in the Global South. Further, ethnographers analyze dynamic power struggles in state-sponsored zones of heritage in the form of archeological sites. Continued struggle between the local community and the nation-state is documented in these areas (Castañeda 1996, 2009; Breglia 2006; Burrell 2013). This research adds to the debate surrounding the tourist gaze in a multitude of ways. The tourist gaze is comparable to tourism performance as each is a purposeful construction of self and environment. Like Dean MacCannel’s “front and back stages” (MacCannell 1999), where local livelihoods and autonomy can be shielded from or displayed for the tourist
gaze, both the gaze and the performance remain constructions. Such manifestations of self to satisfy the tourist gaze remain intact, yet this research proves that in spaces of mass tourism (exemplified in the packaged, all-inclusive cruise ship industry) local negotiation remains bounded, albeit by varying degrees. These industries purposefully create boundaries and a culture of separation between the local and tourist. The relationship between the cruise ship tourism industry and the tourist gaze is defined by the way the industry actively constructs an environment that contributes to the structure of the gaze. The industry formulates the tourist gaze in making the cruise ship the destination, rather than focusing on the organic, local community.

The tourist gaze is also formed by consumption that is both visual and metaphorical. It is the process of consumption that is the capturing of the gaze (Urry 1990:42). Urry describes how the tourism industry has adopted strategies to allow a multitude of tourists to gaze repeatedly upon the same object or environment. He lists the following examples how the tourism industry uses the tourist gaze, their visual consumption of space, to its [the industry’s] economic benefit: “[In] devising holidays for different segments of the market so that a wider variety of potential visitors can see the same object; and the development of timeshare accommodation so that the facilities can be used all of the year” (Urry 1990:42). This research adds to this theoretical discussion as the cruise ship industry, including the conglomerates Carnival Corporation and Royal Caribbean Cruises Limited, has allowed millions of tourists to gaze upon local port-of-call communities at discounted rates of travel, throughout the calendar year, while marketing this genre of vacation to a wide socioeconomic population of potential cruise ship tourists. Moreover, the cruise ship industry has created a palpable climate of control
and surveillance of tourists and the structure of local participation. As a cruise ship passenger, you are allowed only a brief time period to disembark while docked at any port-of-call community. The industry creates its own private islands and spaces, void of local life. Finally, the industry manufactures deliberate and strategic zoning of space in and around each cruise ship pier, as evident on the island of Cozumel.

One way to define tourism, however simplistically, is as the consumption of space, time, and signs (Meethan 2006:337). Historically speaking, as leisure time is afforded to more people since the end of WWII, a new status marker has emerged centered on practices of consumption. The more leisure time tourists enjoy, the greater their status, and thus, the more they consume. Tourism is representative of varying modes of consumptive practices (Urry 1990, 1995). Urry describes five tropes of the ways tourists experience another place and culture. The most useful of Urry’s etic forms of the tourist gaze is what he denotes as “romantic,” where “emphasis is upon solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze” (Urry 1990:43). This romantic gaze is exemplified in Caribbean tourism as gazing upon pristine constructions of exotic paradise. The romantic gaze is employed by various tourism industries, especially in the Caribbean, from local government ministries to all-inclusive resorts to the cruise ship industry itself.

According to Urry, the experience of travel begins before arrival to the anticipated destination, “Photographic images organize our anticipation or daydreaming about the places we might gaze upon” (1990:140). Various types of media, including print and electronic, inform the tourist gaze before departure. In relation to Mesoamerica, the tourist gaze often focuses on the exotic, which casts “tourees” into neocolonial spheres of
marginalization (Murphy and Stepick 1991; Castellanos 2007; Broulotte 2009). The cruise ship tourism industry also employs a host of exoticized and sexualized media on their website and through print and electronic ad campaigns. Such campaigns employ the romantic gaze to entice travelers to experience the unspoiled, pristine paradise that the beckons a form of spirituality upon embarking on the high seas, disembarking at an exotic Caribbean port, or just lounging on a remote beach lined with palm trees and turquoise waters (McClintock 1995, 1997).

The Semiotics, Simulacra, and Staging of the Romantic Gaze

Tourists often engage in acts of sightseeing, consuming, and acquiring goods or experiences to authenticate and memorialize the sights and people met while engaging in tourism. “A way of certifying experience, taking photographs is also a way of refusing it—by limiting experience to a search for the photogenic, by converting the experience into an image, a souvenir” (Sontag 1973:9-10). Similar to National Geographic's photographic and descriptive techniques centered on the exotic and timeless, other tourists further this narrative using photography as a physical manifestation of memory (Barthes 1981). Tourist photography dually memorializes and frames the experience in highly structured ways. As early travel writing and journalism suggests, tourists also search for photographic mementos in the form of cultural difference and exoticism, essentially excluding daily life and local voice.

Socioeconomic markers of status are associated with or conveyed through certain tourist destinations. Locations widely identified as exotic, like Dubai, Venice, or the Riviera Maya in Mexico, may claim superior status as the tourism industry reinforces
status markers through its symbolization of the native region and people. Remoteness, cost of travel, and activities unique to each region all form a location’s perceived exoticism. Mass tourism in the Caribbean and Riviera Maya has successfully branded the romantic gaze. All-inclusive resorts, as exemplified by the entire construct of Cancun, are developed for large numbers of tourists and actively promote Urry’s concept of the romantic gaze as a feature of branded exoticism. Tourists expect to look at an object privately or only with ‘significant others’’ (Urry 1990:150). Such objects can vary and include the beach and ocean, familiar shopping and dining establishments, and similar phenotypes of other tourists. The cruise ship industry exploits the romantic gaze in its construction of private islands or sections of land built for cruise ship tourists and not the local population. This research affirms that in mass tourism zones, specifically in all-inclusive packaged options that include areas owned and/or in contract with the cruise ship industry, boundaries are purposefully created between tourists and everyday local life. The physical environment is strategically manipulated as spaces, people, and experiences indigenous to the region are hidden to satisfy the romantic gaze.

The tourism industry controls the romantic gaze, steeped with images of exoticization, for revenue and profit (Dann 1997). A travel brochure entitled the “Classic Caribbean” exemplifies the narrative of the romantic gaze: “Create a Memory…Sway to the rhythm of the island music carried on the cooling breeze. Pamper your body, spirit and soul. Discover the sparkling necklace of alluring islands. The Caribbean awaits” (Classic Caribbean 2007). The mass tourism industry constructs the powerful image of an extraordinarily private paradise, ripe and yearning to be encountered. Romanticization as a semiotic process relates to the positive valorization and idealization of the object as
being pure, unadulterated, and stimulating sentimental affects toward it. This is represented through images of untouched beaches, an unbroken conch shell, or an empty hammock swaying in the breeze (Figure 5). Such immediate connotations and intimate recreations of paradise, masquerading as organic Caribbean sights, are consumed by tourists and influence the tourist gaze upon contact.
In addition to romanticization, exoticization refers to a specific kind of extreme difference; the process of deducting and defining a person, ethnicity, culture, or physical
landscape, as “other.” It may be positively or negatively valued but the act of labeling as other is central to this process. For example, Figure 6 is an advertisement of “JadesMaya,” Maya Jade, essentializes Maya handicrafts into a sexualized exploit of a traditional cultural and ultimately represents an exoticification of the types of products for sale in a Caribbean port-of-call community like Costa Maya (a private port-of-call located in Mahahual, Mexico).

Figure 6. "JadesMaya," Exotification and Essentialization in Port-of-Call Advertising
Both of these semiotic processes, common to the entire Riviera Maya and Caribbean, is not just encountered by tourists but the sentiment is conveyed that its people are there to adorn each tourist upon arrival and throughout their stay. Tourists assimilate symbols of paradise and exoticism, produced by the tourism industry, in categorizing the type of experience, tour, or souvenir they want while on vacation. It is this imagery the cruise ship industry employs to garner a collective feeling of abandon, hedonism, and, importantly, wealth. Marketing by the cruise ship industry, Mexican Tourism Board, and the many businesses of the Riviera Maya use imagery that connotes feelings of deserving forms of luxury, with many images depicting deserted beaches and rampant advertising of diamond jewelry, cocktails, and the act of doing nothing. Taking these common images one-step further, the Mexican Tourism Board published a series of advertisements for Cozumel linking Cozumel with religion iconography. For example, Figure 7, published in Royal Caribbean’s “Port Folio” official port and shopping guide, shows the act of playing with a child, presumably your own, under the tagline, “If you don’t believe in paradise, you haven’t been to Cozumel.” The relationship between father and son is exoticized to the point of labeling it as paradise. Deep tans, fit bodies, and doting fatherly gaze are evidence of both romanticism and exotification. Further, the beach setting is privately theirs alone to enjoy and experience without other tourists, boats, or wildlife. The physical environment assumes the role of an uninhabited, uncontaminated, unrestrained, and uninhibited entity. The spiritual environment, meanwhile, assumes the role of actualized reality-- a fantasy brought to life. The industry paints exoticized regions of paradise as global playgrounds for tourists, free from the
realities of actual life, simultaneously occurring in regions of tourism (Turner and Ash 1975; Enloe 2001; Desmond 1999).  

Figure 7. Romanticization and Exoticification in Cozumel (source, Mexican Tourism Board 2012)  

Tourists who recount their trip upon arriving home symbolically reconstruct the experience. This reconstruction threatens to emanate a variety of stereotypical impressions of the places and people tourists’ encountered while on vacation. Tourists convey symbolically reconstructed impressions upon return as well as represent the “unsung armies of semioticians” looking for the ultimate, typical, or traditional place or people while traveling (Culler 1981:127). Tourists actively seek out such overt symbols while traveling. Thus, symbols play a large role in the way the tourist experiences travel—before departure, during, and after the trip. Throughout mass tourism sites in the Riviera Maya and Caribbean, symbols are often constructed by the tourism industry that produce the tourist gaze in terms of commodified, pre-packaged, and easily accessible forms of exoticism.

Baudrillard’s work on simulacra mirrors modern constructs of mass tourism in which simulacra and simulation is defined as an endless web of reproduced images which are far removed from reality (Baudrillard 1983; cf. Eco 1990). MacCannell’s “front and back stages” in tourism operate similarly to Baudrillard’s theory of hyperreality as the “very existence of an ‘original’ is a function of the copy” (Frow 1991:128). In Cozumel, and many cruise ship port-of-call communities, the hyperreality of the presented environment is consciously constructed for tourist consumption by the cruise ship industry. It is a reproduction of images, removed from reality, as reality is shielded and only a sanitized, controlled, and familiar environment is constructed for cruise ship tourists from the Global North.

Front and back stages function to display or shield environments and people amid the framework of hyperreality. MacCannell argues that the back stage of tourism is
purposefully hidden from tourists’ view. Acting simultaneously, the performance of host identity is foremost in the tourist’s gaze, labeled as front stage. The front stage functions in response to what tourists seek and consume while traveling. This popular theory in tourism studies critically analyzes the segmentation between host and guest. The backstage allows for “tourees” to “continue meaningful traditions away from the gaze of tourists... This makes available portions of host culture for guest consumption, while it protects other parts from commoditization” (Medina 2003:354). Each stage allows for local negotiation in the choice between what cultural aspect of their environment is consumed and commoditized for tourism revenue or mere contact and what is chosen to keep shielded. MacCannell suggests that host populations segment their lives to ward off exploitation, misrepresentation, and further symbolic marginalization from the tourist gaze, essentially protecting the nuances of local cultural habitus from tourist view. This project adds to the discussion MacCannell’s theory by focusing on how the cruise ship industry, not the local population, establishes a power dynamic with local communities in deeming which spaces are safe, guaranteed, and built specifically for cruise ship tourists. Front and back stages are manipulated by the cruise ship industry, leaving a strong sense of competition among local businesses, and thus the local community of Cozumel. The segmentation between host and guest is intentionally created by the cruise ship industry. Local negotiation still functions, including annual traditions (e.g. carnival, the Iron Man competition, and the agricultural fair at El Cedral); yet everyday negotiation in relation with the cruise ship industry is strained. Competition for revenue from cruise ship tourists underpins daily life, especially for businesses in competition with the daily influx of cruise ships to the island.
Consumption and Commodification in Mass Tourism

The quest of experiencing an easily attainable, sanitized version of the extraordinary is a constant for tourists choosing an all-inclusive or cruise ship vacation. Mass tourism zones are tailored around the ease with which symbols are consumed. Coerced consumption in tourism ultimately is a “continued quest for the next ‘unspoiled’ people, environment, beach, countryside, indigenous village” (Urry 1995:135). Such zones in mass tourism offer replicas or recreations, or simply boundary areas, manipulated and tailored to tourists’ imagined sense of what unspoiled paradise actually looks like. For the cruise ship industry in Cozumel, this representation manifests itself in environments mirroring private compounds, shopping malls, and designations of guaranteed safety, all the while keeping the outside (local) away from tourists’ idealized representation (romantic gaze) of paradise. The U.S.-based cruise ship industry appropriates coerced consumption in its everyday practices as cruise ship tourism can be theorized by Urry’s definition.

Lisa Breglia notes, “For a place to be produced for tourist consumption, it must first be marked out, or defined, and then commodified so that it can be consumed by the tourist as either a discrete experience or as an image” (Breglia 2006:100). Similar to how the heritage of the ancient Maya is a carefully constructed vision at Chichén Itzá, the cruise ship industry also is culpable of manufacturing both a specific experience and vision, or concept, of a Caribbean vacation. The cruise ship vacation is treated like a commodity, bought and sold in millions of units. Its packaged quality makes it easy for tourists to purchase, and therefore consume. Cruise ship tourists search for the pristine, exotic, or timeless nature of packaged or all-inclusive travel. Like tourists to Chichén
Itzá, vying for views of the ancient pyramids unobstructed by other tourists (Castañeda and Himpele 1997), cruise ship tourists seek unadulterated beach vistas, sanitized cultural contacts, and access to familiar visualities including bottled water and multinational service-related businesses at their disposal (e.g. Diamonds International, Starbucks, and Office Depot in Cozumel). “All the ‘natural resources,’ including cultural traditions, have their price, and if you have the money in hand, it is your right to see whatever you wish” (Greenwood 128:1977). With supremely large amounts of money flowing in and out of popular mass tourism sites, local, national, and global stakeholders in the tourism industry are controlling the ways tourists experience nature and the culture of the toured destination to garner the most profit.

This research draws upon Urry’s definitions of “mass consumption” (Urry 2002:14). Mass consumption, like mass tourism, describes an unequal relationship between producer and consumer. Mass consumption defines the role of the producer and how it dominates all aspects of production while consumers are placed in a subservient position in relation to the producer. Fordist consumption, meanwhile, places the act of consuming above production (Torres 2002). This process is producer-driven for the sake of consumer profit. The more that is produced, the more that is consumed, and therefore, the more profits are garnered by the producers. This view of consumption is ultimately a consumer-driven landscape rife with private investors, easily replicated, as it is a standardized model of production, offering low costs to consumers and requiring high volume of tourists to generate profits.

Cruise ship mass tourism fits both definitions. This research shows that in Cozumel an inequitable relationship exists between port-of-call communities and the
cruise ship conglomerates when the local communities become part of a “ship-approved map,” directly catered for cruise ship tourists while they disembark on land, ripe with contractual legal jargon and high expenditures. Therefore, in this instance the producer dominates the production of experience sold and displayed to cruise ship tourists while consumers, the cruise ship tourists, are never informed of such an arrangement. This ignorance is part of what each cruise ship tourists pays for on their cruise ship vacation. Further, exotification and romanticization of mass tourism zones replicates these tropes. For example, Figure 8 is symbolic of many advertisements citing the ease of all-inclusivity, common to mass tourism zones. The tagline, “Forget everything…you are in paradise,” connotes the producer will do everything for you upon arrival (and sometimes before during booking). This is an egalitarian way of promotion but ultimately prized to the privileged few who can actually afford such a vacation package, “in paradise.”
Scholarly trends in ethnographies of tourism to the Global South have shifted to reveal how the way place and people are packaged or displayed for tourist consumption is often negotiated. Local communities negotiate by confronting exploitative repercussions of global tourism. These documented repercussions in Mesoamerica include land seizure by the state government, out-migration from rural localities, unsteady remittances, and gendered, inequitable labor practices in mass tourism zones. Such ethnography has shifted to incorporate a more nuanced view of tourism by citing ethnographic examples of local agency. This challenges the one-way notion of power, the absolute binary between victimhood and agency within the landscape of tourism (Castañeda 1996; ReCruz 1996; Little 2004; Breglia 2006; Castellaños 2007, 2010). I argue that in
commodified spaces of mass tourism, exemplified throughout cruise ship port-of-call communities, local negotiation is limited. The cruise ship industry constructs bounded spaces, physical boundaries between cruise ship tourists and the local community.

Nina Wang defines mass tourism as “pseudo-events which were brought about by the commoditization of culture and the associated homogenization and standardization of tourist experiences” (Wang 1999:352; cf. Boorstein 1992¹³). Funneling culture into pre-packaged units of experience is an easily accessible way to satisfy tourists’ desires based on consumer demand. All-inclusive, packaged vacations are archetypical of mass tourism throughout the world. Industry models of large-scale resorts are the blueprints for similar mass tourism sites from Mexico's coastal beach resorts to Caribbean all-inclusive hotels like Sandals and Beaches resorts.

Reflected in packaged or all-inclusive mass tourism is the “standardizing of culture as a commodity indispensable to contemporary capitalism” (Schweppenhäuser 2009). Adorno and Horkheimer's theory of “the culture industry” (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944) parallels the modern mass tourism industry as each functions in a position of power, dually manifesting in forms of top-down subjugation and manipulation. In terms of leisure and travel, “the man with leisure has to accept what the culture manufacturers offer him [sic]” (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944:3). Like modern visual art and music, the culture industry predetermines the impressions made on its consumers, thus making a vapid experience. “The product prescribes every reaction: not by its natural structure (which collapses under reflection), but by signals” (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944:9). Immediate interaction and limited mental effort are to be exuded.

Absolute imitation and repetition is the framework of the culture industry as the packaged or all-inclusive vacation experience. The illusion of happiness, fulfillment, or paradise is what is consumed: “the mechanical reproduction of beauty, which reactionary cultural fanaticism wholeheartedly serves in its methodical idolization of individuality, leaves no room for that unconscious idolatry which was once essential to beauty” (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944:11). The culture and mass tourism industries use overtly ostentatious symbols of beauty to entice, but ultimately thwart, true representations of beauty—leaving the continually packaged representation of beauty to be consumed. The “intellectualization of amusement” is demonstrated in tourism by the fact that only the copy is consumed. Tourists’ photographs and mass-produced souvenirs are examples of how consumption of reproductions takes place every day in mass tourism zones. The culture and mass tourism industry’s control over “the copy” reigns supreme.

I believe Adorno and Horkheimer's theory surrounding the culture industry foreshadows Urry's "post-tourist/m" (Urry 1995). Adorno and Horkheimer suggest: “Life in the late capitalist era is a constant initiation rite. Everyone must show that he wholly identifies himself with the power which is belaboring him [sic]” (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944:17). Being cognizant of one's place in the dominant social structure is to be a modern citizen. Adorno and Horkeimer signal that late capitalism, or neoliberalism as we now refer to this period, force the masses into self-categorization amidst the assaulting hierarchies of power. In the culture industry the “individual is an illusion not merely because of the standardization of the means of production. He [sic] is tolerated only so long as his complete identification with the generality is unquestioned” (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944:18). Personal defenselessness, a characteristic of one who
has “swallowed his rebelliousness” in the wake of authority, fully integrates each member of society to act as a wholly synthetic representation of their former (nuanced, creative, complex) selves (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944:18). Pseudo-individuality (along with, I propose, events, interactions, and now entire environments) evolves to become normative or archetypical, especially in mass tourism. The post-tourist is a product of the mass tourism industry who “finds pleasure in the multitude of games that can be played and knows there is no authentic tourist experience” (Urry 1995:140, cf. Feifer 198614). Post-tourism acknowledges the purposefully created boundaries, manufactured synthetic environments, and potentially shallow cultural interactions of mass tourism. Post-tourism signifies personal negotiation and agency in the late-capitalist/neoliberal framework—there is even acceptance and revelry in its fabricated absurdity. As Adorno and Horkheimer eloquently surmise, “What is new is not that it is a commodity, but that today it deliberately admits it is one; that art renounces its own autonomy and proudly takes its place among consumption goods constitutes the charm of novelty” (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944:19). Advertising in both the culture and tourism industries is foundational to consumerism as we buy and use products that we know are ludicrous as testament to the supreme power of the advertisement (Urry 1995:24). The tourism industry's packaging and marketing of a specific good, place, or people formulate tourists’ interactions and perceptions of the region. The successful commodity economy, in tandem with the acceptance of tourists' hyper-consumerism, forms the framework of mass tourism zones.

Mass tourism zones often incorporate constructions of symbolic representations of culture for tourists. Sterilization, homogenization, and sameness are produced in such spaces. The order and structure of this type of tourism expose the uniform nature of cultural variance as expressed for tourist consumption. This important factor in mass tourism, its packaged representation of culture, is exactly what makes this genre of tourism so popular. Travelers who chose a mass tourism vacation want an experience that is safe and familiar. Mirroring the ways in which fast food is mass produced and consumed, tourists in mass tourism zones travel with an expectation of a modern, often Westernized, summation of the exotic. McDonald’s’ customers pine for the way their specific cheeseburger tastes. For that very reason, the cheeseburger is manufactured specifically to taste the same at every restaurant location from New York to Hawaii. Tourists to mass tourism zones also pine for the sameness generated from all-inclusive accommodations, imported food, bottled water, and sanitized cultural contacts with host populations—all at affordable prices for middle-income households hailing from the U.S. or Canada.

Sanitized cultural contacts between host and guest are often framed through commodity exchange. Sightseeing tours, restaurants, and the sale of souvenirs are a few common examples of how tourists interact through commodity exchange with the host population. As exemplified in the U.S.-based cruise ship industry and all-inclusive resorts, the commodification of ethnicity is displayed for profit. Structures of inequality between marginalized host populations (i.e. indigenous Maya of Mahahual, Mexico) are

---

15 Sanitized can be defined here as temporary, meaningless, baseless other than for sale or exchange of knowledge, controlled in an atmosphere of sale such as a cruise ship pier or cruise ship approved store, restaurant, or tour.
perpetuated in zones of mass tourism with mainly North Americans or Europeans as pre-packaged vacation consumers. Exogenous appropriation of indigenous culture, whether for political or economic purposes, results in the “‘packaging’ of indigenous identity, the context of which is largely determined by dominant external institutions and actors” (Stephen 1991:102).

To a certain extent, especially regarding cruise ship tourism, I agree with Erik Cohen’s classic remarks regarding mass tourist systems as complete envelopment of fabricated cultural symbols: “A fully developed mass tourist system surrounds the tourist with a staged tourist space, from which there is ‘no exit’” (Cohen 1988:373). As previously exemplified, all-inclusive resorts strategically place “the real” away from the tourist’s gaze and instead offer symbolic, idealized representations for consumption. It is not just “the real” that is whisked away from the tourist gaze— it is any part of local life that does not exist to serve or sell to cruise ship tourists. This, in turn, creates an environment in which the cruise ship tourist, him/herself, is the primary referent for all other people, thus confirming the myth of tourist centrality. If an activity is taking place that does not have cruise ship tourists at its center, then it seems not to exist. Deeper than “sanitizing” tourists’ experience— it is a more complex process involving an imagined world built for cruise ship tourists. Examples include the cruise ship industry manufacturing completely fabricated private islands built to their liking or piers at each port-of-call that come to life only when cruise ship tourists set foot there—void of the region’s cultural distinctiveness. In these examples, culture is sanitized to comply with the tourist gaze in mass tourism. “Staged tourist spaces” are evident of the “globalization of nothing” (Ritzer 2004). Such staged spaces rely on the existence of the familiar in
unfamiliar spaces of travel. Affordability, simplicity, and lack of distinctiveness appealing to a wide range of tastes define many mass tourism zones. All-inclusive hotels specifically cater and market this heavily structured nature of staging. Extending the “globalization of nothing,” “glocalization,” also permeates mass tourism (Ritzer 2004). Glocalization refers to the transformation of indigeneity and heterogeneity of the physical space, transforming identity into “nothingness for mass appeal and greater profits” (Ritzer 2004:175). The industry’s process of cultural sterilization for tourist consumption certainly exists. While these are perhaps generalizations, and certainly exceptions apply, constructing mass tourism zones in the context of theme parking remains a multimillion-dollar business.

Host populations are not left without agency in the process of representation (Little 2004). Host and guest communities are interconnected through capitalist restructuring of space for tourism revenue. Inter-cultural awareness is developed through flexible strategy in production and marketing of goods and services for tourism (Ateljevic et. al. 2003). “A host community is not only subject to its own internal dynamics but also part of a larger regional or national culture, and tourism is merely one component contributing to the types of actions and choices made by locals” (Bendix 1989:144). The construction of ethnicity for profit in tourism is a dynamic process between host and guest. “Production is increasingly aestheticized, attaching meanings and symbolic associations to material objects” (Ateljevic et. al 2003:123). Although not directly associated with tourism, Chipotle, a popular fast-food restaurant chain in North America, appropriates indigeneity in assuming the parallels between “Mexican” food and indigenous artwork. The chain displays indigenous-inspired artwork at each of its locations that is produced by
“Mayatec,” a Colorado-based design firm. These art pieces resemble an Aztec-like figure -- holding a burrito. Literally and figuratively, this example transforms indigeneity into a symbol of consumption. Whether indigenous stakeholders were consulted or not in the production and design, this “art for marketing” should be questioned in future research. Appropriating cultural heritage and identity for mass appeal is a common theme in (mass) tourism.

It is important to note that cultural commodification is not a positive or negative outcome of tourism, rather, it can be used as a lens that explores the nuances between the host and guest relationship. Deconstructing the relationships established in this often dichotomous host and guest presentation offers insight onto the larger structural processes happening while identity and display are constantly shifting. In short, plural meanings are produced in cross-cultural encounters (Stanley 1988:150). Economic motivation is only part of the equation for sustained cultural displays for tourist consumption. Sustained aestheticization in the representation of localities in tourism by the host community for tourism can act as a reaffirmation of local identity, culture, and heritage (Bentex 1989). Performing a ceremony or engaging in the ritual of maintaining heritage sites for tourism revenue are examples of how local cultural distinctiveness can be reaffirmed through tourist consumption. Tourists’ consumer choices may economically affirm an aspect of locality, while simultaneously its presentation is ultimately constructed or symbolically (re)represented by the “touree.” Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) argue that cultural commodification and tradition are not merely acting

---

16 This text will focus more on the manifestations of cruise ship tourism in the context of authoritative power using participant observation and interviews. See Chapter 7 for more about future research.
as the transaction in tourism; rather, cultural and monetary exchange are becoming vernacularized into local, everyday lived experience. “Just as culture is being commodified, so the commodity is being rendered explicitly cultural—and, consequently, is increasingly apprehended as the generic source of sociality” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009:28). Entire countries are trademarking into a singular brand for consumption (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009:122-130). Forging a singular symbol or logo as emblematic of “hetero-nationhood” aptly signifies the entryway into a commercial engagement. Nowhere do we see the trademarking of countries more prominently than in the tourism industry. In addition to selling the people, history, or natural resources, the country itself becomes a brand, competing with other countries for the most tourism revenue.

The structural framework of the corporatization of nationhood ultimately leads to the commodification of ethnicity. “The historical process that began by making corporations into living, right-bearing persons ends by conjuring living, right-bearing persons into corporate-like 'private contractors,' human agents who own and market their skills, their heritage, their embodied capital” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009:130). I intend to add to the discussion of ethnic commoditization by hypothesizing the exact extent of local negotiation by host populations in such hyper-regulated, constructed, and potentially bounded areas of mass tourism.

Indigeneity for Profit: Themeparking and Ethno-commodities for Sale

The cruise ship industry also employs indigeneity for entertainment to satisfy the tourist gaze. “Ethno-commodities” are displayed and marketed to tourists as the
“incorporation of identity and the existential grounding of ethnicity” work in tandem (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009:46). Culture is marketed along with these romantic notions of travel and can be just as easy for tourists to experience. Mayaness used as entertainment by the tourism industry provokes scholars of tourism studies to question the continued indigenous cultural homogenization for profit. Branding of Mayaness in zones of mass tourism (i.e. Cancun, Cozumel, and Costa Maya in Mexico) is presented as safe, sanitary, homogenized, or stereotypical interpretations of exoticism to garner the most tourism dollars (see Figures 6 and 9). The construction of archetypical controlled package tourist communities is a clear example of the construction of exoticism and continued Othering for tourist consumption (Dann 1996:64). Tourists can experience Mayan ruins or ritual through replicas and recreations in a restaurant or hotel. In Cozumel, for example, “Discover Mexico” is a cruise ship shore excursion. This excursion takes cruise ship passengers directly from the pier to the “museum” where tourists tour miniature replicas of famous Mexican archeological sites and landmarks from the “Prehispanic,” “Colonial,” and “Classical” periods from around the country (i.e. there is a replica of the Palacio de Bellas Artes, Monumento a la Independencia, and Paseo de la Reforma found in Mexico City). The tourism industry, especially exemplified in mass tourism, purposefully creates distance and overt representations of the exotic by branding Mayaness for tourist consumption (see Chapter 5).
Stuart Hall (1997) theorizes representations to be depictions or translations of images that stand in or take the place of realities, often sexualized or exoticized as "Other." This reconstruction threatens to reproduce a variety of stereotypical impressions of the places and people tourists encounter while on vacation. Not only do tourists, specifically mass tourists, convey symbolically reconstructed impressions upon their return home; they are also looking for the ultimate, typical, and/or traditional place or people while traveling (Culler 1981:127).

Theme parking frames society and cultural exchange as a commodities—“exchange is rooted in cultural display” (Dicks 2003). Iconic cultural symbols are literally translated into commodities and commodified physical spaces. Employing the Olympics as an example of theme parking, cities around the world promote their ethnicities in symbolic ways for global consumption. For example, the 2010 winter games in Vancouver, British Columbia included indigenous ritual dance, ceremony, and iconography to pay tribute to, as well as act in the sale of, Olympic-themed products. “Theme parking is a
technological effect which aims to make environments thematically coherent, through deploying a particular, recognizable set of symbols” (Dicks 2003:93-4). In addition to citing the Olympics as an example of theme parking, we can also see the ways Disney uses theme parking to entice tourists. Disney appropriates cultural icons for touring and commodifies the entire experience in their parks and thus is a clear representation of this process. Disneyfication, or the creation of entire “lands,” as opposed to random displays of entertainment/amusement, creates a feeling of immersion for the tourist. Epcot at Walt Disney World Resort includes a “World Showcase” of eleven different countries. Tourists can sample regional foods, costume, and architecture of countries, from Norway to Morocco in the span of a single afternoon. Mass tourism zones employ Disney's cultural production in the ease with which cultural diversity is displayed—in its supremely commodified and accessible form.

Central to constructed and bounded lands are concentrated spaces of selling. Often subliminal, the constant plethora of sale, exchange, and consumerism is a sly marketing tactic, often resembling a “cloak of consumerism in a form of disguise” (Dicks 2003:101; Eco 1986). From literal theme parks to the processes of theme parking in tourism, marketing and branding of culture to sell goods and services is normative. Consumerism parallels displayed simulacra, and tourist enjoyment is based on consumption in controlled environments built on the theoretical framework of theme parking.

Built into the coastline just south of Cancun, Mexico, Costa Maya represents an extreme example of the constructed theme parking of Mayaness for tourist consumption. Using previously constructed models of theme parking and Disneyfication for tourism, Costa Maya is completely engineered for and tailored to cruise ship tourism.
Internationally owned and operated cruise ships dock at Costa Maya as a “safer” alternative to ports in Haiti, Belize, and Honduras (for more discussion on Costa Maya and the Yucatán as constructed for cruise ship tourism, see Chapter 3). A online forum for cruise ship tourists describes the port-of-call: “Costa Maya is what you'd expect if, say, Disney World decided to create its own private island in Mexico: a man-made tourism village with bars, restaurants, shops and pools at the ready” (CruiseCritic 2014). One can relax on the manmade beach while a “Mayan folklore show” is offered for free at the amphitheater. Swim-up bars under synthetic thatched-roof huts (in the style of the traditional palapa) are situated near faux-pyramids built as playgrounds for children. Internet access at $6/minute (USD) is provided by the company, “Mayan Connection.” An interesting symbolic juxtaposition is established between the enormous transnational cruise ships looming in the distance and the reality of this port being utterly closed off from the inland communities. Costa Maya is a synthetic replica of a Maya village with all the Global North’s ideals of comfort and safety. In such constructed, and ultimately manipulated, environments, the tourist gaze is easily accessible and attainable by “signposting” (Urry 1995). Signposting decodes variation or distinctiveness of culture, local identities, and ethnicities—making consumption instant and easily recognizable. The social construction of Mayaness, relaxation, and leisure in zones of mass tourism relies on the communal acknowledgement of commodified space from both hosts and guests. Tourists are active participants, assigning roles, representations, and expectations onto host communities. Such expectations are bred from mainstream media in its marketing and constructed imagery of the host population and environment (Bunten 2008:382). The aestheticization of commodity production (in tourism) is a fluid concept,
as commodity production lies within embedded structural frameworks (Appadurai 1996). As previously suggested, frameworks of global commerce, national and international marketing campaigns, and tourism development strategies shape the ways in which tourists assign roles, representations, and expectations. “These relationships, however remote, are fundamentally embedded within the global structures of power and knowledge” (Atelijevic et. al. 2003:136). Power hierarchies construct how image and representation, even beliefs, about tourism destinations are shaped for (foreign) consumption.

Cruise Ship Tourism and Hall’s Theory of Representation

Like the tourist gaze, commodification, and consumption, the concept of representation is a process. Stuart Hall, Jamaican-born Caribbeanist, cultural theorist, and sociologist defines representation as it “connects meaning and language to culture” (Hall 1997:15). That simplistic meaning is brief yet can be unpacked to give great value to tourism studies. Other synonyms of the term include: description, depiction, symbolization, and the act of “making sense.” These terms combine to form a construction of what one connotes as the representative subject that ultimately form a constructive process. “Meaning is constructed, produced. It is the result of a signifying practice – a practice that produces meaning, that makes things mean” (Hall 1997:24). As previously stated, such constructions of meaning often take the place of reality. The reality that is presented to cruise ship tourists is purposefully constructed by the cruise ship industry not merely “out there” waiting to be represented or misrepresented and distorted. According to Hall, codes are crucial to understanding, meaning, and
representation and “do not exist in nature but are the result of social conventions” (Hall 1997:29). I argue, in the context of mass tourism, specifically cruise ship tourism, the way people contextualize and understand Hall’s concept of codes is manipulated by the industry.

Cruise ship mass tourism creates its own social conventions by creating a tightly controlled experience from the point of sale to disembarkation at the end of the vacation. For example, Royal Caribbean’s SeaPass card is issued to each passenger upon check-in to a cruise vacation, printed with a picture of the passenger on the face of the card. This credit card acts as a debit or credit card for onboard purchases (e.g. photographs, alcoholic and soft drinks, and souvenirs) and also is used as a security measure by the industry. The SeaPass card is required to display upon both disembarkation at each port-of-call and upon re-embarkation, swiped by security guards after personal items are scanned on a conveyor belt (similar to an airport). This system of surveillance controls not only the physical movement of cruise ship passengers but also the ways in which the tourist experience is tightly controlled, sanitized, and homogenized form of tourism (starting from the exact onset of the vacation).

Codes are crucial to understanding, meaning, and representation is already constructed through the tourist gaze and engineered by the cruise ship industry to make this space a materialized reality. For example, Figure 10, an advertisement in Royal Caribbean’s PortFolio magazine demonstrating imagery that manipulates the codes necessary for understanding what is expected as a cruise ship passenger and therefore

17 Each cruise line adopts a similar method of surveillance and purchasing as a Royal Caribbean’s SeaPass card.
constructs the tourist gaze. Flipping through this magazine, issued by Royal Caribbean, tourists can picture their experience onboard: elegantly dressed, perfectly coiffed, relaxing and laughing among peers all while being served (with a smile) from a person of color. Excess, privilege, and racial hierarchy are all codes that are engineered by the cruise ship industry which create the tourist gaze.

Figure 10. Representation, Codes, and Understanding: The Tourist Gaze Manufactured by Royal Caribbean (source, PortFolio 2012)
Conclusion: The U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry as an Authoritative Power

Recent ethnography has shifted to incorporate a more nuanced view of Mesoamerica by including examples of local negotiation and agency that challenge constructions of power in tourism (Castañeda 1996; ReCruz 1996; Little 2004; Breglia 2006; Castellanos 2007, 2010). This research adds to this discussion by analyzing how local negotiation is compromised in Cozumel through the process and construction of authoritative power by the cruise ship industry.

Foucault’s panoptic environment is fitting to the ways in which the cruise ship industry has both physically shaped and metaphorically directed cruise ship passengers to certain spaces in Cozumel. Observation and surveillance (of each cruise ship tourist), while certainly present, does not only serve as an explanation of why the cruise ship industry has chosen to separate the local community from cruise ship tourism; this segmentation serves as a form of social discipline, a physical manifestation of power which is visualized through the structured “architecture of power,” where the cruise ship industry serves as the architect. In Cozumel, the manifestation of Foucault’s panopticon is “an economical model of power, for once its physical structure is in place, it confines the masses to their allotted spaces” (Gene 2012:615). While cruise ship tourists and inmates are vastly different, as tourists are afforded multiple rights to which inmates inherently do not have access, this model of power works to benefit the cruise ship industry, mostly at the cost of locally owned and operated businesses. Several local owners and employees have expressed the need to compete with the “cruise ship approved” businesses (e.g. Diamonds International, Del Sol apparel, Carlos n’ Charlies)
as these “approved” businesses can afford to charge lower prices. The crux of this argument is that the majority of these “cruise ship approved” businesses are operating in several locations either internationally or throughout various port-of-call communities simultaneously.

It is imperative to note that there are degrees of agency among the local community of Cozumel, as power is not completely one-sided. As Foucault admits, “Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody’s hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth” (Foucault 1977:98). Power’s dynamism functions similarly to the changing representation of indigenous, specifically Maya, populations. The argument has justly shifted from a notion of the “stagnant primitive” to one possessing increasing agency though migration, globalization, and tourism as testament more egalitarian forms of displayed ethnicity.

More dynamic and emergent representations of indigeneity in the context of transcultural exchange break former essentialist renderings of displayed ethnicity (Bossen 2005:125). Tourism zones, especially communities in or near mass tourism sites, should be read through the lens of transnationalism where local communities’ expressions of identity ultimately benefit economic progress, both individually and collectively (Appadurai 1997; Ortner 1997; Stoller 1997). However, this ethnography adds to the discussion, demonstrating that while mass tourism now challenges Edward Bruner’s construction of “touristic borderzones,” where guest and host rarely occupy the same space other than to “coexist in a specially constructed locality, a performance space,” the cruise ship industry still adheres and vehemently upholds this intentional segmentation between host and
guest (Bruner 2005:251). A dichotomy in Cozumel exists between the manufacture and sale of indigeneity for profit with the sense of competition among businesses dependent on cruise ship tourism. Sherry Ortner (2006) critiques the way Bourdieu (1977) and Sahlins (1981) have omitted both individual and collective agency from their descriptions of power because the term does not translate from what American and British social theorists mean by “agency.” I wish to employ Ortner’s analysis and definition of agency when citing the local community of Cozumel in relationship to the cruise ship industry. Ortner describes agency as not merely a form of Western individualism but a shifting force embedded within cultural construction. It is the focus of this text to expand Ortner’s conception of the way agency is “shaped, nourished or stunted” under different regimes of power (Ortner 2006:137). A regime of power, in the context of this ethnography, is characterized as the U.S.-based cruise ship industry’s manifestation, a succinctly physical cultural construction, of U.S. imperialism. The industry is concerned with the building and maintenance of such physical environments in port-of-call communities across the landscape of cruise ship tourism. In Cozumel, this power, paralleling U.S. imperialism, is evident in the three cruise ship piers: Puerta Langosta (Royal Caribbean), International Pier (Carnival), and Puerta Maya (Carnival). In these environments, collective local agency of independently owned and operated businesses is being stunted by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry.

These different kinds of power (Foucault 1977 and Orther 2006) are similar in that they characterized processual, fluid, and dynamic pertaining to each body or community. In the context of cruise ship tourism, especially apparent in port-of-call communities like Cozumel, power takes shape of something more sinister in context. It
is absolute and cloaked in regulation, bureaucracy, and corporate greed. This typography of power is different than Foucault and Ortner, as it is authoritative in both social construct and manifestation on land.

In Cozumel, a tension exists between cruise ship tourists, local businesses, and cruise line expectations for industry success on land. Tourists pine for sameness in experience, along with escape from their daily routines at home, while local businesses long for profit. The cruise ship industry promulgates neocolonialist (gendered) sentimentalities of conquering the island, framed in modes of consumption. It is the cruise ship industry that ultimately prevails as the island's premier source, the center of authoritative power, of tourism to Cozumel. Money generated from cruise ship tourism combines with tourist and local desires of idyllic beach leisure and economic stability, respectively. Thus, the massive earnings reaped from cruise ship tourism at the industry level (by internationally owned cruise ship companies) help to coerce tourist and local attitudes towards the industry’s benefit, and therefore can be seen as tools to promulgate authoritative power. Max Weber defines authoritative power as legitimated, conforming to the law and rules, and therefore accepted by society as authority. The cruise ship industry establishes itself as autonomous from the law, as many cruise lines are registered in countries other than the U.S. (e.g. Liberia, the Bahamas, and Panama), and therefore are not accountable to U.S. regulation, environmental and labor laws, or corporate taxation (see Chapter 3 on “flags of convenience” and Gupta et. al. 2012). Non-U.S. flag registries dominate because

U.S. laws are generally the most restrictive of all maritime nations. Convenience registry critics feel that cruise lines choose developing nations' registries because as flag states, these nations are not only reluctant to discipline major contributors
to their economies, but also do not have the resources to enforce regulations or even punish polluters [Gupta et.al. 2012: 276; see also Wright 2007, 2010].

Authoritative power “implies the ability to require performance that is based upon the performer's belief in the rightness of the system” (Allan 2011:100). It is the system of authoritative power that is being legitimated through the cruise ship industry and materialized on land in Cozumel. The system of "exotic summations of paradise" as constructed by the industry to satisfy the tourist gaze defines its authoritative power and its omnipresence on the island. The omnipotent nature of mass tourism structures (physical, emotional, labor-driven), however, does not necessarily imply social coercion. The industry uses authoritative tactics in wielding power to secure its financial stronghold over each port-of-call community while maintaining its reputation of high standards among cruise ship tourists, but local negotiation is certainly present in Cozumel. One business owner notes, “the island is forced to comply with the cruise lines, without it, we’d go hungry” (interview, January 4, 2012).
Preface to Chapter III.

Ethnographic Vignette: All-Aboard!

In early January 2012, after spending two months living and conducting research in Cozumel, I flew from Cancun to Orlando, made the hour and a half drive to Tampa, and met my friend and colleague who would accompany me on our 5-night “Western Caribbean Cruise” on Royal Caribbean’s “Jewel of the Seas.” The morning our cruise was set to disembark, we excitedly boarded a shuttle with other cruise ship passengers and made our way from Tampa International Airport to the Tampa Cruise Terminal. Riding in the shuttle, each of the families, couples, and the two of us shared how excited we all were to relax and eat good food aboard, exchanged horror stories of past cruise ship experiences, and worked together to build an energy of excitement as we pulled up to the terminal.

A cruise ship vacation begins in an often confusing and overwhelming embarkation process not unlike a visit to the Department of Motor Vehicles or trying to catch an international flight at a busy airport. The process is filled with paperwork, long lines, and often confrontational exchanges between cruise ship passengers and employees who process each passenger’s paperwork. Every passenger is responsible for completing this check-in process, beginning online available three days before departure, and in person before boarding the cruise ship. A security note accompanied our “SetSail Pass” (ticket), “Prior to entering the cruise terminal, be prepared to present your SetSail Pass along with photo identification. Due to security reasons, there are no visitors allowed in the terminal” (Royal Caribbean 2012). A boundary was instantly created between cruise
ship passengers with tickets and family, friends, and acquaintances helping to unload passengers. As we said our goodbyes and gathered our luggage, we were told to wait. As we patiently stood in line, corralled in a sea of luggage and paperwork outside the main entrance to the terminal, a young man from Florida with a family of three grumbled, “What else do they need [to board the ship]? A DNA sample?” (interview, 2 January 2012).

There are three terminals for cruise ship embarkations at Tampa Port Authority. Each terminal is designated for a particular cruise line (i.e. “Cruise Terminal #3” is for Norwegian Cruise Line and Royal Caribbean International). Each terminal acts like a parking spot for the cruise ships while they unload the previous cruise’s waste, luggage, and tourists while simultaneously load the food, luggage, and passengers of the new itinerary. This intricate unloading/reloading process happens in a matter of hours: beginning early morning when the cruise docks and then departs late afternoon, once everyone is onboard and supplies have been replenished. Cranes lifting massive wooden boxes onto the ship, vans filled with luggage crowding the dock, and men laboriously painting the sides of the ship, either from the dock itself with elongated rollers or belayed from the ship’s decks, are common scenes in this interim parking period of each cruise ship.

We traipsed through the sea of fellow passengers leaving their taxis, cars, and other shuttles at the terminal’s entrance. The scene was chaotic and loud—families arguing over who would carry the heaviest luggage, older couples unsure of where to enter, and groups of twenty-something’s hollering in anticipation of the night’s party at the ship’s Vortex Disco. Upon entrance into the terminal, we went up a large escalator,
waited in line, and finally placed our luggage onto a conveyer belt, similar to TSA’s at every national airport, and we patiently stood at the security checkpoint. The checkpoint was to confiscate alcohol, drugs, and firearms-- all not permitted onboard. After passing through the metal detector our luggage was whisked away to be sorted, then delivered to our stateroom onboard. One note in our boarding materials warned,

All luggage’s are subject for inspection, if you have prohibited items such as; alcohol, knives, sharp objects, iron, etc., your suitcases might be in our security holding area in Deck 2 Centrum by 7:00pm…We are dealing with 5,000 pieces of luggage’s [sic] and delivery can be a lengthy process, we kindly ask guests to wait patiently. Your luggage should be in your room no later than 7:00pm (Royal Caribbean 2012).

We went up another escalator of the four-story terminal to wait in another line, similar of one you would see at a crowded bank, the line of increasingly impatient passengers twisting and snaking multiple times between retractable ropes. When we finally reached the front of the line after an hour wait, a line of employees working behind a long counter seemed frantic processing each travel document. Upon reaching the front of the line, we showed our passport, our signed SetSail pass (ticket), and the credit card we previously registered online for onboard purchases. Once we completed the check-in, the “validation” or “immigration clearance process,” as coined by Royal Caribbean in their pre-departure materials, we were issued an identification card called “SeaPass.” This pass serves as each passenger’s identification to get on/off the ship at every point, a stateroom key, and also an onboard expense card for purchases (e.g. photographs, alcohol, soda, specialty coffee, clothing, jewelry, etc.). Royal Caribbean advises, “Each person should also hold on to their SeaPass Card during the entire boarding process for security purposes.” We were also told this card would be how the
cruise line knows when have disembarked at each port. Passengers swipe their SeaPass upon disembarkation and again during embarkation at each port-of-call community.

More details of the card were provided on a one-page brochure stacked neatly near where we waited in line:

The Jewel of the Seas is a cashless ship. Think of your SeaPass card as your onboard charging card. To activate your SeaPass card, we suggest using a credit card as it allows for automatic checkout at the end of your cruise vacation while also avoiding standing in long lines (Royal Caribbean 2012).

A feeling of financial recklessness steadily percolated as we learned this one card would unleash access to the casino, spa services, and premium, handcrafted cocktails. It would also be our ticket back onboard after each port-of-call. Above all, we learned it serves as a security measure, a constant surveillance of each passenger’s spending and whereabouts.

We finally entered the ship after snapping the last of a succession of embarkation pictures on the gangway. The opulence of the ship’s size and scale hit us like a shot of cold air to the face. Glitzy neon lights traced every surface and colorful carpets, furniture, and wall treatments were an overload to our numbed upstate New York senses.

As we looked around the ship’s main common area, the multi-story “Centrum,” we read from the daily “Cruise Compass,”

Pure relaxation and incredible views along the way. Jewel of the Seas, a dazzling Radiance-class ship, combines sleek swiftness, panoramic vistas, and wide-open spaces for the ultimate cruise getaway. With acres of glass throughout and elevators facing the sea, every view is picture-worthy. Bask at the tranquil Solarium pool, recharge at Vitality Spa, or reach new heights on our signature rock-climbing wall. When the sun goes down, the night heats up with Broadway-style shows, Casino Royale, plus sixteen bars and lounges. It's the amazing vacation you've been searching for.
Pools, spas, shows, bars, and lounges now made up the destinations of our days rather than daily commutes to work and senseless errands. I believe this energy was palpable among fellow passengers in seeing the opulent surroundings, reading the possibilities of the week both onboard and while visiting port-of-calls on the itinerary, and breathing those first relaxing sighs of *vacation*.
Chapter III. The Structure of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry

The Global Cruise Ship Industry: A System that Cultivates Authoritative Legitimacy


“The development of the modern form of the organization of corporate groups in all fields is nothing less than identical with the development and continual spread of bureaucratic administration” (Weber 1947:337).

Mass tourism, as we know it today, did not begin with the popularity of cruise ship tourism. Rather, the cruise ship industry was part of a boom of affordable vacations in a post-WWII era of marked leisure and disposable income in the United States. The model and mode of leisure that is all-inclusivity, made popular by land-based tourism resorts, has successfully been appropriated by the cruise ship tourism industry. The framework for this genre of mass tourism (first made popular by all-inclusivity) contains the following: ease, affordability, familiarity, and choice. Each resort offering an all-inclusive option for tourists implements at least one or all of these elements. The U.S.-based cruise ship industry is no different. This chapter examines how the industry has implemented this framework to its benefit and has successfully established itself as one of the most popular forms of tourism in the Global North.

The cruise ship is intended, marketed, and designed to be the focal point of every cruise ship vacation. The port-of-call communities that comprise each cruise ship’s
travel itinerary are literally and figuratively placed in the shadows of the cruise ship. The amount and variety of passengers’ choices are paramount in explaining this phenomenon. The food choices available at every meal and dining venue are overwhelming. For example, Royal Caribbean’s Main Dining Menu is a two-page booklet which includes a brief introduction, “Our menus present a different daily choice with options to choose between nine appetizers, three different types of soups, ten entrée choices, and seven desserts” (Royal Caribbean Menu 2012). Figure 11 shows the first of two pages of the menu detailing the starters and deserts for the dinner. On the left-hand side of the menu, a reference is made to the variety, quality, and exclusivity of alcohol that is available in the form of a “Royal Caribbean Bloody Mary Experience.” This menu reflects that consumer choice is a badge of honor to the cruise line. The more choice presented for consumers, particularly the greater the cruise line’s profits. This is especially true in terms of alcohol sales, as passengers must pay for alcohol and soda purchases separately from their pre-paid fare on their SeaPass card.
Figure 11. Royal Caribbean's Activities and Entertainment Highlights. This image is from the "Cruise Compass," which passengers can carry with them around on board to attend shows, shopping events, buffets, and more.
Figure 12. Royal Caribbean’s Main Dining Menu, Starters. Passengers can choose as many selections as they like, often opting for multiple starters and desserts, as all food is included in the each ticket, prepaid-booking of the cruise vacation.

Activities on board also offer an array of choices, from surfing to reading a book in the library; swimming to playing a game of high-stakes poker; rock climbing to dining in the privacy of your own stateroom with room service — onboard stimulation is seemingly
limitless. Figure 11 shows the variety and scope of activities offered for just one day onboard the Royal Caribbean’s *Jewel of the Seas*.
The cruise ship companies pride themselves on catering to every palate, desired activity level, and personality type. While there are certainly exceptions, primarily more upscale cruise ship lines like the U.K.’s Cunard Line or the U.S.’ Seabourn Cruise Lines (which refers to itself as The Yachts of Seabourn), the two most popular, U.S.-based cruise ship companies, Royal Caribbean International and Carnival Corporation & PLC, focus on providing standardized service and a multitude of options for their passengers.

This chapter explains the formation of the cruise ship industry and its introduction to U.S. consumers. This history reveals how the global cruise ship industry has evolved into only three companies controlling the global cruise ship market: Carnival Corporation & PLC, Royal Caribbean International, and Star Cruises Group. Star Cruises Group focuses its cruises mainly throughout Asia while both Carnival Corporation & PLC and Royal Caribbean International employ itineraries to Canada, Europe, Central and South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Carnival Corporation & PLC and Royal Caribbean International are the focus of this research because they are both headquartered in the United States. The U.S.-based cruise ship industry, comprised of the large fleets of ships operated under Carnival Corporation & PLC and Royal Caribbean International, and the tourists who choose a vacation with their cruise lines, are the main focus of this study (see Figure 13 for a map of the cruise ship industry’s structure).
Figure 14. Map of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry's Structure
Caribbean cruise ship vacations began with the first commercial cruise ship voyage in 1966. Since the advent of commercial cruise lines in the United States in the late 1960s, this form of mass tourism has steadily burgeoned into a billion dollar global industry. According to the industry’s largest trade and travel consortium, the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), “[North] America continues to be the primary economic driver for the cruise industry, providing close to two-thirds of all global passengers and sixty percent of all cruise embarkations” (CLIA 2011). The United States is the leading market for cruise ship tourism, as this country is the largest producer of cruise ship tourists in the world. In 2011, two-thirds of the 20 million cruise ship passengers in 2011 worldwide were from the United States. “Nearly one in ten North Americans has traveled as a cruise ship tourist and 90 percent would choose to vacation on another cruise ship” (Garin 2005:8). In the U.S., cruise ship tourism is virtually recession-proof, as it has sustained growth both during and after the country’s longest recession since the 1920s with the 2007-2009 subprime mortgage, banking, and automobile crisis.

This chapter also introduces the theoretical underpinnings that can help to understand and conceptualize the development of the cruise ship industry into a centralized corporate entity. The three cruise ship companies that control the entire global market wield their billion-dollar profits in influential ways. The power of the cruise ship industry is apparent in its relationship with each port-of-call community. This relationship is an example of Max Weber’s concepts of authority (Weber 1947). Weber explores legitimacy, control, and influence over other persons in the context of social, bureaucratic, and economic objectives (Weber 1947:324). Employing Weber’s three
classifications of “legitimate authority” as legal, traditional, and charismatic types illuminates the way the cruise ship industry ultimately wields power in a legitimate and authoritative way in relation to cruiseship-port-of-call communities.\textsuperscript{18}

This theoretical structure manifests itself physically in Cozumel. The cruise ship industry shapes the physical landscape, literally and figuratively, by affecting the attitudes of many citizens working and living amidst cruise ship tourism (see Figures 1 and 2). The relationship established between the cruise ship industry and the port-of-call community of Cozumel parallels Weber’s concept of “imperative coordination” (Weber 1947:326). “Imperative coordination” is defined in the context of wielding economic power based on a “monopolistic position” (Weber 1947:326). This chapter explains the history of the global cruise ship industry, its hegemonic U.S.-based subsidiary companies, and their relationship (social and economic) with local port-of-call communities, with Cozumel being the case study of this particular investigation. In this chapter, I argue that the strength of the cruise ship industry builds a globalized system of authority that is hegemonic, monopolistic, and bureaucratic.

The U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry’s Structure of Power

The U.S.-based cruise ship industry, as detailed in this chapter, is dominated by cruise lines sailing in North American waters, with companies with headquarters in the

\textsuperscript{18} I acknowledge that I risk anthropomorphizing the U.S.-based and global cruise ship industry by employing this argument, as all actors within the industry are not equal nor of the same perception or perspective. It is, however, important to treat the industry, especially the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, as a singular, unified entity because of its perverse economic, social, and cultural relationship with port-of-call communities in Mexico and the Caribbean.
United States. These corporations are Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC operating the following U.S. cruise line companies: Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises, Azamara Club Cruises (Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.) and Carnival Cruise Lines, Seabourn Cruise Line, Holland America Line, and Princess Cruises (Carnival Corporation & PLC) (see Figure 14, Map of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Corporate Structure: North American Market). These companies’ marketing focus is North American consumers. The global cruise ship industry segments the North American region from the rest of the world because the profits, marketing strategies, and the sheer size of the ships, itineraries, and tourist populations are unique to this region.

The industry has historically established North America’s niche market with political power. U.S.-based cruise ship corporations wield authority legislatively, successfully tailoring legal frameworks in their political and economic favor. For example, a special-interest lobby group in Washington, D.C., once named the International Council of Cruise Lines (ICCL) but later merged with the aforementioned CLIA. This lobby primarily focuses on environmental issues, but its presence on Capitol Hill signals political power and therefore an example of corporate legitimacy (Weber 1947:328). This is exemplified by the many environmental regulations to which most U.S. industries are held accountable, yet to which Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC, through legal authority, are not subject (Garin 2005).

These corporations deny legal responsibility and thwart prosecution as they operate through loopholes in maritime law (e.g. flags of convenience, see page X). As Barry

---

19 Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC, their two corporations’ headquarters also are both located in Miami, Florida. Therefore, I will refer to Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC as U.S.-based corporations operating the U.S.-based cruise ship industry.
Meier and John Schwartz noted in a *New York Times* article on February 25, 2013, this political power, described as legal deception and dodging, is representative of a “pattern of international regulatory roulette that governs cruise ship safety.” This article also noted a letter from Senator Jay Rockefeller (Democrat from West Virginia and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation) affirming the convoluted nature of cruise ship regulation, “Once they are beyond three nautical miles from shore, the world is theirs” (Meier and Schwartz 2013).

Legal authority, according to Weber, is the “most rational known means of carrying out imperative control over human beings” (Weber 1947:337). Such control is precise and efficient, characterized by manipulation of established bureaucratic administration(s) in one’s favor. The U.S.-based cruise ship corporations, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC, wield political power by manipulating the law in their favor. Not introduced in Weber’s concept of legal authority is the question of bureaucracy. The U.S.-based cruise ship corporations form a bureaucracy and exert power over other forms of bureaucratic entities: governments and their political codes and laws (both U.S. and foreign) and other companies (e.g. smaller cruise ship lines they continually merge with and/or acquire). For example, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., the corporation, owns fifty percent of TUI Cruises, a cruise ship company based in Germany while it acts as a parent company to Pullmantur Cruises in Spain, owning this company outright. The concept of *supreme bureaucracy*, I argue, explains the U.S.-based cruise ship corporations’ position in the social field in terms of power and authority, and thus it is definitive of a singular imperialist entity.
The U.S.-based cruise ship market is home to some of the most popular cruise ship port-of-call communities in the world. The Caribbean is the top geographic market in the global cruise ship industry. In 2011, the region had the most bed days at 32.6 million of the entire geographic market (The Ocean Conservancy 2011). Bed days are defined as a common measurement of occupancy used by the cruise line industry: “‘bed days’ are calculated by multiplying the number of beds occupied by the number of days [of the entire cruise vacation]” (The Ocean Conservancy 2011). The Caribbean region in 2011 saw a 13.5 percent increase of deployment days, or days when the cruise leaves for a voyage to a particular itinerary (The Ocean Conservancy 2011). Bed and deployment days are important units of measurement for the cruise ship industry because they combine to form its primary revenue source and overall profits. Using these industry units of profit, the Caribbean market, which includes Eastern Mexico (i.e. Cozumel and Costa Maya cruise ship ports-of-call), is the most profitable in the world.
Figure 15. Map of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry's Corporate Structure: North American Market
The Cruise Ship as Sole Entertainment Based on Affordability and Comfort

While cruise ships sail all over the world, the most affordable options for U.S. citizens are itineraries to the Caribbean, often costing around $150 USD per day with all meals, entertainment, and room fees included. The ways cruise ship tourists from the United States, in particular, envision a vacation, how much they pay for it, and what they want to experience while on holiday are executed by the industry. As previously mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the variety of choice is paramount for tourists choosing a cruise ship vacation (e.g. menu options and shore excursions). Interviews with cruise ship tourists frequently cited the options afforded to them on the ship (in terms of dining, activities, and entertainment) as a decisive factor in choosing to take a cruise ship vacation. One younger man in his twenties remarked during an interview on Royal Caribbean’s Jewel of the Seas, “I’m here with my friends. There are five of us all together. We couldn’t take a different type of vacation, other than a cruise vacation, because it was too expensive. This is like $60 a day and hotels are like $150! We get to do whatever we want too, which is awesome” (interview, 3 January 2012).

Nearly one in ten North Americans has traveled as a cruise ship tourist and 90 percent would choose to vacation on another cruise ship (Garin 2005:8). Affordability, ease of travel to each destination (i.e. port-of-call) on the itinerary, general feelings of safety and security, quantity and range of onboard entertainment and dining, and activities offered both on the ship and once docked (i.e. shore excursions) are important selling points of each cruise ship vacation. An important demographic for the cruise ship industry’s marketing focus is the baby boomer generation that comprises persons born
during the post-World War II baby boom between 1946 and 1964. This generation, nearing four million people in 2014, is the “heart of the industry” (Byczkowski 2003).

It is important to stress the fact that the most important attraction for a tourist interested in a cruise ship vacation is the cruise ship itself. Nearly every tourist that was interviewed during this research said that the cruise ship was a motivating factor in their decision to choose this type of vacation and not the port-of-call communities as destinations. Mention of destinations on the itinerary, or ports-of-call, were rarely reported as motivating factors for respondents’ vacation choices. I asked respondents, “What was your reasoning for leaving the cruise ship to come ashore and experience Cozumel?” One respondent said, “Go to the MEGA store [a Walmart-like supermarket] and look at all the cool drugs you can buy over the counter in Mexico” (interview, 19 January 2012) while another remarked, “Needed to walk on the solid land. We were looking forward to getting off the boat for a few hours to get away from all the rocking the day before!” (interview, 13 January 2012). As demonstrated through this data, the cruise ship industry is successful in making the cruise ship itself the primary destination and motivating factor for travel, not — as one might expect — the culture, language, or even shore excursions offered at each port-of-call.

A woman traveling from Florida on a Carnival cruise ship explained, “I like cruising. It’s easy and everything I want is right there [on board]. I can practically get a massage, have a drink, and gamble at the same time!” (interview December 5, 2011). Casinos provide a useful metaphor for the ways in which cruise ships like those of Royal Caribbean and Carnival cruise lines tailor the physical space and passengers’ experiences on board to their own economic benefit. Space is used in specific ways for the industry
to obtain the maximum amount of profit from every passenger. For example, in a casino, windows and clocks, signifiers of the world outside the game in front of the consumer, are not present. A dark atmosphere of artificial light disconnected from time and filled with sounds of winning slot machines infiltrates the psyche. In turn, the passenger is more likely to spend money playing more casino games because the connection to the real world is not present. Cruise ships employ this environment in their casinos and for other onboard activities.
Figure 16. SS Oceanic (1974) Main Deck (top) and Royal Caribbean's Jewel of the Seas (2012) Main Deck
A clear example of how the ship itself becomes the destination is through the sale of shore excursions to cruise ship tourists both pre-departure and while passengers are already on the ship. The cruise ship company exclusively sells each excursion in strict negotiation with the tour operator on land. These contractual obligations come with heavy price tags for the cruise ship tourists and ongoing negotiation with each tour company. These relationships are often steeped in an entanglement of expectation for profit for both the tour operation and cruise ship company. The branding, marketing, and sale of shore excursions by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry are steeped in conflict. Ethnic essentialism and cultural commodification of the port-of-call are used by the cruise ship industry in selling many shore excursions. While the cruise ship itself is usually promoted as the singular attraction in general marketing purposes, the races and phenotypes of bodies and cultural stereotypes of the host population are either used or completely void in the marketing of shore excursions. Of the 73 shore excursions sponsored by Royal Caribbean in Cozumel, one shore excursion entitled, “Discover Mexico,” has an image of a miniature replica of the Pyramid of Kukulkan at Chichén Itzá as its main attraction. The description reads, “At Discover Mexico, you will enjoy the beauty and wealth of the Mexican culture in comfort and at your leisure…You can also visit the snack bar for a margarita or nachos and get your souvenirs at the hand crafts shop.” (Royal Caribbean 2013, 2). Images of boats, the ocean, bodies relaxing in the sunshine on the beach, and underwater shots dominate the website’s landscape. Local life is omitted as images of tourists swimming with dolphins on the “Dolphin Push, Pull and Swim, Manatee Interaction at Chankanaab” tour or horseback riding on the “The Mayan Frontier Horseback Ride” tour dominate Royal Caribbean’s shore excursion
listing. Evident from this list alone, the relationship between the cruise ship industry and port-of-call communities throughout the Caribbean can be characterized as awkward. The culture of the port-of-call community is tightly controlled by the cruise ship industry in how it is portrayed to cruise ship tourists at points of sale (e.g. the presentation of shore excursions are generic and “safe” as possible).

One scholar who studies the cruise ship industry argues, “Cruise companies discourage tourists form going ashore” (Dowling 2006:14). This was absolutely evident throughout my research and fieldwork of the cruise ship industry. The money cruise ship tourists spend on board is paramount to the industry’s success and profitability. The industry discourages tourists from disembarking from the cruise ship by charging high tour prices, branding the port-of-call communities as unsafe, and purposefully engineering the piers and surrounding environments where passengers disembark with retail outlets common among different port-of-call communities throughout the Caribbean (e.g. Diamonds International and Del Sol apparel). One informant said, “We did not know much specifically about Cozumel. We were told that Mexico, in general, can be a dangerous place for tourists-being held up for money, corrupt police, and kidnappings. It did have an influence on our activities-we did not want to pay the ship prices for the excursions and were too nervous to trust people to take us where they said especially because of the language barrier” (interview, 13 January 2012).

The cruise ship industry engineers an environment in its favor by building such spaces controlled and owned by each cruise line. In Cozumel, the island has three cruise ship piers, all located on the Western shore of the Caribbean Sea (see Figure 1). Punta Langosta is owned and operated is coined as “the only shopping mall in Cozumel.”
Puerta Maya, the pier and shopping complex (seemingly) only for cruise ship tourists, is owned by Carnival Corporation & PLC. Lastly, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. owns International Pier. This pier began reconstruction in 2012 with an associated mall across the street, called Royal Village Cozumel, to compete with Puerta Maya’s and Punta Langosta’s mall-like pier and shopping complexes. An employee at Los Cinco Soles, a popular, multi-sited souvenir shop specializing in fair-trade items throughout Mexico, he recalled the negotiations involved in renovating the International Pier. He said it was decided upon after a lengthy agreement between Royal Caribbean International and the “presidente de Cozumel (sic)” and plans to build the mall “hubo un trato entre años” (there was a deal [that lasted] years) (interview August 15, 2012).
Figure 17. Royal Caribbean's Cruises Ltd.-Owned Shopping Mall, Royal Village Cozumel
These piers and adjacent shopping malls intentionally blur the line between public and private. Cruise ship tourists are only allowed on the physical dock. There are security guards and checkpoints at the entrances to each dock and cruise ship tourists must present a ship-issued identification card (that looks like a credit card). Yet, exactly who is allowed into the shopping malls is sometimes confusing, depending on which mall (i.e. Punta Langosta is more publically accessible and centrally located in downtown San Miguel than Puerta Maya, where there is more security and it is located farther south from San Miguel). Industry-produced manipulations of physical environments are historically rooted in the development of Carnival Corporation & PLC and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.

The Historical Development of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship

Industry in the United States

For the past fifty years, the growth of cruise ship tourism has become increasingly popular since its large-scale commercial advent in the late 1960s (Wood 2004; Garin 2005; Dowling, ed. 2006; FCCA 2011). The beginning of cruise ship tourism’s popularity in the United States can be documented with the release of the television show The Love Boat in 1977. The foundations of modern cruising, however, lay with multiple entities, from international moguls to the Florida tourism board, prior to the show’s debut. The cruise vacation, as we know it today in North America, was first introduced stateside by two men: Ted Arison and Kurt Kloster (Garin 2005:48). I will focus the
history of cruise ship tourism around these two corporate entities, as they are the primary modes of investigation of this ethnography.20

The Early Beginnings of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC

The founders of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC have revolutionized the global cruise ship industry from a once bourgeois playground for the entitled few prior to the 1960s (e.g. transatlantic travel) to a family-friendly, affordable, and entertaining vacation choice we know in North America today. Two of the U.S.-based cruise ship corporation’s founders, Ted Arison and his partner Kurt Kloster, started in the business by forging the city of Miami as one of the premier ports in cruise ship passenger and cargo traffic in the world. Biscayne Bay in Miami, Florida was called “Dodge City” when the port was first established in 1966. This nickname solidified the port as a hub of cruise ship embarkation. The profitable combination of post-WWII soldiers looking for jobs in Florida after being released from military bases, the beginning of national flights via commercial airlines, and the mass production of in-window air conditioners solidified Miami as a tourist destination ripe with jobs and possibilities (Garin 2005). Arison and Kloster jumped on the bourgeoning tourism zone to support their even bigger dreams of owning and operating cruise ships. The Sunward, the flagship of the newly minted Norwegian Cruise Lines, had great success in

20 There are varieties of cruise ship tourism that need to be detailed and put into perspective yet this task is for future study. The history of the cruise ship from the 19th century, its linkages to the rise of modern tourism, raise important issues regarding the emergence of the “democratization” of tourism are all themes to be explored further.
establishing the cruise ship vacation and the Caribbean as a premier genre and destination for mass tourism.\(^{21}\)

After the success of the *Sunward*, ships’ tonnage and occupancy grew at impressively large rates. A popular slogan of the 1970s reflects the now-commonplace enormity of each ship: “Sail a Skyscraper” (Garin 2005:63). All-inclusive marketing began to entice U.S. travelers to warmer climates, especially during the colder months of the North, in package deals with commercial airlines. These packages proved to be a successful combination-style travel option and have since been often incorporated into many mass tourism vacations.

As the style of choosing a cruise ship vacation expanded into packaged deals and enticing travel agent bookings, corporate competition grew along with the size of each ship. Ed Stephen established Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines (RCCL, now known as Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.) in 1970 with Ted Arison. The relationship between these two men firmly established market competition that would solidify the U.S.-based cruise ship industry as a sector generating billion-dollar annual revenues. Amidst a financial scandal, Arison left Stephen’s RCCL and began Carnival Cruise Lines (now known as Carnival Corporation & PLC). RCCL and Carnival would come to dominate two-thirds of the entire industry in the span of less than a half of century.

The 1970s established the brand of the cruise ships and this genre of tourism into the lexicon of North American popular culture. Supported by heavy subsidies from European governments desperate to support civilian shipbuilders, each cruise line began to build custom-made ships in efforts to express the uniqueness of each ship’s brand.

\(^{21}\) Kloster would go on to operate Norwegian Cruise Line while Arison founded Carnival Cruise Lines.
Disney Cruise Lines emerged as a family-centered holiday experience while Carnival’s sense of on-board lawlessness and sexual liberation became infamous. Carnival was first to shift the advertising focus from the destinations (e.g. ports-of-call) of each cruise vacation to the ship itself (Garin 2005: 88). “The Fun Ships,” a marketing slogan coined by Carnival, defined the company’s leisure-centered aesthetic. Marketing initiatives highlighted belly flop and Ping-Pong tournaments in their advertisements as opposed to formal dinners and white-glove service, making cruising appear less of an exclusive luxury only enjoyed by the upper echelons of society and wealth. Carnival revolutionized cruise ship tourism by making it accessible for “everyman,” including (for the first time) families and/or couples with modest incomes. At the same time, post-WWII ushered in a new middle class in the United States.
The growth of transnational air travel coupled with more leisure time enticed travelers to tropical climates, securing Miami, the Caribbean, and points south into global lexicon of vacation destinations. My Mother told me a story of her first cruise with my
Father in 1974. They were eager to leave their jobs in Albany, New York and explore the world as newlyweds. They sailed from New York City with a cruise line named *Home Lines* on the *SS Oceanic* for a five-day voyage from New York harbor to Paradise Beach, Bahamas and back. She remembers, “It was a big deal [among our friends and family] that we were going on a cruise. No one knew what it was, really. I know it was expensive. I was excited and scared. I didn’t was unsure of being at sea for that long…When we came back [from the vacation], everyone was in shock when they saw our slides, that we went all the way to the Bahamas. No one knew where that was!” (interview, 8 August 2013).

---

22 The now defunct cruise line Home Lines was sold and eventually became a subsidiary of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.
Figure 19. SS Oceanic's Pool Deck in 1974 (author's mother, center, bottom left and father, top right, looking at the camera)
The 1970s also brought the cruise ship industry to the vernacular of popular culture in the United States. *The Love Boat* became a television sensation, airing “for nearly a decade and… syndicated in forty-seven countries; at its height, as many as fifty million households a week were partaking of *The Love Boat’s* unlikely Saturday night cocktail of syrupy morality tales and naughty innuendo” (Garin 2005: 94). This pop culture phenomenon, coupled with the industry’s branding techniques, established the U.S.-based cruise ship industry and therefore cruise ship tourism to North Americans as one of the most popular vacation options in the world. In 1970, about 825,000 U.S. tourists chose a cruise ship vacation, while 1980 welcomed nearly three million (Garin 2005).
Since the 1980s, the U.S.-based cruise ship industry has solidified itself as a global conglomerate. Carnival Corporation & PLC and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. operate nearly 85 percent of the entire North American operation and continually earn annual revenue of billions of dollars (Garin 2005). These corporations habitually operate mergers and acquisitions of smaller cruise lines, incorporating these smaller firms under
their own operation (e.g. Princess Cruise Lines was acquired by Carnival Corporation, hence the “& PLC” in their corporate moniker). Royal Caribbean International (RCL, the company’s symbol on the New York Stock Exchange) and Carnival Corporation & PLC (CLL, Carnival Corporations & PLC’s symbol on the New York Stock Exchange) have made initial public offerings (IPOs) on Wall Street with many stockholders buying shares in their companies on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE). Share must be traded, as each company needs to generate the revenue necessary to produce a continuous order of newer and larger ships in each fleet every year. Costly renovations in the billions of dollars also are necessary to maintain and update older fleets of ships. This continuous cycle of production is required to keep the each cruise line brand viable in the marketplace and appealing to future cruise ship passengers.

The U.S.-based cruise ship corporations evade international regulation and U.S. legality, with limited oversight by U.S. government in the form of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. For example, the 2013 Senate bill, “Cruise Passenger Protection Act” (S.1340), has been “read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.” This bill “Amends federal shipping law to direct the Secretary of Transportation (DOT) to develop standards for passenger vessel owners to provide passengers with a summary of key terms of passage contracts upfront and before they are binding.” The government stalling the passage of this bill into law exemplifies how the U.S.-based cruise ship industry is outside jurisdiction and oversight. These corporations enjoy multiple government-backed tax incentives from lobbying in Washington, D.C. These incentives include operating under relaxed environmental legislation (Nowlan and Kwan 2001) and flags-of-convenience (FOCs; for more
information regarding FOCs, please see the conclusion to this chapter). The entangled
and evading legal structuring of Carnival Corporation & PLC and Royal Caribbean
Cruises Ltd. is explained as such,

In many ways these ships, as long as three football fields, are not so much floating
cities as sovereign islands, operating beyond the police and regulatory jurisdiction
of the nations they cruise among. Every major cruise ship sailing out of
American ports is registered with a foreign country, usually Panama or Liberia.
The corporations that own them are foreign, too. The foreign registry means the
ships and their owners avoid American corporate income taxes and many
American laws, though more than 80 percent of their passengers are American.
Carnival Corporation, the parent of Carnival Cruise Lines, has its headquarters in
Miami but is a publicly held corporation registered in Panama. Controlling
interest is held by the family of its founder, Ted Arison, a billionaire who
renounced his American citizenship in 1993 in part to avoid estate taxes. His son,
Micky, an American citizen, is chairman. Most of Carnival's executives are
American. The other leading line, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., also has its
headquarters in Miami, but the corporation is registered in Liberia. Controlling
interests are owned by a Bahamian partnership associated with the wealthy
Pritzker family of Chicago and by a shipping company owned by a Norwegian
family, the Wilhelmsens. (Franz 1998:1).

Foreign registry to evade U.S. income taxes and laws while operating as a publicly held
corporation (i.e. traded on NYSE with U.S. stockholders) is a strategy to keep earning
revenues in the billions of dollars.

These incentives benefit the U.S-based cruise ship corporations as they are
evident of political and economic structures that maintain profits to these corporations
from cruise ship tourism. There have been many industry setbacks recently, such as
environmental exposés in the press (Frantz 1998), Costa Cruises’ [owned by Carnival]
Concordia shipwreck in January 2012, and Carnival’s sewage-filled fiasco in the Gulf of
Mexico in February 2013. The U.S.-based cruise ship corporations are in control of the
high seas as ongoing negotiations with Washington lobby and interest groups thwart
investigations of the legal rights of cruise ship passengers and crew members in addition
to cruise ship safety, security, and environmental issues (see Walker 2014). This economic and political structure favors the proliferation of duty-free, non-taxable profits, the evasion of labor unions, along with industry cover-up of cruise ship crimes, sexual assaults, accidents, fires, disasters, and disease.

Despite such public relations setbacks like the *Concordia* shipwreck and Carnival’s “sewage cruise,” these corporate practices combine to form an extremely powerful financial and political conglomerate among the two U.S.-based cruise ship corporations. Consumer demand has even *increased* in 2013,

In 2013, the growth of the cruise industry continues...The current cruise ship order book from 2013-2016 includes 26 new ships (14 ocean-going vessels and 12 riverboats/coastal vessels) from FCCA and/or CLIA Member Lines, with over 48,000 berths and a capital investment of value of over $9.5 billion. Based on known ship additions and deletions, the industry forecasts 20.97 million passengers to cruise globally in 2013, with 17.6 million of these guests predicted to sail from North America (11.79 million sourced from North America and about a third—5.8 million—comprised of international passengers). This represents a 2.5% increase over 2012’s figures and commensurate with the added capacity” (FCCA 2013:1).

Multi-billion dollar investments into building new ships, developing port-of-call infrastructure, and branding is made possible by the economic and political structure these corporations manufacture.
Figure 21. Carnival Corporation & PLC (green) and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. (blue) Revenue Earnings, 2010-2014 (source, Moskowitz 2014)

The Future of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry

Cruise ship tourism based in the United States first developed in the 1960s, became profitable in the 1970s, and has since made a cruise ship vacation part of the U.S. vernacular in the years since because of little governmental oversight. The future of cruise ship tourism, including the U.S.-based corporations of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC, is moving swiftly and promises to show even more expansion.

The cruise industry is the fastest-growing category in the leisure travel market. Since 1980, the industry has experienced an average annual passenger growth rate of approximately 7.2% per annum…Since 1990, over 200 million passengers
have cruised. Of this number, over 70% of the total passengers have been generated in the past ten years and nearly 40% in the past five years” (FCCA 2013:6).

As the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA), the future of building cruise ships is moving swiftly and promises to show even more expansion. The association correctly forecasted that seventeen million people sailing from North America, including 11.684 million who live in the U.S. and Canada, took a cruise vacation in 2012. This was “coupled with an annual occupancy percentage that exceeded 102%, this annual passenger growth [a record of 20.3 million passengers cruised globally during the year] shows continued consumer interest in cruising and an industry where demand continues to outstrip supply” (FCCA 2013). The cruise ship industry is making billion dollar “capital investments of value” into sustaining this sustained growth as evidenced in both U.S. and global passengers taking a cruise ship vacation. The industry’s success is “headlined by the Caribbean, which continues to rank as the dominant cruise destination, accounting for 37.3% of all global itineraries in 2013. The Caribbean continues to have the leading share of cruise industry capacity, although there has been growth in all global cruise regions” (FCCA 2013:1). The implication of these statistics is staggering: the cruise ship industry is certainly the fastest and most consistently growing category of leisure travel and in global mass tourism.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cruise Industry Statistics</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual cruise industry revenue for the US economy</td>
<td>$37.85 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cruise industry jobs in the US</td>
<td>314,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual number of cruise ship passengers</td>
<td>20,335,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of cruise passengers that originated in North America</td>
<td>80 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual growth rate of the cruise industry since 1980</td>
<td>7.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children 18 and under that sailed with their families</td>
<td>1,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of new cruise ships that debuted in 2009</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of new cruise ships currently on order</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount being spent on new ships</td>
<td>$15 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of cruises that were in the Caribbean</td>
<td>37.02 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of a cruise</td>
<td>7.2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of North American embarkation ports</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of embarkation ports around the world</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average ship capacity utilization</td>
<td>104 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cruise ships that have sank since 1979</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of passengers who died on a cruise ship since 1979</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Death count includes all causes of death

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cruise Passenger Demographic Statistics</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average age of a cruise passenger</td>
<td>50+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average household earnings</td>
<td>$109,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of passengers who are college graduates</td>
<td>86 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent who are married and work full time</td>
<td>62 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of people age 25+ with earnings of $40,000+ who have taken a cruise</td>
<td>44.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of the total US population who have taken a cruise</td>
<td>19.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average spent per person per week on their cruise</td>
<td>$1,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average spent per person per week on a non-cruise vacation</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cruise Passenger Behaviors &amp; Attitude Statistics</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of cruise passengers who think its a great way to sample destinations</td>
<td>80 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of would return to the Caribbean for a land based vacation</td>
<td>50 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>21 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>13 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>13 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>11 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Micky Arison, CEO of Carnival Corporation & PLC, is the 68th richest person in the United States, according to Forbes magazine’s annual report (Forbes 2012) where net worth were calculated in September 2012 of their publication of the “The 400 Richest Americans.” Arison’s net worth of $5 billion in 2012 surpasses the wealth of George Lucas, Stephen Spielberg, Donald Trump, and Oprah Winfrey, who were also listed. Arison’s personal wealth is significant as it is gleaned from cruise ship tourism and specific to Carnival Corporation & PLC. Another notable fact about Arison is he also coined the phrase, cruise ship vacations are “Disneyland for adults.” Arison’s adage is absolute when analyzing the corporate practices of Carnival Corporation & PLC and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. Colorful decals and paint on the exterior, the ship’s pool deck with amusement park-like slides, and tourists appearing the part of Disneyland vacationer combine to convey the ship’s jovial atmosphere. Disneyland is a metaphor for

| Percent of cruisers who travel with their spouse  | 75 % |
| Percent who travel with their children (under 18) | 25 % |
| Percent who travel with their friends            | 23 % |
| Percent who travel with other family members     | 21 % |

**Most Appealing Destinations to Cruise**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>43 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediterranean / Greek Islands / Turkey</td>
<td>14 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bermuda</td>
<td>11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama Canal</td>
<td>8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico (West Coast)</td>
<td>8 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 22. Cruise Ship Industry Statistics as of January 1, 2014 (source, American Association of Port Authorities, Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association)*
cruise ship tourism as the physicality and space onboard is presented as a theme. Each cruise ship manufactures and produces playgrounds, ripe for consumption, both onboard and at each port-of-call community.

Analyzing the two conglomerates as a unified entity, their power and influence is palpable on land—the size of each ship dwarfs the port at which it is docked. The sheer size and scale of these cruise ship are symbolic representations of U.S. imperialism and the legal and economic power the two corporations harness in their favor.

Figure 23. Cruise Ships Docked at International Pier in Cozumel

In 2014, the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) published data of continued passenger growth since 2010 to the entire global cruise ship industry which indicates the projected increase of fleets of ships (from 393 in 2013 to 410 in 2014), global passenger growth (from 21,300,000 estimated in 2013 to 21,700,00 in 2014), and a
7.2 billion investment in 2013-14 to fund this growth from the “global cruise industry” (Figure 21). This data also demonstrates that North American’s are the primary passengers on all cruise ship vacations since 2002 to 2014. These numbers are significant as cruise ship tourism continues to grow and maintains a core demographic of North American passengers.
Figure 24. CLIA 2014 State of the Cruise Industry Report
Maintaining Market Revenues: Mega-Branding and Simulacrum

Mega-branding is a sensory-laden marketing schemata that highlights the ship as the main destination. Since the inception of U.S.-based cruise ship tourism in the late 1960s the cruise ship industry, specifically Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC, use mega-branding as a successful marketing and branding technique. For example, clicking onto Royal Caribbean’s website fills a computer screen with videos, pictures, and text of each ship’s nuances. Clicking for more information on the website will enviably prompt a nearly bi-weekly delivery of hard-copy promotional materials in the mail. These materials are glossy advertisements on heavy cardstock with many colors and pictures of couples running on a deserted beach with the cruise ship in the background, another couple riding a jet ski with the ship in the background, and multiple pictures of the ship’s interior with no mention of any cruise ship port-of-call (see Figures 25 and 26).

Mega-branding answers how exclusivity is manufactured and produced by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, as simulacrum, a hyper-reality that manufactured, branded, and marketed to potential cruise ship tourists. These images do not reflect any persons of color except in positions of servitude. Heterosexual couples, dressed in nice clothing and smiling widely, are the focal point of each relationship presented. This type of advertisement is racially and sexually sanitized for mass-consumption. These images are also reflective of how the ship itself is the brand, the industry’s main marketing device, and void of any contact with local populations of the destinations on the itinerary. Mega-branding also can be used to describe the U.S.-based cruise ship corporations (i.e.
Royal Caribbean International and Carnival Corporation & PLC) control over the brand’s (i.e. each ship and associated company’s) image. Mega-branding is a trademark of the U.S-based cruise ship industry because mass produced simulacrum creates consumer loyalty as evidenced in the increasing passenger growth since 2002 (see Figure 24).
Figure 25. Carnival and Royal Caribbean Advertisements, Examples of Mega-Branding (source, Ben Berlin)
Figure 26. Carnival Brochure Cover, 2003-2004 (source, Ben Berlin)
Cruise Line Branding: The Difference between Carnival and Disney Cruise Lines

The U.S.-based cruise ship industry is shaping the entire cruise ship vacation as a centralized experience around the cruise ship itself. A cruise ship vacation is a singular packaged experience; a particular mega-brand that explains why tourists (especially North American) have made this genre of mass tourism so profitable.

The U.S.-based cruise ship industry produces and creates tourism as the product that is produced and marketed for sale. The assemblage of product-commodities that are marketed are cruise ship tourists experiences onboard. Leisure and affordability make this form of travel appealing to many middle and upper level income households in the United States, Canada, and Europe. Affordable cruise vacations for middle-income families have proven to be recession-proof as the cruise ship industry continues to grow despite the fumbling U.S. economy in recent years (FCCA 2011). The cost of a cruise ranges from $150-$10,000 USD, and that price tag fluctuates depending on the itinerary, length of stay, and location of a stateroom (i.e. room aboard the ship). Further, the economic structure of cruise ship tourism also translates at each port-of-call community on the cruise ship itinerary, “The typical cruise ship carrying 2,550 passengers and 480 crew members conservatively generates $225,596 in passenger and crew expenditures during a single port-of-call visit (total spending amount is based on 85% of passenger arrivals and 38% of crew arrivals) (FCCA 2013). Passenger spending once ashore at a port-of-call community is crucial to the local economic infrastructure of port-of-call communities and yet is a facet of the branding of cruise ship tourism that is rarely marketed to tourists.
Mega-branding also correlates with marketing toward the socioeconomic statuses of cruise ship passengers. When Celebrity Cruise Lines was being courted by Carnival Corporation & PLC for acquisition in the mid-1990s, Carnival Corporation & PLC, the corporation, saw Celebrity Cruise Lines, the cruise line company, as a way to break into the upscale market as Celebrity Cruise Lines was created with the intent to attract “classier, younger, wealthier passengers” (Garin 2005:233). This is exemplarily of cruise ship branding: the prestige of the cruise ship company and romance of cruising is literally translated into cruise ship names (Sovereign of the Seas, Allure of the Seas, and Freedom of the Seas) to the names of the cruise ship lines themselves (Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Celebrity). Mega-branding has been a framework not only to the monetary success of the cruise ship industry, but has secured this form of mass tourism into the lexicon of the North American tourist.

The cruise ship market increases (in sales) as its branding increases (Dowling 2006:6). Each cruise lines brands its company differently. In the aforementioned example, Celebrity Cruise Lines markets mostly to upper-middle class passengers. In contrast, Disney Cruise Line is branded mostly to families. Disney Cruise Line offers reduced rates for children under three years old, based on two adults occupying one cabin (or stateroom). The rate for children under three years old is $149 (total) for three and four-night cruises and $189 (total) for seven-night cruises. This marketing strategy is centers on the volume of staterooms sold to passengers. The more cruises the company sells at reduced, incentive-based rates, the higher the occupancy of the ship at the time of departure, and therefore greater profits for each cruise line.
Overall, cruise ship vacations are marketed mainly to families, heterosexual couples, and retirees (or the baby boomer generation), as exemplified by the multitude of mediascapes available on the Internet, in print, and on U.S. television (Appadurai 1990; Preble 2008). Mediascapes, as first theorized by Arjun Appadurai, display a stagnant homogenization of images (i.e. brands) disseminated by industry (Appadurai 1990). The industry’s prolific distribution and dissemination of media based on the branding of each ship is the framework to the cruise ship industry. Mediascapes are employed by the industry to solidify the ship as the main attraction, not each port-of-call. Concepts like mega-branding and mediascapes combine with inexpensive costs for passengers. These themes solidify the claim that the cruise ship industry is an “economic power based on a monopolistic position” (Weber 1947:326). The U.S.-based cruise ship industry employs aggressive marketing and branding, using homogenized themes, to consumers. Rate incentives are passed along to consumers, establishing a form of brand recognition and what Weber theorizes as “loyalty” (Weber 1947:326). The industry solidifies consumer loyalty by “dictating the terms of exchange to contractual partners” (Weber 1947:326). In the context of the cruise ship industry, such partners are classified as the passengers (cruise ship tourists) and persons living in port-of-call communities. The cruise ship industry’s claim to legitimacy (via “loyalty”) is absolutely “treated as valid” both on land and on board as the cruise ship is the main attraction, not each port-of-call community (Weber 1947:327).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Net Revenue 2013</th>
<th>Total Passengers 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>AIDA</td>
<td>1,534,160,000</td>
<td>883,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Carnival</td>
<td>2,880,050,000</td>
<td>4,517,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Costa Cruises</td>
<td>2,090,010,000</td>
<td>1,515,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Cunard</td>
<td>766,210,000</td>
<td>134,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Holland America</td>
<td>1,860,000,000</td>
<td>753,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Ibero Cruises</td>
<td>632,470,000</td>
<td>190,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>P&amp;O Cruises</td>
<td>1,225,350,000</td>
<td>320,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>P&amp;O Cruises Australia</td>
<td>948,360,000</td>
<td>286,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Princess</td>
<td>3,189,460,000</td>
<td>1,626,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Seabourn</td>
<td>379,100,000</td>
<td>46,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCL</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>3,053,650,000</td>
<td>1,938,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCH</td>
<td>Oceania Cruises</td>
<td>692,630,000</td>
<td>129,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCH</td>
<td>Regent Seven Seas</td>
<td>560,520,000</td>
<td>47,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCL</td>
<td>Azamara</td>
<td>313,110,000</td>
<td>52,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCL</td>
<td>Celebrity</td>
<td>2,267,340,000</td>
<td>982,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCL</td>
<td>Croisières de France (CDF)</td>
<td>181,780,000</td>
<td>102,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCL</td>
<td>Pullmantur</td>
<td>483,460,000</td>
<td>339,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCL</td>
<td>Royal Caribbean</td>
<td>4,845,500,000</td>
<td>3,411,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUM TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>27,903,160,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>17,278,600</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 27. 2013 Market Share Graph of U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry (sources, Cruise Market Watch's proprietary Cruise Pulse and Port Pulse databases, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., Carnival Corporation & PLC., NCL Corporation Ltd., Thomson/First Call)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Net Revenue 2013</th>
<th>Total Passengers 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>AIDA</td>
<td>1,544,160,000</td>
<td>883,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Carnival</td>
<td>2,880,050,000</td>
<td>4,517,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Costa Cruises</td>
<td>2,090,010,000</td>
<td>1,515,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Cunard</td>
<td>766,210,000</td>
<td>134,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Holland America</td>
<td>1,866,000,000</td>
<td>753,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Ibero Cruises</td>
<td>632,470,000</td>
<td>190,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>P&amp;O Cruises</td>
<td>1,225,350,000</td>
<td>320,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>P&amp;O Cruises Australia</td>
<td>948,360,000</td>
<td>286,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Princess</td>
<td>3,189,460,000</td>
<td>1,626,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Seabourn</td>
<td>329,100,000</td>
<td>46,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCL</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>3,053,650,000</td>
<td>1,938,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCH</td>
<td>Oceania Cruises</td>
<td>692,630,000</td>
<td>129,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCH</td>
<td>Regent Seven Seas</td>
<td>560,520,000</td>
<td>42,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCL</td>
<td>Azamara</td>
<td>333,110,000</td>
<td>52,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCL</td>
<td>Celebrity</td>
<td>2,267,340,000</td>
<td>982,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCL</td>
<td>Croisières de France (CDF)</td>
<td>181,780,000</td>
<td>102,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCL</td>
<td>Pullmantur</td>
<td>483,460,000</td>
<td>339,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCL</td>
<td>Royal Caribbean</td>
<td>4,845,500,000</td>
<td>3,411,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>U.S.-Based Industry Sum Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>27,903,160,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>17,278,600</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>All Leisure Holidays</td>
<td>175,260,000</td>
<td>62,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>American Cruise Lines</td>
<td>17,840,000</td>
<td>10,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Blount Small Ship Adventures</td>
<td>12,550,000</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Celebration Cruise Line</td>
<td>103,920,000</td>
<td>35,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Classic International Cruises</td>
<td>226,285,000</td>
<td>80,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Celebrity</td>
<td>2,267,340,000</td>
<td>982,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Croisières de France (CDF)</td>
<td>181,780,000</td>
<td>102,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Pullmantur</td>
<td>483,460,000</td>
<td>339,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Royal Caribbean</td>
<td>4,845,500,000</td>
<td>3,411,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>All Leisure Holidays</td>
<td>175,260,000</td>
<td>62,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>American Cruise Lines</td>
<td>17,840,000</td>
<td>10,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Blount Small Ship Adventures</td>
<td>12,550,000</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Celebration Cruise Line</td>
<td>103,920,000</td>
<td>35,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Classic International Cruises</td>
<td>226,285,000</td>
<td>80,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Celebrity</td>
<td>2,267,340,000</td>
<td>982,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Croisières de France (CDF)</td>
<td>181,780,000</td>
<td>102,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Pullmantur</td>
<td>483,460,000</td>
<td>339,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Royal Caribbean</td>
<td>4,845,500,000</td>
<td>3,411,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>All Leisure Holidays</td>
<td>175,260,000</td>
<td>62,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>American Cruise Lines</td>
<td>17,840,000</td>
<td>10,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Blount Small Ship Adventures</td>
<td>12,550,000</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Celebration Cruise Line</td>
<td>103,920,000</td>
<td>35,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Classic International Cruises</td>
<td>226,285,000</td>
<td>80,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Celebrity</td>
<td>2,267,340,000</td>
<td>982,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Croisières de France (CDF)</td>
<td>181,780,000</td>
<td>102,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Pullmantur</td>
<td>483,460,000</td>
<td>339,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Royal Caribbean</td>
<td>4,845,500,000</td>
<td>3,411,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>MSC Cruises</td>
<td>1,460,730,000</td>
<td>1,358,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Ocean Star Cruises</td>
<td>129,430,000</td>
<td>45,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Ocean Expedition Cruises</td>
<td>7,590,000</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Paul Gauguin (P&amp;O)</td>
<td>97,490,000</td>
<td>17,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Pearl Seas Cruises</td>
<td>47,520,000</td>
<td>16,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Phoenix Reisen</td>
<td>296,620,000</td>
<td>100,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Phoenix Reisen</td>
<td>296,620,000</td>
<td>100,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Phoenix Reisen</td>
<td>296,620,000</td>
<td>100,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Quark Expeditions</td>
<td>24,040,000</td>
<td>7,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Saga Cruises &amp; Spirit of Adventure</td>
<td>212,140,000</td>
<td>75,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>SeaDream Yacht Club</td>
<td>76,620,000</td>
<td>9,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>SilverSea</td>
<td>413,090,000</td>
<td>86,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Star Clippers Cruises</td>
<td>93,060,000</td>
<td>23,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Star Cruises</td>
<td>803,300,000</td>
<td>284,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Swan Hellenic</td>
<td>41,980,000</td>
<td>6,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Thomson Cruises</td>
<td>809,300,000</td>
<td>286,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Travel Dynamics</td>
<td>32,320,000</td>
<td>3,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>TUI Cruises</td>
<td>710,530,000</td>
<td>251,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>Windstar</td>
<td>93,540,000</td>
<td>37,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worldwide Cruise Ship Industry Sum Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>64,960,860,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>38,834,600</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 28. 2013 Market Share Graph of Worldwide Cruise Ship Industry (sources, Cruise Market Watch, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., Carnival Corporation & PLC, NCL Corporation Ltd., CLIA, FCCA, and DVB Bank)*
The Walt Disney Company established its own fleet of four cruise ships in 1998 with Disney Cruise Lines. Each ship is complete with employees dressed as Disney characters posing for pictures and public spaces decorated with motifs from each famous animated film. The Celebrity Cruise Lines offers retirees an option of adult-only lounges, including pools and dining rooms that children are not allowed to enter. Many cruise lines also offer programming on board that is specifically tailored for adults and couples, aged 55 and older, including ballroom dancing, cocktail mixers, and shore excursions tailored to low-impact recreation (e.g. cooking classes or walking tours).

These examples of niche marketing illustrate the prowess of the cruise industry to satisfy consumers’ demand for the familiar while vacationing. Wood (2004) argues that cruise ships physically represent deterritorialized, fractured, de-centered materialities based on their unsettled physicality while at sea and their short lay-over time on shore. I argue this categorization is only a physical attribute to the cruise ship industry. The fluidity of deterritorialized spaces, exemplified in the inherent transnational nature of cruise ship travel, is not as loose as previously theorized (Appadurai 1996; Wood 2000, 2004).

Potential passengers are purposefully selected and marketed toward according to criteria addressed in marketing niches that are quite specific in nature. This is evident in the tactful marketing and branding inherit to cruise ship tourism. In fact, the global cruise ship industry, specifically U.S.-based cruise ship companies, operates as tightly controlled as any other multinational corporation. That is to say, the brand becomes the basis for all operational decision-making. Speaking of the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, these cruise ship corporations operate beside law and regulation, thwarting legislative action and dodging passenger and crew lawsuits, as previously demonstrated.
De-National, De-Territorial Spaces of the Cruise Ship

Industry: “The Nation of Why Not?”

Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines has recently designed an advertising campaign entitled, "The Nation of Why Not? (Royal Caribbean 2012). Their slogan reads, “With twenty-one floating ship-states, 251 ports, and 361,000,000 square kilometers of ocean terrain, Royal Caribbean is practically its own independent country—and now we're making it official.” While opening potential cruise ship tourists to the possibility of discovering new cultures, a different onboard activity, or simply doing nothing at all during their cruise vacation, it is branded in such a way so that the tourist becomes proprietor of a consciously unconscious, neo-piracy crusade. Cruise ship tourists are consciously unconscious by being aware that they are on vacation and therefore not responsible for anything (i.e. their behavior, daily routine, answering to anyone).

This aggressive marketing tactic uses mediascapes to construct an imagined community, a sense of societal cohesion among cruise ship tourists. Moreover, this marketing works to build a nationalist sentiment, evidenced in the way the advertising campaign relies on imagery and text that symbolizes patriotism for the act of cruising and revelry in conquest over the spaces which cruise ships traverse (Figure 27). For example, a single, white arm raises a flying flag with the Royal Caribbean “coat of arms,” or emblem, which reads, “The Nation of Why Not.” The flag symbolizes Royal Caribbean’s nationhood and therefore nationalist sentiment among tourists who chose a vacation with Royal Caribbean. The advertisement also prints a message by Adam Goldstein, President and CEO of Royal Caribbean International, “With so many things to do here, it’s like its own country.” This specific text is centered on the page in large font.
with a bold outline and is easy to see. This message puts the symbolic energy of the flag into text, therefore making the message of the advertisement clear: the cruise ship is the main attraction so much so that it is its own nation. It can be surmised through this advertisement’s imagery and text that there is no need for cruise ship passengers to disembark at port-of-call communities as the ship is its own country and a destination unto itself. The mission of this faux-nation is stated as such, “Our cruise ships are more than just a means of travel, they’re destinations in themselves…you’ll never be in a hurry to reach your destination again.” Tourists are encouraged to revel in the ship’s plethora of activities and entertainment. Royal Caribbean’s marketing tactic undoubtedly breeds excitement for a cruise vacation yet is worrisome in its belligerent delivery. The advertisement reads, “The nation will sail the world’s oceans in its 21 states (previously called ships), governed by the principles of “Why Not,” according to representatives from royal Caribbean.” Ships are referred to as states and their governing principles of leisure. Ice skating, soaking in whirlpools, surfing, and rock climbing are the activities listed that surmise the “Why Not” attitude, activities passengers would not normally do at home but now have the opportunity to partake in onboard. Cruise ship tourism, per Royal Caribbean, is imagined as a singular entity, a destination unto itself, and a nation of its own governance based on onboard leisure.
ROYAL CARIBBEAN ASKS "WHY NOT?"

Starts own floating Nation at sea

"With so many things to do here, it's like its own country." - 

IN THIS ISSUE

NATION ABOUNDS WITH WHY NOT MOMENTs
ASK VICKI  P. 2
A SAMPLING OF THE NATION'S FAVORITE WHY NOT MOMENTS
NATION SAYS "WHY NOT?" TO HEALTHIER CRUISEI NG
CITIZENS THRIVE IN LAND OF WHY NOT
NATION'S NEWLY REDEEMED TAKE VOWS OF "WHY NOT?"
OASIS OF THE SEAS TAKES TO AMAZE

Figure 29. Royal Caribbean Cruises 2002 Marketing Campaign, "The Nation of Why Not?"
Based on marketing campaigns like Royal Caribbean’s “Nation of Why Not,” it is evident that U.S. imperialism is part of the U.S.-based cruise ship industry. Marketing campaigns like this and others from the cruise ship industry that place the ship as the main focus of cruise ship tourism promulgate this genre of tourism’s heterogeneously hedonistic and self-serving form of corporatocracy. “The Tourist Image,” according to Dann (1996), is useful when analyzing this form of corporate advertising. The U.S.-based cruise ship industry only uses “paradise contrived” (no people) and “paradise confined” (tourists only) models of touristic paradise in analyzing data obtained from cruise ship tourism brochures (Dann 1996:68). Images of local populations in port-of-call communities are completely left out of advertisements in lieu of promoting the ship as the main destination. In the “Why Not” campaign, only white tourist bodies are presented rock climbing, eyes closed at the spa, and dining with family. The industry continues to overlook its destinations in lieu of focusing on the ship as the sole space of importance. The “Why Not” campaign states, “Innovation and Imagination Rule Supreme in Floating Nation.” Examples of “innovation and imagination” are “hanging ten on the first attempt on the FlowRider” (an onboard surfing simulator), attending “three yoga classes in one day” (onboard), and ate (onboard) at Jonny Rockets, a 1950s, Americana-themed U.S. restaurant franchise chain. When port-of-call communities are mentioned in this advertising campaign, symbolic language is used in describing such ports as stamps in a passport book, completely void of local contact:

Royal Caribbean’s new Nation is not just about onboard innovation, it’s about saying “Why Not?” to more and more destinations around the world. Why not set sail to over 284 ports in 81 countries on six continents? While the Nation of Why Not will always hold a special place in its heart for the Caribbean, it is committed to allowing its guests to say Why Not to ports further afield, like Panama, South America, Australia, Asia and New Zealand...So with that kind of open invitation
to fill up a passport and collect stamps from countries around the globe—why not arrive in Copenhagen with views that only a ship can provide?

The quantity and exotic nature of each port is highlighted rather any evidence of local interaction between host and guest at port-of-call communities.

One part of Weber’s logic concerning a “bureaucratic administration” (or in this case a corporate entity) as a “legal authority” is that such an entity carries out “imperative control over human beings” (Weber 1947:337). Imperative control is defined as command and obedience as fundamental notions connected to the idea of authority. Authority as the legitimated right to command and to command with the legally enforced expectation of obedience. The cruise ship industry, specifically in cruise lines with port-of-call communities located in the Global South, demonstrate a sense of legitimacy on land by controlling the way in which tourists experience port-of-call communities. As demonstrated previously in the “Why Not” campaign, local communities are void of the cruise ship vacation packaged to tourists. Royal Caribbean asserts authority and the legitimacy to rule, govern, and establish its own set of laws explicitly in their “Why Not” campaign through starting its own “floating Nation at sea.” This translation of Weber’s legitimacy in cruise ship tourism marketing is not so blatant and literal when analyzing other cruise ship advertising campaigns. Rather, it is a symbolic power of authority that permeates the industry. The example which I argue best represents the cruise ship industry’s symbolic power of authority is the physical space of port-of-call communities. This space is manipulated by the cruise ship industry once passengers disembark. This authority exceeds Weber’s definition as solely “legal.” The cruise ship industry has authority which is precisely, legally, juridical, and sanctioned by their own devices. As
previously demonstrated by evading U.S. legality and governance, the U.S.-based industry establishes itself as a unified entity and therefore established a self-granted right to rule. Royal Caribbean boasts, “When it comes to the spectacular destinations like the Caribbean, we’ve got those covered too. After all, Caribbean is our middle name. Truth is, we show you around these warm-weather playgrounds like no one else can” (2008-2009 Royal Caribbean Cruise Vacation Planner). The cruising industry reduces the Caribbean to “playgrounds,” ripe for tourist consumption. Successfully employing mega-branding on each cruise ship the industry has produced a singular product as its commodity: the cruise ship itself. Ships have dwarfed their ports-of-call, not only in sheer size, but moreover, as powerful, all-inclusive, and private city-states. As such, the U.S.-based cruise ship industry uses its authority as a means to assert its power. It is its own authoritative structure, the struggle and means to sway, influence, and control are wielded from the inside of this singular corporate entity. As the rest of this chapter demonstrates, the cruise ship industry relative to port-of-call communities exerts its authoritative structure beyond advertisements to actual physical spaces steeped in unequal power relations.
Figure 30. U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Companies Operating in the Caribbean
Dis/Embarkation at Ports-of-Call: A Question of Organic Communities, Entertainment Centers, and Private Islands

A common thread in this chapter explains how the cruise ship industry has historically marked the cruise ship itself as the destination. This industry has employed many similar development, branding, and marketing strategies of other mass tourism genres. Most importantly, the industry has mirrored the all-inclusive model of many land-based resorts. This interesting juxtaposition between land-based and water-based mass tourisms leads us to ask the following questions: how has each country or nation-state worked with these mass tourism industries as tourism destinations? How has each form of all-inclusive industry (e.g. land-based resorts and cruise ship tourism) been complemented or in combat with one another? Lastly, how does the cruise ship industry establish, brand, and specifically promote a port-of-call community within cruise itineraries?

U.S. Embarkation Ports

Embarkation points around the U.S. are strategically developed to welcome cruise ship tourism as they represent the spaces where cruise ship tourists begin and end their cruise ship vacation. The development of U.S. embarkations ports are built from scratch at pre-existing ports and developed in tandem with local, regional, and state governing bodies (The U.S.-based cruise ship industry has established more than thirty embarkation ports around the U.S., mostly on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts (including a few along the Gulf Coast).
U.S. embarkation ports “provide consumers with unprecedented convenience, cost savings and value by placing cruise ships within driving distance of 75 percent of North American vacationers” (FCCA 2012). The port of Miami, called the “Cruise Capital of the World,” (PortMiami 2013) was established as the U.S.-based cruise ship industry’s commercial center, since forging a relationship with Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC in the late 1960s. Carnival Corporation & PLC and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. have their headquarter offices in Miami, as does the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association, and the port is also operates as a home-base to eight other cruise lines (PortMiami 2013). This port infrastructure is significant because

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West Coast</th>
<th>Gulf Coast</th>
<th>East Coast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seattle, WA</td>
<td>Galveston, TX</td>
<td>New York, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco, CA</td>
<td>Mobile, AL</td>
<td>Boston, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>New Orleans, LA</td>
<td>Bayonne, NJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego, CA</td>
<td>Tampa, FL</td>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Baltimore, MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Norfolk, VA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Charleston, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jacksonville, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ft. Lauderdale, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Port Canaveral, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Miami, FL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 31. Graph of the Cruise Ports in the Continental United States (sources, RCL, CCL, NCL, and CruiseWeb.com)*
the industry is dependent on increased numbers of tourists choosing easily accessible embarkation ports to fill onboard capacity:

The cruise industry’s establishment of over 30 North American embarkation ports provides consumers with unprecedented convenience, cost savings and value by placing cruise ships within driving distance of 75% of North American vacationers. By providing significant cost savings through the convenience of avoiding air travel, the new homeports have introduced leisure cruising to a wider customer base (FCCA 2013:6).

Beginning in the 1990s, land and sea packages sold to cruise ship tourists provide an increased revenue stream for the cruise ship industry. By packaging land (i.e. flight, train, and/or additional tours) and sea vacation (i.e. the cruise ship vacation itself) options together, each U.S. embarkation port benefits national tourism while onboard spending, and thus cruise ship tourism, is not compromised.

Louisiana’s cruise ship terminal and embarkation port provide a clear example of how a U.S. embarkation port ultimately benefits from cruise ship tourism. Since Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005, the Julia and Erato Street Cruise Terminal Complexes have redeveloped into a major hub of cruise ship activity (Port of New Orleans 2013). This terminal and port is a mega-terminal as it offers tourists close proximity to the city sights while touting major retail, entertainment, and dining options, all packaged in a mall-like environment. Mega-terminals as embarkation points offer cruise ship tourists more vacation choice before and after the dis/embarking on the cruise ship because of its proximity to a major city as well as entertainment, shipping, and dining choices of a mall. Mega-terminals are built in the hope for increased tourist expenditures related to cruise ship tourism in such homeports by local, regional, and state businesses and governments. These expenditures are based on the volume of cruise ship
tourists as they embark and disembark, before and after their cruise ship vacation. New Orleans is not the only mega-terminal built for this type of “piggybacking” tourism; a terminal (shopping, entertainment, and dining complex) in Tampa, Florida called *Channelside Bay Plaza* opened in 2006 and boasts retail destinations like Del Sol Apparel and dining establishments like Hooters (Thalji 2013). Both options also found steps from where cruise ship tourists disembark near Punta Langosta pier in Cozumel, Mexico.

*The Cruise Ship Industry as a Titan of Mass Tourism: Private Islands as Exemplary of Corporate Hegemony*

National governments and multinational business corporations have historically worked in tandem, developing mass tourism projects to build a uniform package of sun, sand, and sea for tourist consumption (Crick 1989; Pattullo 1996; Castellanos 2007; see Chapter 4 for detailed development of mass tourism in Mexico). Mass tourism to the Riviera Maya, close to where Cozumel is located, and throughout the Caribbean, employs a sense of uniformity. This uniform nature of experience is exemplified throughout the marketing campaigns and physical spaces of all-inclusive hotels and resorts in this region. As such, uniformity essentially breeds ease of imitation for mass consumption. Land-based resort projects, a model the cruise ship industry has adopted, have an infrastructure based on “being pampered, fine dining, getting away from it all, hassle-free, and easy to plan and arrange” (FCCA 2013:11). All-inclusive tourism is also defined by this infrastructure. This all-inclusive infrastructure is defined as hassle-free experience for tourists-- beginning at the planning stages in booking the vacation and
extended to daily itinerary filled with leisure activities once tourists arrive. Tourist experiences at such all-inclusive resorts, including cruise ship vacations, include

Packaged vacations and all-inclusivity form a foundational model to the economy of mass tourism. Weber’s analysis of traditional authority types as inherently patrimonial in nature (Weber 1947:357) is realized through mass tourism’s system of corporatocracy. A corporation is a bureaucratic organization and a bureaucracy is corporate organization. Therefore, all-inclusivity corporations, businesses, and, as extended, sites of mass tourism, are recognized bureaucratic apparatuses. This is exemplified in the historical development of Cancun, Mexico. This city and hotel zone’s development in the late 1960s is indicative of a nation essentially gambling on the success of a completely manufactured, man-made environment for international investors and tourists. The state’s patrimony as a symbolic investment is interwoven and ingrained in each of Cancun’s hotels.
Paralleling the private nature of the ship in comparison with each port-of-call, a popular trend in cruise ship tourism is the manufacturing and ownership of islands in the Caribbean. Norwegian Cruise Line purchased the first island privately owned by the cruise ship industry in 1977. The majority of Great Stirrup Cay was purchased from an
oil company and the former military outpost was converted into an “oasis” for cruise ship passengers. Since then, other cruise lines have followed suit by either leasing or buying entire islands (or pieces thereof). The popular message board and information site CruiseCritic declares, “Just as the race has begun to see who can build the most amenity-laden ship, the cruise lines' ocean-edged retreats have received their fair share of enhancements, including aqua parks, horseback riding and even Barbie Escalades” (CruiseCritic 2013). The cruise lines market their private islands as “The Caribbean, only better” (Wood 2000:361). From Labadee in Haiti to Half Moon Cay in the Bahamas, the cruise lines and their privately owned islands are sold as the primary destination, not the public ports or communities where each ship docks. The obvious omission of Caribbean people organically living on these tourist islands parallels how the cruise ship industry focuses on the ship itself as the vacation, not each port-of-call. Endogenous communities and people are purposefully absent to fit an idealized image of paradise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private Island Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Cruise Line Associated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Castaway Cay (island)</td>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>Disney Cruise Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CocoCay (island)</td>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>Royal Caribbean International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Stirrup Cay (island)</td>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>Norwegian Cruise Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Cays (private beach</td>
<td>Eleuthera</td>
<td>Princesses Cruises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resort)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Moon Cay (island)</td>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>Holland America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labadee (private beach resort)</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Royal Caribbean International</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 33. Graph of the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry's Privately Owned Islands and Beach Resorts in the Caribbean*
The cruise ship industry’s private spaces in the Caribbean resemble the archetype of supreme paradise, even better than the real thing, because of their privatized prestige. Cruise ship passengers’ inhibitions can be released in these spaces “with no fear of reprisal or scandal from either employers of locals, since both [are] absent from the scene” (Dann 1996:72). These spaces symbolize the private/public space engineered by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry in Cozumel’s three cruise ship piers and associated shopping spaces. “It is intriguing how uninhabited privately-owned islands, free of the vitality as well as the problems of local societies, can be marketed as the way to have the truly ‘authentic’ Caribbean experience” (Wood 2000:18). The cruise ship industry’s private islands symbolize paradise-confined simulacra of the Caribbean (Dann 1996:71-2). They are vapid summations of exoticism, purposefully excluding local communities from view (or if local people work on in such spaces, existing in a submissive position in comparison to cruise ship tourists) and participation in the island’s existence. Homogenized summations of paradise (by corporate entities) are the framework to the cruise industry’s privately owned islands (Wood 2000; Pattullo 2005).
The Development of Port-of-Call Communities in the Caribbean

Caribbean cruise ship vacations began with the first commercial cruise ship voyage in 1966. Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL)’s Sunward ship was not only the first commercial cruise ship but was also the first ship to service weeklong trips from its home port of Miami to Jamaica. NCL began a campaign of “corporate citizenship” in the Caribbean (Garin 2005:50). “Corporate citizenship,” in this context, refers to the cruise ship industry establishing a business relationship with Caribbean nations in the form of cruise ship tourism. Specifically, this refers to how local port-of-call communities were first linked to the literary of cruise ship vacations. NCL established a presence in the
Caribbean as a corporate entity working with Caribbean officials to develop port infrastructure and marketing the Caribbean as a destination for cruise ship tourists to enjoy. Perhaps the most forward-thinking and socially conscious innovators of the cruise ship industry, NCL’s Kurt Kloster and Herb Hiller founded the “New Experiences” program in 1971. This program welcomed Jamaican families aboard the Sunward in the hopes of teaching the passengers about Jamaican history, culture, and current events of the time. Once docked in Jamaica, cruise ship passengers were given the opportunity to tour homes and places of business of the ship’s Jamaican crew or converse with similarly employed locals (i.e. doctors or teachers could meet and exchange shared job experiences). “Kloster and Hiller had envisioned the programs as antidote to the legacy of colonialism and the unequal power dynamics and cultural perceptions it had engendered” (Garin 2005:53). Unfortunately, this utopian cultural exchange was short lived. Jamaicans saw this performance of blackness as cliché and marginalizing, and the crew was not interested in working as tour guides once docked in Jamaica after having worked on board all week (Garin 2005:53). Furthermore, the deep racial divisions during late 1960s in the U.S. and in the Deep South carried over to interactions abroad in the black Caribbean (Garin 2005:54).

This example of Jamaica’s cultural transaction between its locals and cruise ship tourists is somewhat of a failed social experiment of tolerance and marketing ingenuity. Yet, this important milestone in cruise ship history establishes Jamaica as an important destination, or port-of-call, for NCL and thus the Caribbean with the cruise industry. How did Jamaica and subsequent ports establish themselves in each cruise ship itinerary? Destinations, ports, or ports-of-call are simply stops along the itinerary that the cruise
ship makes during each voyage. Itineraries vary between geographic location, ranging from the “Western Caribbean,” “Canadian Maritimes,” or “Glacier Bay” in Alaska. These itineraries are strategically negotiated between the cruise ship industry with the associated local, regional, state, and federal governments of each cruise port.

Cruise ship port-of-call communities must also adapt to local infrastructure. This infrastructure includes national tourism, governmental support, and private investment in each of the U.S. embarkation ports. Internationally speaking, as is the case in Cozumel, the country that each cruise ship port is attached to charges a head tax for every cruise ship tourist who disembarks (Garin 2005). Local negotiation is extremely important in securing the amount charged as head tax. Millions of dollars are necessary to provide the proper infrastructure to support the docking and disembarkation of cruise ships docking in each country.

The Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), established in 1973, is a collective between fifteen Caribbean nations as “Member States” and five “Associate Members.” Their objectives are not solely economic in terms of trade, negotiation, or development of the Caribbean region, rather this unified coalition focuses on multiple aspects of daily life for the population of its members as stated in CARICOM’s objectives:

Improved standards of living and work; (b) full employment of labor and other factors of production; (c) accelerated, coordinated and sustained economic development and convergence; (d) expansion of trade and economic relations with third States; (e) enhanced levels of international competitiveness; (f) organization for increased production and productivity; (g) the achievement of a greater measure of economic leverage and effectiveness of Member States in dealing with third States, groups of States and entities of any description; (h) enhanced co-ordination of Member States' foreign and [foreign] economic

---

23 For a complete listing of the members see CARICOM’s website.
policies; and (i) enhanced functional co-operation, including – (i) efficient 
operation of common services and activities for the benefit of its peoples; (ii) 
accelerated promotion of great understanding among its peoples and the 
avancement of their social, cultural and technological development; (iii) 
intensified activities in areas such as health, education, transportation, 
telecommunications [CARICOM 2013].

CARICOM has historically advocated in favor of charging higher than proposed head 
taxes by the cruise ship industry to provide more financial security to each supporting 
homeport. Head taxes, paid by each cruise line, often remunerate the construction and 
maintenance of the pier where the tourists disembark and each ship docks. Countries 
negotiate (often with an intermediary organization such as CARICOM) with the industry 
to collect large head taxes have a greater advantage. The process of creating a head tax, 
including its legality and processes of negotiation, is negotiated between local port-of-call 
community and the cruise ship industry.

**Conclusions: The Cruise Ship Industry Practicing Regulation**

**Evasion**

The cruise ship companies are entirely non-Caribbean. Their destinations are 
increasingly under their direct ownership and control; Caribbean cruises are taking on 
elements of ‘cruises to nowhere.’ The ships' labor force is overwhelmingly non-
Caribbean. What these ships do in the Caribbean Sea (including dumping) is outside the 

Weber offers us a useful lens to explore how the “contractual relationship 
between the global cruise ship industry and port-of-call communities has historically
emerged over time” (Dr. Ross Klein, pers. comm.). There is a certain level of “indebtedness” inherent in this complex relationship (Weber 1947:326). Each entity is economically and politically linked in a web of legalities, what Weber defines as a “relationship of imperative coordination” (Weber 1947:326). This relationship is exemplary of how the cruise ship industry is ultimately an economic power.

This chapter has explained the structure and development of the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, its marketing strategies, and emergence of port-of-call communities. We are left with the following questions: what is the relationship between the cruise ship industry and port-of-call communities? What is the nature of the brokering between storefront and tour with each cruise ship company? How does this process work?

The politics involved in negotiating between local port-of-call community and U.S.-based cruise ship industry for profits manifests far from the Caribbean, in lobbying bureaucracies, law firms, or the court system in the U.S. Each cruise line diligently works to become an independent, private city-state; a “floating hotel” autonomous from jurisdiction, law, or non-industry established policy. In order for this system to operate, cruise lines have historically adopted flags of convenience (FOC), once the sole province of cargo and merchant lines wanting to escape the “ravages of war” by registering the ship with a neutral country’s flag (Dickinson and Vladimir 1997:65). FOC allow each U.S.-based cruise ship company (e.g. Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC) to “escape taxes, labor laws, and safety regulation despite sailing from a U.S. port and catering to the U.S. market” (Garin 2005:34). “When a ship carrying an international crew is registered in Liberia or Panama [together each country have about thirty percent of the world’s registered tonnage and thus power in the U.N.’s
International Maritime Organization] it is not subject to union and other restrictive crewing policies” (Dickinson and Vladimir 1997:66). By registering the ships under FOC countries, the cruise ship industry avoids having to pay fair, regulated wages to ship employees along with paying lower to no taxes. In turn, FOC allow the cruise ship industry to charge their customers less per cruise vacation as the industry savings trickle down to each cruise ship tourist at the point of sale. The general affordability of a cruise vacation has historically burgeoned the industry to be one of the most popular mass tourism genre in the world. FOC cruise ships are “operating in a free market, provide more value to the worldwide labor pool, with significantly less cost to its operators, and therefore lower prices to its consumers” (Dickinson and Vladimir 1997:67). While this bold statement supports big business’ deregulation and manipulation of labor laws, lower prices for cruise ship tourists afford port-of-call communities the opportunity to become a vital component in mass tourism.

When Carnival Corporation & PLC and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. became IPOs, an initial public offerings, related to the initial sale of a company’s stock, in the 1980s, long term mortgages were taken out to finance the building of megaships and subsequent tax incentives were also agreed upon with the U.S. government (Garin 2005: 131). U.S. governmental interests in the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, and vice versa, underline this entangled relationship. Sailing in international waters, which begin twelve miles off shore, voids the jurisdiction of the nearest country.

The U.S.-based cruise ship industry ab/uses governmental agreements (i.e. sailing in international waters to avoid national jurisdictions), their status among shareholders (i.e. as corporations worth billions of dollars), and FOC practices (e.g. circumventing
labor laws and environmental oversight) in its favor. These practices equate to an industry-wide evasion of regulations. In addition, federal income tax on U.S. cruise operations is limited (Garin 2005:210). Goods loaded on board—literally tons of food, alcohol, cleaning supplies, and fuel—are labeled as “exports” and are therefore considered duty free, which exempts the cruise ship company from paying taxes on goods it uses for each cruise itinerary. FOCs establish bilateral tax treaties with the country where each ship is registered, circumventing U.S. tax law and regulation. Additionally, lobbying and financing campaigns in support of legislation and politicians with similar agendas transpires in Washington, D.C. A simple Internet search reveals the cruise industry fighting the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)’s cleaner fuel regulations (Schoof 2012) and Royal Caribbean International donating to the campaigns of members of the Congressional Subcommittee on Coastguard and Maritime Transportation (OpenSecrets 2013)—the Congressional counterpart to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation where Senator Jay Rockefeller is now “taking the cruise lines’ lack of transparency head on” (Walker 2013).

From its rocky beginnings as a group of small, independent companies, to its current status as a global conglomerate that controls the physical environments, policies, and social and economic structures of port-of-call communities, the U.S.-based cruise ship industry is prolific in wielding its authoritative power. The manufacture of cruise ships as floating all-inclusive resorts, purposefully built spaces on land (embarkation ports, private islands, and port-of-call communities) to satisfy industry profits, and unconstrained labor and tax law loopholes are all key features of the modern U.S.-based cruise ship industry. The U.S.-based cruise ship industry is *not* a legal power *nor* does it
exemplify legal authoritative power (Weber 1947). Rather, the industry is subject to the authority structures of nations and international laws, but it is able to evade these. Therefore, the modern U.S.-based cruise ship industry is more representative of political maneuvering and capitalist power. However, I argue that through this evasion of governance, oversight, taxation, and general corporate responsibility, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC have instituted legitimate authority. These two U.S.-based corporations control most of the global cruise ship tourism market and therefore their abuse of legality can be (at least abstractly) constructed as (legitimate) authority.

Weber theorizes, “While authoritative, capitalism remains and trumps supreme hegemony over local community” (Weber 1947:327). This sentiment is exemplified throughout port-of-call communities in the Caribbean. The following chapter explores how the industry’s power is transposed on land in Cozumel. It will explain how cruise ship tourism is staged by the cruise ship industry, merging cultural vestiges of Mexico’s past and present, in purposeful ways.
Preface to Chapter IV.

Ethnographic Vignette: The Pulse of Daily Life in Cozumel

It is impossible to be on the island without recognizing the cruise ship industry’s presence. From storefronts advertising that they are a “recommended safe store” as labeled by each cruise ship company, to signs boasting positive Trip Advisor ratings, cruise ship tourism is omnipresent in everyday life in Cozumel. The main artery of the island is one street, a highway of sorts, in which each of the three cruise ship piers, with mall-like terminals attached, are essentially plugged. This stretch of highway hugs the shoreline, extending from downtown San Miguel to the southernmost point of the island, about a half hour car ride. This one street, Rafael Melgar Avenue, named after a Mexican general and once governor of the state of Quintana Roo, is as living and breathing as any Cozumeleño. Every day, its arteries fill with tourists, bulging at the seams with a flurry of tourist activity: shopping, sightseeing, taking pictures, eating, and drinking.
I wanted to record Melgar's schedule, its breath and heartbeat, since the contrast between day and night for an island resident is exceptionally stark. At 7:45 a.m., there is little foot traffic, a few sanitation workers are sweeping, and the sun's rays steadily become more noticeable. This early in the morning, riding a bike on Melgar is not a near-death experience; there are few taxis or hotel shuttle buses greedily pushing you over to the side of the road. You even have a moment to look out onto the crystalline cyan color of the ocean and hear the gentle lapping of waves. The looming cruise ships in the distance only overshadow the serenity of the moment, as that day two ships slowly navigate the Caribbean Sea southward toward their respective piers.

By 9:00 a.m., each cruise ship has formally announced its presence with loud horn blasts, sure to be heard for blocks inland. Jeeps with uniformed hotel workers and lines
of taxis are whizzing southward on Melgar, ready to welcome cruise ship tourists for when they disembark. Gates that once protected each storefront are rolled out of sight and goods are fashionably displayed for sale. A vendor comments that his main business is focused on the time each cruise ship is docked, roughly from the hours between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Many shop owners, tour operators, street vendors, and food service workers on Melgar corroborate this statement. The sentiment continually conveys the importance to sell and do well, no matter what the profession, while cruise ship tourists are in port, as many businesses rely solely on business generated from cruise ship tourists. Every day by 9:00 a.m., the street is ready and waiting for the day’s cruise ship business.

By noon, the scene on Melgar is as bustling as any major metropolitan tourist zone: the street swells with people as the sidewalk becomes difficult to find, beers and margaritas accompany shopping bags in the hands of tourists, taxi and moped horns chirp ecstatically, and store employees anxiously try to get attention from the crowd in order for tourists enter their stores. The energy of the street’s activity is palpable and exciting. Tourists shop for souvenirs for loved ones, ask about renting vehicles, or leisurely sip a cocktail in the shade of an enclosed restaurant. Luxury goods such as watches, diamond and gemstone jewelry, designer sunglasses and apparel, and fragrances are mostly sold on Melgar, in air-conditioned storefronts with marble floors, free, cold alcoholic beverages for interested tourists, and armed guards protecting the entrance. These more affluent stores welcome heavy traffic along with the more traditionally souvenir-laden shopping choices. International companies also are available to cruise ship tourists while in port on Melgar: Starbucks, Hard Rock Café, Pizza Hut, Burger King, and Diamonds International.
(with ten waterfront locations in Cozumel) offer respite for tourists weary of locally owned and operated dining or shopping choices.

Another interesting segmentation exists between cruise ship workers, tourists, and local Cozumelanos. Certain establishments—like the expatriate-owned restaurants Rock-n-Java and No Name Bar and Grill, or the island’s only South Asian restaurant near International Pier (at this time it is not named), further south from San Miguel on Melgar—cater mostly to cruise ship employees. Looking for respite from ten hour work days, a reliable Internet connection, alcohol, or a meal reminding them of home are a few of the reasons cruise ship employees often disembark together in groups and frequent the aforementioned businesses. Three cruise ship workers, males in their early 20s, were buried in their laptops and iPads, Skyping and emailing for nearly three hours at a popular bar and restaurant frequented by cruise ship tourists, local gringos, and stay-over tourists. Interrupting their intense focus, I began a conversation with one of the three about their daily life—the other two kept their heads down in their computers as we talked. They said they worked in the sound, lighting, and tech department of the onboard theater. As employees, they must pay to use the Internet while at sea and most of their phones do not work as there “of course is no reception in the open ocean” (interview, December 2011). They said that their days are long and it’s hard to be away from their friends and family, “but I joined to see cool destinations and it’s something different” (interview, December 2011).

At Puerta Maya, a Carnival-owned pier and shopping, dining, and entertainment complex, groups of cruise ship employees are seen carrying large bags of groceries or sundries back to the ship. They also completely take over the area’s small coffee shop,
each with their mobile, internet-accessed technology close in front of them to prevent further interaction with cruise ship tourists while not on duty. Having been mistaken for a cruise ship employee many times since beginning my journeys alone to Cozumel, I hope to understand whether that label is a compliment or an insult. Many island residents view cruise ship employees as a transient and insular community. They are ashore for such a short amount of time, usually partying at selected hotels, shopping, or on their computes near the cruise ship piers. This segment of the island’s transient population is rather flippant toward the scenery and environment, yet some partake in the same, sometimes lewd, behavior as do the cruise ship tourists.

The most popular cruise ship tourist lounges in Cozumel include the Jimmy Buffet-owned, U.S.-based food chain Margaritaville and the Mexican-owned bar and restaurants, Carlos n’ Charlie’s and Señor Frogs (Hooters was being built across from both Carlos n’ Charlie’s and Señor Frogs at Punta Langosta Pier as of January 2013). Any given day a ship is in port, each of these international chains are filled with cruise ship tourists; come nighttime, after the cruise ships leave for their next port-of-call, each restaurant is essentially deserted or closed completely. A convoluted mixture of Spanish and English is spoken between server and guest while cruise ship tourists sway to every lyric of the Jimmy Buffet repertoire playing over the loudspeaker. There are large dance floors at all three establishments and employees are encouraged to engage in dancing with the tourists as a non-stop festive party atmosphere reigns supreme. At Margaritaville, swings are mounted to the outdoor bar, overlooking an array of inflatable toys used to climb and jump off into the ocean, a pyramid and a trampoline being the most favored. Young, attractive men and women are the designated “shot givers,” along
with a man making balloon animals and hats, followed by a pair of costumed pirates, and lastly an employee who is dressed in a full-body, fluffy shark costume—in eighty-degree heat. This parade of employees makes its way from table to table, engaging tourists with alcoholic shots (administered only after a flamboyant and flirtatious display of physical contact between the “shot girl” or “shot boy” and the tourist), pictures, balloon hats, and general depravity. One block away at No Name Bar and Grill, cruise ship employees are essentially decompressing their anxieties in similar ways: eating, drinking, swimming, dancing, and singing. The later was noted being livelier, as there were fewer groups of families and more (seemingly) single, attractive, and younger people gathered at No Name Bar and Grill, tirelessly enjoying each other’s company amidst the setting Caribbean sun and booming European techno music.
Chapter IV. Manufactured Mass Tourism: A Port-of-Call Defined by the U.S.-based Cruise Ship Industry

Introduction: “They could be anywhere:” Cruise Ship Tourist

Disembarking at Puerta Maya

As a cruise ship tourist disembarking in Cozumel at the Carnival Corporation & PLC’s owned Puerta Maya, the experience is like spending the day at an amusement park. Only Carnival-owned cruise ships dock here and this deep-water pier can hold up to two cruise ships at one time. Cruise ship passengers make their way through a long, enclosed terminal after they have had their identification card scanned and the ubiquitous photo opportunity taken once on the pier by cruise ship employees. This long terminal is filled with merchandise kiosks selling Mexican-themed souvenir trinkets, expensive French perfume, sunglasses and hats, and suntan lotion. A large sign on the pier’s façade displays the shopping slogan “Tax and Duty Free.” Once inside, vendors line each side of the long pier selling many items including, but not limited to, sunglasses, shot glasses, suntan lotion, and sombreros. Some souvenirs for sale look like handmade handicrafts, such as those sold at Cinco Soles, a retail outlet which prides itself on importing souvenirs from around Mexico, with multiple locations on the island and in Cancun. Other souvenirs for sale in the “Tax and Duty Free” pier on Puerta Maya are more expensive, internationally recognized brands like Swarovski, Lacoste, and Mont Blanc. The space is unbelievably crowded and loud. A sense of chaos is palpable (Robinette
Passengers are huddling close, peering over cases of jewelry while a performer dressed as a golden pirate is soliciting the stream of traffic, the wave of passengers coming toward him, to take a souvenir picture. It is like a light at the end of the tunnel once you make your way through the long pier. There are security guards at the exit that are checking passengers’ identification and there are multiple signs advising tourists they must have their ship identification upon exiting the pier.

Figure 36. View of International Pier and Puerta Maya (far right) from Cruise Ship Deck, January 2012

This structure at Puerta Maya is similar to Punta Langosta and International Pier in Cozumel. Each cruise ship pier has both an enclosed shopping space only for cruise ship passengers with proper identification and a main complex, or an open-air mall that is open to the public. Cruise ship piers and the associated shopping spaces are open to the public, but these spaces are built specifically for cruise ship tourists. They are open only upon embarking in the beginning of the cruise ship vacation. See Chapter 3.
when a cruise ship is docked and closes quickly after each ship pulls out to sea. These enclosed shopping piers resemble any mall in the United States. Perhaps the only difference is that cruise ship passengers have an opportunity to purchase similar brands at duty and tax-free prices.

In Puerta Maya, once cruise ship passengers make their way out of the enclosed shopping pier, they are flanked by two restaurants to either side, Three Amigos and Fat Tuesday, and a replica of Chichén Itzá, complete with fountain, is situated straight ahead of them. This view is their first on actual Mexican soil. Behind to Fat Tuesday, there is a small manmade beach complete with hammocks, palm trees, and many lounge chairs. There is no access to the ocean for passengers to swim or snorkel, only the view of docked cruise ships and the pier itself. A small palapa is located in the far corner that has a large sign describing a selection of beauty treatments including massages. ($50 USD/hour).

Once tourists make their way through the “Tax and Duty Free” pier on Puerta Maya, the energy of an amusement park is tangible. The space is engineered like an outdoor shopping mall, complete with a replica statue of the iconic Pyramid of Kukulcan of Chichén Itzá atop a fountain, a small beach with lounge chairs that overlook the docked cruise ship(s), and mobile mariachi quartet that snakes around the entire property.
Figure 37. Mariachi Musicians at Puerta Maya, Cozumel
Dining choices in Puerta Maya are Fat Tuesday and Three Amigos Cantina. Puerta Maya’s website boasts Three Amigos Cantina as “a new theme restaurant inspired by the 1986 hit movie starring Steve Martin, Chevy Chase and Martin Short. The waterfront eatery – the first of its kind in the Caribbean – offers traditional Mexican fare, along with an extensive beverage menu” (Puerta Maya 2013; see Figure 38). My attention was caught one day at Three Amigos Cantina when the entire restaurant of cruise ship passengers suddenly stood up at their tables. The 1970s disco music blared as nearly passengers quickly drew their cameras and smartphones to document the activity. One of the servers was standing perfectly still as his colleagues stacked drink after drink, large margarita glasses full of liquid, on the top of his head until the drinks towered well over two feet atop of his head. The customers exclaimed in shock and amazement of such a feat as the server walked the length of the restaurant to perform his finale. The cruise ship passengers, behind the lens’ of their cameras quipped, “How is he doing that?!?” “Wow that takes skill.” “I bet I could totally do that.”
The drink performance ended when a young, attractive female customer was chosen by the staff to stand on a table and pass out the beverages to the patrons who ordered them. The entire restaurant erupted in raucous applause after each drink was passed out.

This party-atmosphere at Three Amigos Cantina is nearly identical to their counterparts, Fat Tuesday, Carlos’n’Charlie’s and Señor Frogs that are located near each cruise ship pier in Cozumel. These restaurant and bars are comparable to Chili’s or TGIFriday’s in the U.S., in terms of price, menu, and focus on customers losing their inhibitions (usually through cocktails) and having a good time. In Puerta Maya, there is also Pancho’s Backyard, a local restaurant that has an agreement with the cruise ship industry to have a space there along with another location in downtown San Miguel.
Lastly, in Puerta Maya, there is a café selling coffee and pastries called Café Punta del Cielo, a more Euro-chic version of Starbucks. This café is usually packed to capacity with cruise ship staff furiously writing emails, Skyping, or browsing the Internet.

Walking away from Three Amigos Cantina and Fat Tuesday in Puerta Maya, there are many stores and kiosks that line each pathway. Three brothers from the Yucatán have a movable kiosk, this day positioned in front of the manmade beach, selling lucha libre masks, woodcarvings, and handmade purses. Similar kiosks are stationed around Puerta Maya and they compete with transnational retail and dining chains found throughout Caribbean port-of-call communities. Such chains include Milano Jewelers, Del Sol Apparel, Piranha Joe’s, Dufry Tax and Duty Free, and Diamonds International (see, PuertaMaya.com 2014; see Figure 39).

The words, “Puerta Maya” does not translate from English to Spanish to “Maya Port” (puerto). Rather the direct Spanish to English translation is “Maya Door” (puerta). This word choice is symbolic that this pier, or mega-terminal with outdoor mall space in addition to the actual pier, is linked to the idea of cruise ship tourists entering the world of “The Maya.” This space is a symbol of mainly U.S. cruise ship tourists arriving to the exotic and indigenous Mexico. Puerta Maya’s website reads, “The essential ingredients for a fun day in beautiful Cozumel, Mexico are duty-free shopping from over 30 different outlets, tasting of savory local cuisine and the time to explore the magic and beauty of the ancient Mayan culture” (Puerta Maya 2013). This tagline is misleading as cruise ship passengers do not experience or “explore the magic and beauty of the ancient Mayan culture” anywhere in this port filled with transnational corporation retail and dining establishments nor is this space uniquely “Mexican” as the space is designed for mass
tourism. The piers and shopping centers at each port-of-call community are sanitized spaces built for touristic consumption rather than displaying or educating tourists of the nuances, vestiges, and significance of Maya, Mexican, or Caribbean history and culture.

In Puerta Maya, tourists enjoy taking pictures, lounging in the sun, shopping, and enjoying alcoholic beverages. A similar routine of cruise ship tourist behavior is observed at Cozumel’s other two cruise ship piers, Punta Langosta and International Pier, located just a few miles north from Puerta Maya. Cruise ship tourists enjoy an enclave of leisure at these piers as each pier and its associated mall are purposefully built for cruise ship tourism. These spaces are constructed for the ease of sale and cultural consumption. Cruise ship tourists arriving at any one of these piers literally could be anywhere in a Caribbean port-of-call because their structure is so similar to one another. Each pier and shopping center in a port-of-call is representative of a replicated construction based on mass appeal of familiar retail and dining options in a theme park-like setting. One Cozumeleña describes this cruise ship tourist schedule as commonly followed by the majority of tourists who come to Cozumel on a cruise ship:

For the most part, passengers are here to escape the cold at home. Their time in port is extremely short -- ships generally arrive between seven and nine in the morning and leave between three and five in the afternoon. During the destination briefings aboard ship, passengers are told not to leave the malecón because the island is dangerous, which is untrue. Many passengers go on ship-organized excursions and many others stay at the port complex (or aboard ship) and drink too much beer/tequila and too little water and do not shop in locally-owned stores. Those people—the majority—do not learn much about Cozumel or its people. They could be anywhere. [interview, April 2013]
Figure 39. Puerta Maya Map (source, PuertaMaya.com)
Society as Spectacle: Cruise Ship Tourism in Cozumel, Mexico

This chapter explains the historical foundation and ethnographic evidence that support the argument that cruise ship tourists could be anywhere at any cruise ship port-of-call community. I will analyze the construction of this “anywhereness” or “non-space-place” using ethnographic data collected from participant observation at each of Cozumel’s three cruise ship piers and associated malls: Puerta Maya, International Pier, and Punta Langosta collected from 2010-2014. The cruise ship industry creates these environments with the goal of homogenizing tourist experience by creating an illusion of anywhere. As one informant stated, cruise ship tourists that do not shop in locally-owned stores and spend their time drinking while on the island of Cozumel learn little of the island’s history, current social dynamics, or population demographics: One fundamental step in the homogenization of experience is the elimination of contact with real social and cultural others. This chapter explains how the cruise ship industry engineers a façade, presents the society as a spectacle, and employs frameworks of staging that create a fabricated environment, an atmosphere of sale, for cruise ship tourists.

The North American-based Cruise Ship Industry: Engineering a Façade

The North American-based cruise ship industry creates a completely fabricated space at each port-of-call pier and shopping center which I define as a façade. I am building upon the front and backstage model in sociology and tourism studies (Goffman 1959; MacCannell 1973). This type of space in cruise ship tourism is neither front nor back stage as local culture, daily life, and history is completely void of presentation to
cruise ship tourists in these spaces. Rather, this façade is comprised of international retail and dining options and is replicated throughout port-of-call communities in the Caribbean.

The cruise ship industry generates a façade of blind leisure while passengers are on board, meaning that passengers forget about the world outside of their experience on the ship. Although the ship, as a ship, is a hierarchized organization of space necessary to create the functionality of maritime travel, cruise ship tourists experience the ship is rather like the hypertext of Puerta Maya’s official website. Endless possibilities are presented by clicking on links for immediate relocation into another metonymic experience that retains no memory, no history, and no depth with the actual port-of-call as neighborhood, city, state, or country. The cruise ship industry, as previously discussed in Chapter Three, strategically maintains that the ship is the physical representation of the entire vacation experience for tourists. The cruise ship symbolizes and embodies the sole destination, even though the ship may navigate many miles to multiple port-of-call communities in a single cruise vacation. The cruise ship as a destination offers a powerful revision of the front/back staging through semiotic codes and meaning.

Port-of-call communities are part of another type of industry-produced façade. The cruise ship industry stages tourism in spaces where each cruise ship docks. Such spaces are elaborate as a modern shopping complex a few steps from where the cruise ship docks (e.g. Punta Langosta in Cozumel), or more complex as a singular shopping, dining, and tour construction completely detached from local community (e.g. Costa Maya in Mahahual, Mexico). These physical spaces are manufactured environments, a construction of organic, local life. Similar to homogenized summations of paradise
constructed by corporate entities like all-inclusive resorts and the cruise ship industry, they represent a façade of physical space and people indigenous to such environments.25

In this chapter, I will describe highlights the way the cruise ship industry stages cruise ship tourism on board and on land. As previously mentioned, the industry stages tourists’ experiences by using the following strategies in the manipulation of semiotics and significance. First, the cruise ship industry brands the cruise ship itself as the destination, not each port-of-call (as discussed in Chapter Two). Second, the cruise ship industry manipulates the physical space that surrounds the area where each cruise ship docks and cruise ship tourists disembark. I argue that such façades are not only physical in nature, but also permeate cruise ship tourists’ attitudes. I will analyze my ethnographic evidence and explain how it proves that such industry-produced façades shape tourists’ belief about each port-of-call. This is exemplified through the industry’s publication of “approved” and “guaranteed” businesses in onboard advertising. The cruise ship industry labels the tours, restaurants, and retail outlets within a contractual relationship with the industry as safe for cruise ship tourists to patronize. Essentially everywhere that is not part of the ship-approved map symbolizes a threat to cruise ship tourists’ safety and security.

Ebbs and flows of cruise ship tourists are literally and figuratively corralled, empirically though signposting and semiotics (MacCannell 1999 and Urry 1990) and more abstractly through tactics wielded by the cruise ship industry to intentionally skew the physical environment in the spaces where cruise ship tourists disembark their cruise

25 This façade parallels simulacra of the cruise ship industry’s privately owned islands and spaces in the Caribbean and Riviera Maya. For further discussion, please reference Chapter II.
ship. Many cruise ship tourists that I interviewed never realized there is more to Cozumel than the piers and shopping located on Melgar Avenue, the main road where each of the three cruise ship docks and piers are located. One tourist from Florida exclaimed, “I love Cozumel because it’s so easy. The shopping is the best in the Caribbean (interview, December 2012).” What makes Cozumel “easy” for cruise ship tourists is the intentional dissuasion against touring the island in its entirety, or even straying from the approved shopping areas. The international nature of the businesses and stores breeds familiarity and a sense of ease among cruise ship tourists. One particularly crowded morning at Punta Langosta pier and shopping center, a cruise ship passenger in the busy Starbucks, looking a little worn down and clearly in need of caffeine, confided, “I’ve been waiting all week to get off the boat for this [sipping her Starbucks latte].” The Starbucks was filled with cruise ship passengers, looking similar to crew members who disembark as they too were mostly hunched over their portable electronic devices trying to connect with family members and relishing the moment with a familiar beverage. The inherent ease, familiarity, and comfort of a cruise ship vacation is what makes cruise ship tourism a genre that is appealing, as evidenced throughout multiple interviews. When asked what persuaded cruise ship tourists to disembark in Cozumel, most respondents alluded to the fact that activities and services were close to the pier, as one respondent notes, “[To] Enjoy the day strolling through the pier and shops. See what Cozumel was like without having to pay for an excursion to take us places.”
Retail, Dining, and Tours in Agreement with the U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry: Purposefully Engineering a Façade where Money Matters

Profits from retail, dining, and tours that operate in a contractual agreement with the U.S.-based cruise ship industry represent a significant facet to how space is engineered in cruise ship port-of-call communities. In the context of Cozumel as a port-of-call community, these agreements are crafted between local business and either Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. or Carnival Corporation & PLC. These contracts form a relationship between these two business entities and combine to form spaces entirely comprised of “guaranteed” and “approved” shopping. Such businesses are usually transnational corporations in and of themselves (e.g. Margaritaville, Hooters, and Diamonds International), where cruise ship tourists disembark: Puerta Maya, International Pier, and Punta Langosta cruise ship piers in Cozumel. These spaces are purposefully marketed to cruise ship passengers before and during their disembarkation, onboard and while in Cozumel.

Cruise Ship Tourism’s Shore Excursions

Another way mass tourism, specifically all-inclusive tourism, concretizes the distance between tourist and local community is exemplified by cruise ship shore excursions. Shore excursions are characterized by the cruise ship industry as “organized trips ashore at ports of call, most often operated by an independent contractor, for passengers in groups of varying sizes. These almost always feature the services of a
guide” (Israel and Miller 1999:173). Cruise ships negotiate with local businesses, labeled as “independent contractors” by the cruise ship industry, in the sale of shore excursions. Cruise ship tourists can book a shore excursion either before or during their cruise vacation online or in person once aboard the cruise ship. Carnival lists the benefits of booking a shore excursion directly with the cruise line: “Our Shore excursion providers are reliable and reputable; a variety of quality excursions at a great value; Carnival keeps your information secure; have a hassle-free experience” (Carnival 2013, activities/excursion website). The U.S.-based cruise ship industry actively constructs a narrative of fear among cruise ship tourists who entertain the idea of supporting stores, restaurants, and services that are not listed on the “ship approved shopping map,” (see Chapter 3) and who also may choose to take a “non-approved” shore excursion. A “non-approved” shore excursion means the cruise ship tourist would wait to disembark, or go to a non-cruise ship website (e.g. TripAdvisor, island listservs and newsletters, or through tour-specific Facebook pages) to sign up for a tour directly with a provider. This practice of cruise ship tourists dealing directly with the tour provider is frowned upon by the industry as evidenced in their claims that *their* tours offer better safety, reliability, and an overall positive reputation in comparison to independently owned and operated tours.

In Cozumel, the U.S.-based cruise ship industry operates hundreds of shore excursions throughout the island, as well as tours journeying into the mainland on every day that cruise ships dock (Carnival’s website alone lists 58 excursions in Cozumel; Royal Caribbean’s lists 73). Tours range in price, activity, length of time, and location. Some shore excursions are only transportation, like a ferry to Xcaret (archeological zone, amusement park, and eco-resort all in one on the coast of the Riviera Maya, south of
Playa del Carmen). Others, more commonly, include transportation and a site tour, like round trip ferry and bus service from the ship to Chichén Itzá, where cruise ship tourists spend a few hours touring the archeological zone located less than three hours inland from Playa del Carmen. Other tours are specific to Cozumel. “Ancient Culture/Mayan Ruins and Island Sightseeing” is a three hour tour to the island’s San Gervasio archeological site after seeing (from an air-conditioned bus) “modern-day residents [in downtown San Miguel], many of who are descendants of the area’s original Mayan inhabitants” (Carnival 2013). This tour costs $65.00 per adult, $49.99 per child, and children under five years old are free. Another shore excursion specific to Cozumel is “La Casa en La Playa – A Select Retreat.” This excursion is a five hour stay at an “exclusive Caribbean-style beach house complete with all amenities including a chef, bartender, and gracious host…Join a small, select group for a relaxing day of sun, sand, swanky cuisine and cocktails away from the crowds” (Carnival 2013). This tour costs $99.99 per adult and $89.99 per child, beach towels and lunch included.

In *Behind the Smile: The Working Lives of Caribbean Tourism* (Gmelch 2003, 2012), anthropologist George Gmelch interviews a Barbadian woman working as a liaison with the cruise lines and island tours. She describes the differences between stay-over and cruise ship tourists as distinct:

Caribbean cruise tourism is very much on the up compared to land or stay-over tourism. I think people like having multi-destination [sic] holidays without changing hotels. The all-inclusive package has become much more attractive in the last ten years, whether it be on land or on cruise ships. People like knowing how much their whole holiday is going to cost up front. I also think all-inclusive holidays have become more attractive as people have become more fearful. It’s a worldwide phenomenon where people have become nervous, and for them the
cruise is more comforting than negotiating their own holiday on the land (Gmelch 2012:145).

Cruise ship shore excursions, like their resort or cruise ship vacation counterparts, play into this sense of fear common among cruise ship tourists. Listing reasons why signing up for a cruise ship endorsed shore excursions is the safer option, as Carnival has done, only promulgates the notion that the destination is unsafe and the local population cannot be trusted. Carnival Cruise Line’s website states:

The Best Shore Excursions: We’ve taken all the work out of selecting the best shore excursions at each destination. We have hand selected the best local providers so you can relax and focus on having fun. The Best Price Guarantee: Booking your Shore Excursion through Carnival is not only easier and more reliable, but will make your wallet happy too. Our best price guarantee ensures that you will always get the best price. Find a better price for any of the excursions we offer and we will refund you 110% of the price difference! Peace of Mind: Don't let potential changes to ship itinerary or delays getting back to the ship interfere with your fun. We take care of all the details and wait in port for the return of all Carnival excursions. First, find the shore excursion of your dreams. Then, go ahead and book it. Relax knowing you got the best deal. That's our Shore Excursion Best Price Guarantee (Carnival 2012).

Tourists could pay a fraction of the cost of these ship-approved shore excursions by choosing to go either independently or hiring a guide once disembarked on the island. Yet ship-approved tours function similarly to “guaranteed” shopping maps in the ways cruise ship tourists are dissuaded from interacting directly with locals.

Ship-approved shore excursions also mimic the way all-inclusive resorts engineer a packaged experience for tourists. Tourists on ship-approved tours move through the environment with very little to no interaction with the local population. Each tour is

26 Gmelch has only devoted one chapter (Gmelch 2012:138-151), “Cruise Ship Shore Excursions,” out of two editions of Behind the Smile (2003, first edition) that directly speaks to the cruise ship industry in Jamaica.
comprised of a group of cruise ship passengers from one cruise ship with either one or more tour guides. The landscape of Cozumel for ship-approved shore excursions is just that—a singular vista as seen from a taxi cab or air-conditioned bus; snorkel or dive mask, void of intercultural exchanges. Ship-approved shore excursions are detached from reality in sociocultural ways as well as economically. The majority of each tour’s profits, as much as 70%, go directly to the cruise ship industry, not to the local tour operators (Julia, interview, March 2013). One local tour operator who worked a popular tour with Carnival said about the potential of acquiring a contract to establish a tour with a cruise ship:

To tell you what I think and what will happen likely will send you in a spin. From my experience when the dust settles you will be lucky to make about 15-18 [USD] per person. The cruise lines will never pay that much and transportation with the ships is done through the racket union. There alone is a big chunk of the costs…If you’re making 80 [USD] per person now I wouldn't change a thing your never see numbers like that. The cruise industry is not what it used to be some tour are lucky to make 3-5 per person, they are relentless and if you complain they just go to the next guy (personal email correspondence, 13 March 2013).

Overall, ship-approved shore excursions symbolize a sanitized and homogenized construction of local history, culture or daily life. Moreover, these excursions do not benefit the local economy. Therefore, it is difficult for autonomous, independently owned and operated businesses, operating separately from the cruise ship industry, to survive.

Sometimes a cruise line will offer an onboard presentation, often taking place in the grandeur of the multilevel stage area, to educate tourists interested in listening to what the cruise line says are the best options for what to see, what to purchase, and where to go when they disembark in a port-of-call community. During a cruise to Cozumel, such
options include shore excursions, or tours that are run in conjunction with each cruise line. For example, a popular tour that is offered on Cozumel is called Salsa y Salsa. The tour boasts an educational and fun experience as tourists learn how to prepare (and eat) fresh salsa and learn how to salsa dance. Although this tour is locally operated in Cozumel, the same tour is also available in Mexico’s western coast port-of-call communities, Mazatlán and Los Cabos. After multiple attempts to interview the staff and other tourists and to participate in the tour, I was told that it is only open to cruise ship tourists. No one other than cruise ship tourists can even book this tour. After asking other tour guides whether it was commonplace for a tour to be private (for cruise ship tourists only), the contractual obligation between cruise line and specific tour company was often discussed. This process entails a commission from every tour to be paid directly to the cruise line or a tour broker acting as an intermediary (field notes 2013). One informant said the commission would be around 30%, as the intermediary “wanted to take a smaller commission” since most of the daily work would be done by the tour operator.

Taxes, operating costs, and insurance all factor into how much the local tour operator actually gets paid. A tour operator noted from her experience with the industry:

When the dust settles you will be lucky to make about 15-18 [USD] per person…If your [sic] making 80 [USD] per person now I wouldn't change a thing, your [sic] never see numbers like that. The cruise industry is not what it used to be…they are relentless and if you complain they just go to the next guy.

The cruise ship industry works in “relentless” pursuit to extricate local tour operations in port-of-call communities for their profit. Aside from Salsa y Salsa, other tours offered through the cruise lines are four-wheeling in the jungle, a zip line tour, or a combined snorkeling and shopping excursion. There is also a “booze cruise” on a reconditioned
boat made to simulate a pirate ship. These cruise ship approved tours are just another example of how cruise ship tourists’ experience on the island is manufactured by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry and how the industry manipulates the local landscape to keep the most money generated from cruise ship tourists in their hands.

There are also maps delivered to each stateroom before disembarkation that illustrate the stores and restaurants listed as the safest options on the island and the only ship-guaranteed suggestions. This “official shopping map” of each port is controlled by the cruise ship industry, leaving local businesses to negotiate with international rules, regulation, and expectation for unwavering profit (Figure 40). A Royal Caribbean map of Cozumel warns in bold, uppercase font, “Only the stores listed on this map are guaranteed by the cruise line.” These markers and suggestions identify what type and which space for leisure is acceptable, recommended, and safe for cruise ship tourists while ashore.

The spatiality of front/back stages, as a completely engineered façade for cruise ship tourists, is facilitated through cruise ship tourists using this map when they disembark in Cozumel. The experience of cruise ship tourists is structured through this map as its language signifies every other space beyond the map is not guaranteed by the cruise ship line and is therefore considered untrustworthy and unsafe for cruise ship tourists to patron. Spaces outside or beyond this map are not for tourists to consume. The rest of San Miguel, other than the one block lining the Caribbean Sea, is not printed. Cruise ship tourists have no concept how big San Miguel is, where the cruise ship pier their ship is docked is located in relation to the rest of the island, or the island’s other attractions including the Isla de la Pasión and Punta Sur conservation areas, the islands
two museums, or that there is an entire coastline of beach on the island’s east side (deemed by locals as “The Other Side”). This map symbolically limits cruise ship tourists’ choice in their time spent onshore though listing 41 of the islands innumerable other stores, restaurants, bars, and tours.
Figure 40. Royal Caribbean Map of Cozumel, "Only the Stores Listed on this Map are Guaranteed by the Cruise Line"
This display of “guaranteed” or “approved” spaces for cruise ship tourists to consume, as wielded by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, produce an engineered experience for cruise ship tourists while they are disembarked in local port-of-call communities. One tourist notes, “The coastline [Cozumel’s east coast of San Miguel] is dotted with hotels and resorts. At each pier has a dedicated shopping area. These guys have the process of extracting tourist dollars down cold” (interview, 16 November 2012, see Figure 41).

Figure 41. Duty-Free Pier before Entering Puerta Maya (source, George Schreyer 2012)
Cruise Ship Contact Zones

The spaces where cruise ship tourists disembark are located at the cruise ship’s piers and associated shopping centers. The three spaces where cruise ship tourists disembark in Cozumel are Punta Langosta, International Pier, and Puerta Maya. These three spaces isolate cruise ship tourists from the rest of the island on the west coast lining the Caribbean Sea (see Figure 41). “Downtown Pier,” the Pier most northeast on the map, is the pier for the ferry system of the island which transports goods and people back and forth to Playa del Carmen, Isla Mujeres, and Cancun. One block further south is Punta Langosta, not shown on the map, which docks Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. cruise ships. “Cruise Ship Pier and Car Ferry” is representative of both International Pier, Carnival Corporation & PLC’s-owned pier, and a pier about three blocks north that operates as a car ferry to mainland. The most southern “Cruise Ship Pier” listed on this map represents Puerta Maya. These cruise ship piers, owned and/or operated by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry segregate cruise ship tourists from the other beaches, archeological zones, and ecological reserves located around the island.

27 This video, posted on the Puerta Maya official website, visually locates Puerta Maya in relation to the International Pier from the ship as the tourist films while the ship approaches. Video can be accessed here, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kTSmeocMno
Figure 42. Cozumel Map of Cruise Ship Piers in Relation to the Island
These spaces isolate cruise ship tourists because such piers and associated shopping centers are marketed by U.S.-based cruise ship companies as the only safe, guaranteed, and recommended spaces on the island. Based on 93 responses from a survey I gave cruise ship passengers, most cited shopping, sitting on the beach, and snorkeling as the main activities they did while ashore in Cozumel.

An informant who identified cruising on multiple cruise ship vacations to Cozumel states, “This was our fifth trip to Cozumel. We only went downtown this time for some shopping. Then we stopped for a drink at Fat Tuesday [in Puerta Maya].” This informant was more of an experienced cruise ship passenger yet made the decision to stay in and around the cruise ship terminal/pier. One respondent named the places they visited once in port, “We did Carnival's beginner's snorkeling excursion, then took a cab into town. Stopped in at Señor Frogs for a shot glass, did some shopping at the outdoor market, then went to Margaritaville for a burger and some fun.” This passenger decided to take a tour operated by Carnival Cruise Lines, which is “guaranteed and approved” by the cruise line, then went to two of the cruise line’s “approved and guaranteed” restaurant/bars, Señor Frogs and Margaritaville. Similarly, another respondent says, “This time [disembarking in Cozumel, we] shopped and hung out at Fat Tuesday [in Puerta Maya].” Another cruise ship tourists responds, “We shopped at the pier, caught a taxi to Mr. Sanchos [beach club] and did the all-inclusive beach day with unlimited food and drink. Then back to the pier and hung out with cruise group friends in an effort to be the last one back on the ship!” Passengers noted that staying around the pier, paying for cruise ship-approved tours, and not venturing farther from ship was in their best interest. When asked why they disembarked, the overwhelming majority noted, “I wanted a place
to relax, have a few beers, and WIFI.” All of which are found steps from where every
cruise ship tourist disembarks at the pier and shopping terminals at each of the three
cruise ship piers in Cozumel.

This cruise ship “guaranteed-by-cruises lines” marketing tactic glosses the entire
island outside of these three spaces as unsafe to cruise ship tourists. As discussed in
Chapter Two, this special segmentation is intentional by U.S.-based cruise ship
companies as they want cruise ship tourists to spend money in the stores, restaurants, and
tours within their established contractual (economic) relationship. This for-profit spatial
segmentation is not unique to Cozumel, as this environment is similarly engineered
throughout port-of-call communities in the Caribbean (Wood 2000; Sheller 2003).

The model in Cozumel is scarcely different from developments in Belize where
RCCL [Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.] is the primary player. It is a model that
first surfaced in the Eastern Caribbean and was rejected by several governments.
The first to buy-in [sic] was St. Thomas, but they then broke the agreement.
Subsequently we saw efforts in Turks and Caicos, Playa del Carmen, Belize, and
Honduras (Roátan). Similar arrangements are now found in some European ports
such as Kusadasi (Klein 2013, pers. comm.).

This model is engineered for cruise ship tourists, most of whom hail from the U.S. and
Canada, to only spend money in the stores, restaurants, and tours that are approved by
each cruise line. One respondent notes, “I had been to Cozumel about ten years ago but
barely made it off the boat, just went shopping.” This passenger rational is quite specific
in the ways they chose to spend their time ashore by mostly shopping. The shops that are
located across from the cruise ship piers eagerly welcome cruise ship passengers while
each ship is docked (see Figure 43 and 44). Safety represents an issue related to which
activities respondents will partake in once ashore. For example, “I have heard Mexico
City is dangerous. Safer to stay in port areas of Cozumel. We have been there before. Felt
safe there.” Additionally, another respondent notes, “Safety concerns the last few times, so didn't leave the port area shopping.”
Figure 43. Recommended Store Advertising in Cozumel, "Welcome Cruise Ship Passengers"
Figure 44. Recommended Store Advertising in Cozumel, "Recommended Store on Your Shopping Map"
Advertising stores as “recommended” is symbolic of cruise ship passenger’s expressions of their perceived safety concerns of Mexico and Cozumel as a port-of-call. One sign states, “Cruise and Hotel Guests…Shop with Confidence” (Figure 45). This language and message, especially when coupled with the cruise industry’s “Recommended Shopping Map,” thwarts cruise ship tourists traveling away from the cruise ship piers, beyond the confines of each pier and associated shopping center. When asked “What were some of the things you heard prior to your cruise about Cozumel or Mexico? Did any of this rumor inform your decision in what activities you would partake in while in shore?” One cruise ship tourist notes, “Bad crime, [but that] did not influence my decision, I knew Carnival would not take us/the ship to somewhere that wasn't safe.”
Figure 45. Recommended Store Advertising in Cozumel, "Shop with Confidence"
One cruise ship tourist surmises the boundaries created between approved and non-approved spaces:

My first cruise to Cozumel was in 2004. I have been nine times. My last visit was March 2014. The only thing I heard was to make sure to drink bottled water while in Mexico. I only visit areas recommended by the cruise industry to stay where it is safe (interview, March 2014).

This informant is an experienced cruise ship tourist, traveling for a decade as a cruise ship passenger. Yet, they choose to visit areas “recommended by the cruise industry to stay where it is safe.” This is evidenced by how the cruise ship industry’s engineers space where cruise ship tourists disembark, tour, eat, and shop as “guaranteed,” spaces that are labeled and defined as to inspire confidence in passengers. Ultimately, such spaces reflect a façade of safety and security, playing directly into passenger’s false notions of insecurity. This is exemplified by the follow informant statement:

I would not go outside the main area [cruise ship piers and associated shopping zones] unless I was on a ship excursion [guaranteed and approved by each cruise line] in Mexico. The violence that has occurred is out of control, Americans are people they like to target. I also would never drive a vehicle in Mexico. The fact that they will put you in jail if an injury occurs to the other passengers. Also that you have to pay up front the wages they lose during their recover time. Even if you take out the extra insurance. They do not follow the same rules of the road as here in the states. It almost like they are looking for a way to take it out on the foreigners (interview, January 2014).

Structure and Regulation of Cruise Ship “Approved” Spaces for Cruise Ship Tourists

The U.S.-based cruise ship industry engineers and then replicates a façade of “guaranteed” and “approved” spaces (Figure 44). This engineering is purposeful on the part of Royal Caribbean Cruise Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC as these
corporations reap a portion of every dollar spent in spaces where cruise ship tourists disembark that are “approved” by each cruise line. In 2012, “cash flows,” or the money generated from “operating activities” both on and off board, as defined in each company’s annual report, were high: $2.4 billion for Royal Caribbean (Royal Caribbean Annual Report 2012:6) and $3 billion for Carnival (Carnival Corporation Annual Report 2012:4). The anywhere/nowhere virtuality of the cruise ship tourism destination, each port-of-call, is (re)engineered throughout the Caribbean to increase in-company profits.

Figure 46. Facade Replicated: Señor Frogs in Cozumel
Locally owned and operated businesses must compete with non-locally owned or operated businesses for tourist dollars. For example, Jimmy Buffet’s restaurant chain, Margaritaville, has the following locations: Cancun and Cozumel, Mexico; Falmouth, Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, and Negril, Jamaica; Grand Turk, Turks and Caicos Islands; and Grand Cayman, Caymen Islands. Five out of the six Margaritaville locations in Mexico and the Caribbean are cruise ship port-of-call communities. The entire
corporation operates in over eighteen cities across the world, from three locations in Australia to a location in Niagara Falls. This chain is replicated throughout the Mexico and Caribbean port-of-call communities. In a response typical by cruise ship tourists, one informant says, “We (my husband and another couple) walked around the shops [on the pier], then walked to Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville and had a drink and some fun [see Figure 46]. Then we walked back and boarded the ship.” The proximity of this restaurant’s location to each of the three cruise ship piers along with it being advertised as a “guaranteed” on the cruise ship industry’s “Approved Shopping Map” makes it a common place for cruise ship tourists to go to. All the while, this globalized and transnational chain is in direct competition with locally-owned and operated restaurants around San Miguel.
A climate of competition is palpable among storeowners and employees at each store and restaurant that attracts cruise ship tourists. Inside and across the street from Puerta Maya, International Pier, and Punta Langosta, independently owned and operated businesses are in direct competition with transnational corporations and smaller businesses in contact with the U.S.-based cruise ship industry. This competition manifests enough for cruise ship tourists to comment about the “offensive” of “pushy” employees. “I had a good experience but the shop people were way to pushy,” another respondents notes, “There is great beach areas to play in if you are looking for a good time. In general, the folks are friendly, wanting to please you since this is their bread and butter.
feed their families. The area is not as poor as others. But they still push to sell their product.” One informant confided, “The merchants are too pushy and at times offensive.” While other cruise ship tourists like the performance of “haggling” for a better price, “We always have fun ‘making deals’ with the locals. It’s a good clean area.”

Figure 49. Making Deals with Locals in Cozumel

Such contentious spaces between approved and non-approved businesses characterize Mary Louise Pratt’s (1992) “contact zones.” A “contact zone” is defined as the “space of colonial encounters, the space in which people geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (Pratt 1992:6). Pratt’s use of “contact zones” is used to analyze the narrative, texts, and
discourses that is produced in this zone as the ideological means of negotiating power imbalances. In the context of engineering facades in cruise ship port of call communities, I am using this concept by focusing on conflict and power that manifest in such contact zones.

Geographic and historical separation is evident when comparing a port-of-call community to the cruise ship industry; cruise ship tourist to local; local business to transnational business. Conditions of conflict are established by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry exercising its legal authority (its authoritative power) in its acquisition and maintenance of space. Coercion, inequality, and conflict arise physically and metaphorically in cruise ship contact zones. Pratt deconstructs her usage of the term “contact,” which is valuable in understanding the ways in which industry relates to each port-of-call:

By using the term ‘contact’ I aim to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. A ‘contact’ perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. [It assess] copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power (Pratt 1992:7).

Contact zones represent a fluid relationship in terms of societal and cultural interaction. Yet, in the context of cruise ship port-of-calls as symbolic of a contact zone, such interactions are rigid due to the fact they are completely engineered by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry. Power inequalities are present in cruise ship contact zones as this is based on social status (cruise ship tourists) and economic power (cruise ship tourists and businesses in contract with the U.S.-based cruise ship industry).
Development of Mass Tourism to the Yucatán Peninsula and the Advent of Cruise Ship Port-of-Call Communities as a Façade

The front/back, staging, and virtuality as the way in which the U.S.-based cruise ship industry structures the experience of cruise ship tourists as they disembark is historically rooted in the development of mass tourism. The cruise ship industry’s creation of this stratum has been a historical progression over time. “The process of the industry taking over control of ports (infrastructure and intimidation/control of local government) has been slow and progressive” (Ross Klein, pers. comm.). In the context of Cozumel, the development of Mexico’s Riviera Maya is relevant when thinking about how international corporations hold such a powerful economic stake in Cozumel as a port-of-call and the region of the Riviera Maya as an international tourist destination.

The Mexican government selected the state of Quintana Roo in 1968 as the site for the nation's first master-planned resort or “Tourist Integral Center” though computerized research data citing the region the primer spot in the country for international tourism development (Torres 2002; Clancy 2001; see Figure 48). It is extremely significant that Cancun was initiated precisely as a Mexican national strategy of tourism development that sought to avoid the problems of Caribbean tourism development. These problems followed the modernization development theory of trickle down that had been put into place since the closing of Cuba in 1961. This process leads to the initiation of Caribbean tourism on the mass scale (Pattullo 2005; Ward 2008).
In forty years, Cancun has shifted from essentially a privately owned, rural space into a completely urbanized zone. “Arrivals in Mexico tripled between 1970 and 1991, while foreign exchange earnings from tourism soared to more than nine fold, from 415 million to 3.8 billion dollars” (Clancy 2001:130).

![Advent of Mass Tourism to Cancun](image)

**Figure 50. Graph Depicting the Advent of Mass Tourism to Cancun**

Moreover, this dramatic development was initiated and has steadily continued for the purposes of fulfilling tourist desires, governmental aspirations for modernization, and considerable revenue for national and international investors. “As tourism in the region grew to a more than billion-dollar industry, Quintana Roo’s population also rose dramatically. Between 1970 and 2000, population levels rose from about 200,000 to over 800,000” (Torres and Momsen 2005:45). Cancun’s population swelled to do demand of
building the zone’s infrastructure including hotels, roads, restaurants, sewer, and electricity (Castellanos 2010). Labor migration from towns and villages across the Yucatán Peninsula to support Cancun’s growth and development still continues today (ReCruz 1996, Taylor 2012)

International tourism to Cozumel began after WWII and with the decline of the local government to continue to support the region’s chicle industry in terms of its purchase, transportation, storage, and export (Santander and Ramos-Díaz 2011:21). Further, the Cuban Revolution in 1959 solidified Cozumel as a new “sun and beach destination” in an easily accessible location close to the east coast of the United States (Santander and Ramos-Díaz 2011:21). The island’s infrastructure was built to accommodate the arrival and demands of international tourists to enjoy a “sun and sand” vacation. In the decade of the 1960s, eleven new hotels were built that offered 405 rooms and 449 jobs (Santander and Ramos-Díaz 2011:21). In the decade of the 1970s, with the induction of Quintana Roo into statehood from a former territory (1974) and the creation of Cancun as an international tourist destination (see Figure 48), the number of new hotels built in Cozumel reached 26, increasing the availability of new rooms [available to travelers] and jobs to 1051 and 808, respectively” (Santander and Ramos-Díaz 2011:21). The island's airport was converted from a former military base for the U.S. and Mexican governments to support commercial international flights. Furthermore, this decade initiated the road that hugs the coast around the majority of the island was paved (Avenida Rafael Melgar), basic public services such as potable water and electricity were established, and in general, a "feeling of optimism" for the future began (Valdes 2008:126).
Coinciding at the same time as land-based resort and hotel development grew in Cancun and Cozumel, 1968 marked the arrival of the first Caribbean cruise ship to Cozumel, the SS Ariadne. At that time, this ship was newly refitted into a luxury liner under the Eastern Cruise Lines fleet and was used on Caribbean cruises. Eastern Cruise Lines would later be rebranded and eventually acquired by Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. in 1972. Postcards of the ship read, “S/S Ariadne: 7-Day Cruising Holiday sailing from Miami every Saturday to Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands,” “The only luxury ship for Caribbean Cruises from downtown Miami,” and “S/S Ariadne: Year-round cruises from Port Everglades, Fort Lauderdale to Nassau and Freeport” (Ian Boyle/Simplon Postcards 2008). Other cruise lines began to visit the island in subsequent years (e.g. SS Bolero in 1974 included Cozumel in its Caribbean itinerary and held 900 passengers). In order to compete with Cancun and the Riviera Maya’s all-inclusive resorts and hotels, Cozumel built three cruise ship piers, with each pier to accommodate a minimum of two ships (i.e. berths) at each pier. This construction began in 1980, 1996, and 1998 (International Pier, Punta Langosta, and Puerta Maya, respectively). The construction of these three piers is representative of how the island was rebranded from an international stay-over hotel and resort destination to a cruise ship tourist destination (Santander and Ramos-Díaz 2011:26). This strategic rebranding was due to the “impossibility of competition with Cancun and the Riviera Maya” (Santander and Ramos-Díaz 2011:26).
Figure 51. Postcards of the SS Ariadne, the First Cruise Ship to Cozumel. Arriving in the Port of Miami (above) and at sea (below) (source, The State Archives of Florida)
The U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry Engineering Spatiality of Anywhere-ness

The U.S.-based cruise ship industry engineers a façade for cruise ship tourists to enjoy while maintaining their share of profits through “guaranteed” and “approved” dining, retail, and tour businesses. This corporate structure is engineered on land in cruise ship port-of-call communities as exemplified by the historical progression of Cozumel as a cruise ship tourist destination. Cozumel was rebranded to a destination of cruise ship tourism due to competition with Cancun and other land-based resorts in the Riviera Maya. The creation of a spatiality of anywhere-ness is not only evidenced with current informant interview responses, the semiotics of cruise ship tourism brochures, maps, and signs in the spaces where cruise ship tourists disembark, or historical trajectories of the region, but also with a court case.

In an affidavit submitted in August 2011, there is evidence that a division of Carnival Corporation & PLC contracted a private firm (Security Alliance, LLC) to undertake an investigation. Carnival selected Security Alliance for the project of “investigating retail shops throughout all Defendant [Carnival]’s port of call in the Caribbean to attempt to calculate square footage, number of employees, types of merchandise sold and displayed used by those retail establishments” (Security Alliance, LLC v. Carnival Ports, Inc., 11-21318 CA 25 [2011]). This “strictly confidential” (Exhibit A, Security Alliance, LLC v. Carnival Ports, Inc., 11-21318 CA 25 [2011]). This project was called the “Caribbean Special Project” as directed by Giora Israel, Carnival’s Senior Vice President of Port and Destination Development, under the division of “Carnival Ports, Inc.” In an interview with Cozumel’s Radio Coral TV in
2011, Giora Israel describes Cozumel as the “number one” port-of-call. He pontificates that maybe in “two or three years” building another cruise ship pier will be justified, but when the video was uploaded in 2011, he noted that building another pier was not necessary as the number of passengers arriving on each ship can increase according to the ship’s berth. That is, the larger the cruise ships (e.g. Royal Caribbean’s Allure of the Seas at 225,282-tons and 5,4000 passengers, the world’s largest cruise ship), the increased likelihood and number of cruise ship tourists disembarking in port. Israel also notes that protecting the environment is “in everybody’s interest: the people of Cozumel, the cruise line, and passenger to work together to make Cozumel cleaner and nicer. We want to work together…to make Cozumel cleaner.” He noted that he is in talks with Cozumel’s Mayor, Aurelio Joaquín González and the presidente municipal, Juan Carlos González Hernández, in working through such plans (RadioCoralTV 2011).

The court case states that on or about June 11, 2003, Security Alliance and the Defendant entered a contract whereby in exchange for payment, Security Alliance would provide certain services for the Defendant as specifically set forth in the Contract:

An in-depth vulnerability and risk assessment of the port located in Puerta Maya in the state of Quintana Roo, Mexico, including an analysis of security vulnerabilities and weaknesses; and comprehensive recommendations on improving security practices...[and] security procedures and programs and a risk assessment to identify Carnival’s security vulnerabilities and weaknesses” (Security Alliance, LLC v. Carnival Ports, Inc., 11-21318 CA 25 [2011]).

In addition to conducting a security assessment to ensure Carnival’s investment in building Puerta Maya cruise ship pier was not to be breached by act of “insecurity,” the contract also reveals that Carnival contracted Security Alliance to investigate the Mayor of Quintana Roo, “that was (according to the Defendant) trying to prevent Defendant
from building a home port” to thwart immigration policy of entering and leaving Mexico. Additionally, there was also an investigation into the General Manager and Port Director of Cozumel for “providing prostitutes and other favors for some of the cruise ship captains” and using “his position to engage in unscrupulous and unethical acts during his tenure.” These claims combine to implicate Carnival Corporation & PLC with the responsibility of assigning the “Caribbean Special Project” to Security Alliance to undertake. The project was an investigation of “retail shops throughout all Defendant’s ports of call in the Caribbean to attempt to calculate square footage, number of employees, types of merchandise sold, and displays used by those retail establishments” (author emphasis added, Security Alliance, LLC v. Carnival Ports, Inc., 11-21318 CA 25 [2011]). A breach of contract occurred as Security Alliance was never paid $31,400 “together with interest, costs including attorneys’ fees pursuant to the parties’ Contract, and such other relief deemed just and proper.” These “shop assessments,” completed at each port-of-call, as stated in an itemized expense report produced by Security Alliance, are proof that Carnival Corporation & PLC engages acts of power politics with local port-of-call communities.

This contractual agreement affirms that port-of-call communities are intentionally manipulated by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry through investigations such as the “Caribbean Special Project.” Private investigations are taking place and involve an intricate relationship between the cruise ship companies with private contractors that work to engineer a façade of anywhere-ness in spaces cruise ship tourism like the piers and associated shopping centers at port-of-call communities. This court case proves that the Caribbean port-of-call communities are being investigated for business purposes.
related to cruise ship tourism (i.e. assessing and describing current spaces of sale including vendors, goods sold, and its location in relation to cruise ship tourism). Moreover, the safety and security of the cruise ship industry’s investment was also evaluated in terms of the stability provided to private (multinational) business, cruise ship tourism, and we can also infer, the security of cruise ship tourists when they arrive at each port-of-call.

In this example, Puerta Maya was being investigated to assess the environment’s current physical condition and value to assess its potential sale. This affirms that U.S.-based cruise ship industry employs a complex process in establishing its (the industry’s) disembarkation upon port-of-call communities. What happens if a potential port-of-call community fails at impressing the cruise ship industry in terms of perceivable threat to security or market nuances of sale? The U.S.-based cruise ship industry does not establish the region as a port-of-call. “The few locations where there has been opposition to the cruise industry (e.g., the planned partnership with Xcaret in the early 2000s) have allowed the industry to demonstrate how they deal with those who don’t concede all (they pull out)” (Klein 2013, pers. comm.). The tenuous relationship between the port-of-call communities and the U.S.-based cruise ship industry is historically rooted in unequal distribution of wealth, autonomy, and power (see Chapter Three). A host of conflicts arises when analyzing this relationship: how does a community preserve its autonomy from the industry as a port-of-call community? While this question is not easily answered, the cruise ship industry must acknowledge local participation in terms of equal distribution of economic benefits with the port-of-call community. Multinational businesses located throughout multiple port-of-call communities (e.g. Diamonds
International) must also be held accountable, like the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, for their share of equal distribution of profits from cruise ship tourism.

**Conclusions: The Cruise Ship Industry and the Staging of Mass Tourism**

Mass tourism, including cruise ship tourism, aptly reflects the cyclicality of money, power, and people in manufactured spaces. Yet, the production of space and tourism contact zones in such zones is not as schizophrenic, fluid, or transcending as Appadurai (1996) suggests. Rather, the boundary-laden physical environment infiltrates identity production and maintenance. Representations of place, culture, and citizenship are skewed and marketed in controlled ways. The process of theme parking created in modern resort models of the Riviera Maya is a prime example of the purposeful control over space and identity as postmodern landscapes. “Postmodern landscapes become ‘economic’ rather than ‘vernacular,’” and whole sections of cities become detached from local culture and society and recreated through simulation and theming” (Wood 2000:358). Front/back staging is purposefully engineered by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry to present a façade of enjoyment for cruise ship tourist consumption. The hyper-reality and commodification of this resort paradise did not organically grow. Rather, the creation of a cruise ship mass tourism zone, like Cozumel, is the product of multinational corporations (e.g. Carnival Corporation & PLC or Margaritaville) working in tandem with national governments (e.g. rebranding of Cozumel into a cruise ship
destination in the 1990s) to build and sustain a continual flow of tourism based on fragmentation from reality.

Graburn (2000) makes the important point that all production, no matter how commercial, is contained within a sociopolitical context that must be attended to by scholars. Working within established binaries and citing the way simulacra are sold as authentic, historical, or profane symbols of indigeneity expands on how the process of the tourist gaze is informed through the various actors involved. Structural power associated with the state-sponsored tourism projects, multinational influences on cultural capital, continued expansion of tourism development, and ways in which space is engineered for cruise ship consumption are all examples of the how cruise ship tourism is engineered. Cruise ship mass tourism sites where tourists’ effects on local populations in the realm of the everyday construct processual structures of interaction; yet daily life ultimately upholds the boundaries between foreign and local (Roseberry 1994). In a hyper-controlled display of multinational businesses, cruise ship mass tourism contact zone do not blend into fluid boundaries between national and international spaces for shopping, restaurants, and hotels. In mass tourism, the landscape may be varied and representative of various actors; social relations and sheer economics remain intentionally structurally segmented between host and guest; local and globally-owned or operated business. This contradicts the blurred boundaries of globalized, international, and transnational travel between foreign and local.

Transnationality is evident in the multinational businesses in each mall-like cruise ship terminal in Cozumel or in popular stay-over tourist destinations such as Cancun, Playa del Carmen, or Tulum with diverse clientele and workforces present throughout
Mexico. Yet the fluidity of deterritorialized spaces, the transnational nature of cruise ship travel, and the relationship between land and sea-based mass tourism is not as fluid or as free from regulation as earlier theorized (Appadurai 1996; Wood 2000, 2004). As previously discussed, the U.S.-based cruise ship industry tactfully evades or uses law, governance, and sanitized spaces of international business to their advantage in garnering the most tourism revenues. Above all, Caribbean port-of-call communities are mass produced themselves, likened to individual commodities to provide profits to the U.S.-based cruise ship industry. The cruise ship industry is creating an idealized culture for mass tourism consumption, not simply catering to a series of “multiple spatially dislocated audiences” (Appadurai 1996:44). This process is engineered by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry and is purposefully replicated in each port-of-call. Cruise ship tourists also easily enjoy this façade of “guaranteed” space:

We know (and had heard) that the biggest industry on Cozumel is tourism and that the shop owners will try earnestly to get tourists to buy their product. We went ashore anyway and found this to be true. It was uncomfortable to keep warding off their advances. That’s why we left to walk down the shoreline for a while. On the way, we saw signs for Margaritaville and thought that would be a good destination for us and a perfect amount of walking/exercise for us. I would have taken a bus tour of the island and/or to the ruins, but there weren’t any listed that suited all of us. (I visited the Mayan Jade Museum in Costa Maya (by myself) and found that interesting. I would have enjoyed that in Cozumel.) People raved about Cozumel to us before we went, but our experience was not that exciting (interview, January 9, 2012)

According to this cruise ship tourist, the world outside of the cruise ship tourist-approved spaces was “uncomfortable.” The semiotics when seeing the signs for Margaritaville offered the security they needed as well as a location close to the pier, which was the “perfect amount” of exercise, presumably to and from the ship. Whether this informant had an exciting experience or not while in Cozumel is not the aim of the U.S.-based
cruise ship industry. The staging of a facade worked in the favor of the industry. As such, the only thing fluid and disjunctive about mass tourism port-of-call communities in the Caribbean is the water on which the cruise ships sail.
Chapter V. Representation and Cultural Commodification Onboard Cruise Ships and in a Port-of-Call Community

As a cruise ship tourist on board, one is shielded by a façade constructed to shield tourists from the realities of waste (human or otherwise). On land, at a port-of-call community, this engineered façade is represented in the retail, dining, and tour operations that are “approved and guaranteed” by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry. On board one of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. or Carnival Corporation & PLC’s cruise ships, in particular, another type of façade is presented to cruise ship tourists. This façade is delicate and can easily be destroyed in the wake of power failure, the arrest or disappearance of a passenger, an illness on board such as H1N1, or more commonly the food borne illness, Norovirus or Norwalk virus. Cruise lines historically are not required to document crimes committed on board. This has led to an absence of any reliable source of crime statistics (Cruise, Inc. 2009). The façade engineered onboard cruise ships is defined as safety that shields cruise ship tourists from the complexities of daily life including illegal activity.

This façade also translates to the behaviors of the cruise ship tourists once they disembark at port-of-call communities, as evidenced in Cozumel. On board, a towering pyramid of freshly laundered white towels is folded neatly in each public bathroom to dry tourists’ hands. Buffet trays are generously stacked, and sometimes overflowing, with many types of prepared food. Staterooms are meticulously cleaned daily: clean sheets, towels, and vacuumed floors are part of the attendants’ routine duties. Even the ocean
itself is sanitized for cruise ship tourists as the ship’s stabilizers purposefully buffer the waves from rocking the ship. Thanks to this technology, seasickness due to the ocean’s waves is no longer common, especially in the calm waters of the Caribbean Sea. These onboard amenities are consciously constructed by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry and create a bubble between the “real world” and cruise ship tourists to ensure that their vacation is nothing less than safe and clean—and therefore controlled and staged.

_Carnival Triumph Disaster Exposes How Industry Stages Tourism_

The cruise ship industry, specifically Carnival Corporation & PLC, has been a magnet for recent media attention. An onboard fire led to a loss of electricity on Carnival’s ship, Carnival _Triumph_ leaving 3,143 passengers and a crew of 1,086 afloat for three days in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico. What was meant to be a four-day cruise, leaving Galveston, Texas on February 7, 2013 to Cozumel, Mexico, ended up being an ordeal of logistics, safety, and sanitation for the ship, which did not dock until the late evening of Valentine’s Day, February 14th, in Mobile, Alabama.

The plethora of mainstream media reports, including round-the-clock CNN coverage, along with Twitter, Facebook and Instagram updates from tourists aboard, documented the ship’s rancid conditions while it slowly inched toward land. Images taken by passengers and posted on social media sites detail an impromptu tent city that took shape on the main pool deck so tourists could sleep outside, and not in their staterooms, which became stifling without air conditioning. Tourists took to sleeping in hallways, in front of elevators or on the casino floor, and mattresses lined the outdoor decks. Sanitary food storage became impossible as the refrigerators ceased to function,
while toilets could no longer flush. The lines for food lasted hours. Human waste, placed in ship-issued, red biohazard plastic bags, had to be handled and disposed of by the crew. The pictures and reports that are coming to light after the ship finally docked tell the story of a “floating toilet, a floating Petri dish, a floating hell” (Reuters 2013). The rumor of large-scale litigation against Carnival is already swarming, since this is yet another blow to Carnival’s image as provider of “The Fun Ships,” and moreover to the cruise ship industry as a whole, due to continual mishaps concerning passenger safety and the mechanical stability of these popular mega-ships.

Figure 52. "Tent City," Carnival Triumph's Main Deck, February 13, 2013 (source, CruiseCritic.com)
In Cozumel, cruises ship and other tourists to the island rarely comment on the environmental implications of vacationing on such a massive ship, capable of deploying tons of waste. Cruise ship tourists’ stories about life on board are centered on debauchery, escape, and excess: gambling, drinking, and an overall atmosphere of partying. One cruise ship tourists notes, “[We] took a taxi to Chankanaab [park]. Went snorkeling, ate lunch, hung at the beach, sea lion show, saw the dolphins, tequila tasting…We lounged, swam, and drank and ate!” Another cruise ship tourists adds, “I had a few beers and enjoyed the best ceviche I have ever had at Puerta Maya.” Most respondents to a survey I conducted of 93 cruise ship tourists noted their time on the island was spend shopping, going to a beach club for swimming, drinks, and lounging, or drinking either at Carlos n’ Charlies, Margaritaville or Puerta Maya’s Three Amigos Cantina or Fat Tuesday, or as part of an Island Bar Hop tour (Cozumel Bar Hop). This party sentiment is expressed in the following, “[We] shopped at the pier, caught a taxi to Mr. Sanchos and did the all-inclusive beach day with unlimited food and drink. Then back to the pier and hung out with cruise group friends in an effort to be the last one back on the ship!” (interview, December 2012). Cruise ship tourists prefer unlimited lounging, swimming, shopping, eating, and drinking, while they are disembarked in Cozumel. Environmental effects of their cruise ship they disembark for a few hours in land (Figure 51) all in an effort to be the last cruise ship passenger back onboard before the ship has to set sail.

When the façade does breakdown in the case of an onboard fire, ship-wide illness, or power loss, as in the case of the Carnival Triumph, then the U.S.-based cruise ship industry’s representation of a pristine world onboard quickly cracks. An engineered
onboard experience is defined by leisure and represented in the form of all-you-can-eat buffets, theme park-like attractions (e.g. waterslides and mini-golf), and tourists’ spending money on ship’s credit card system\textsuperscript{28} (i.e. SeaPass cards). The veil between engineered onboard experiences, what is represented as staged tourism, is quickly lifted when a “disaster,” deemed by popular media reports, happens onboard.

\textsuperscript{28} Most cruise ships operate on a "cashless" system, meaning your boarding card, (also known as a SeaPass card), will be used as a charge card to make all onboard purchases. This is significant because tourists are more likely to lose track of how much money they spend while onboard for goods and services, including alcohol, soft drinks, salon services, gift shop souvenirs, perfume, handbags, etc., as cash is not accepted.
Cultural Commodification in the Context of Tourists and Expatriates in Cozumel

Island life is symbolic of a valuable commodity to tourists and expatriates in Cozumel. The more frequent tourists vacation to the island, the length of their stay, and the location of their hotel, resort, second home are enviable by other tourists. Tourists
and expatriates increase their social status through the commodification in social brokering of these facts. Cruise ship tourists are usually labeled by expatriates and other island tourists as the bottom of such a social hierarchy due to the short time each cruise ship is docked in port. For example, one informant was part of family of three women composed of a mother and her two adult daughters in their 40s that were annual tourists in Cozumel. Such tourists are not associated with cruise ship tourism rather choosing to fly to the island and vacation at one of the island hotels or resorts for two or more nights. This family complained that cruise ship tourists interrupted their two-week long vacation at El Cid resort. The resort’s close proximity, literally beside, International Pier makes it virtually impossible for each type of tourist not to interact on a daily basis (or at least while there is a cruise ship docked at International Pier). One woman describes cruise ship tourists’ coming to their resort, “They infiltrate our lobby with a day pass to enjoy the food, comfort, security, and protection of our hotel’s amenities” (interview, December 2011). The three women were not impressed about how often this happened when they were “just trying to enjoy their vacation.” Cruise ship tourists’ “infiltration” to the resort was characterized by debauchery—a hostile competition for belonging between the stay-over tourists and cruise ship tourists on the grounds of the resort.

Another evening after the cruise ships departed the island at their usual time around 6:00 p.m., a party for a newly certified dive instructor at a local outdoor bar was raging in full swing. Three tables were put together to form one large one and people squeezed to fit for their place at the table. Alcohol was flowing all sides of the table. There were no cruise ship tourists in sight, just a mix of expatriates and locals, enjoying food and drink. Suddenly, the fun-loving atmosphere stopped in its tracks. One of the
dive instructors’ silenced the crowd to announce an important ritual, a rite of passage for their newest coworker, was about to begin. A chair was placed in the middle of the space and the newly certified dive instructor took a seat. Soon after, most of his colleagues were taking turns pouring rum, filling the “newbie’s” snorkel mask with rum while it was still on his face. Immediately, the scene screeched to a halt as a gringa in her late 50s approached the group of jovial partygoers. Looking weatherworn and inebriated, the woman screamed to the crowd of revilers that they are “imposters” on “her island” as she has lived there for more years than they were alive. A game show-like competition ensued among the dive instructors, local bystanders, expatriates, and tourists who heard the woman’s shots (which was the entire restaurant/bar). The prize was to the sole person who had been living on the island for the longest time.

Among ex-pats and tourists, in particular, this competition is normative. In regards to the game that night, respect from other expatriates and tourists is paid to those who have more years and therefore experience with the island—yet consideration is convoluted to the Mexican population of the island. The ex-pat community in Cozumel is comprised of transplants from the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Of the twenty expatriates I met, they are mostly retired and have relocated to Cozumel permanently. A few own and operate businesses on the island or have businesses on the Internet. They come to call Cozumel home for various reasons ranging from distain in raising their children in the U.S., more business opportunities on the island, to as simple as the warm weather. These expatriates are gatekeepers of information specific to the island. This information they hold is valuable for newly minted expatriates (new to the island) or tourists staying
in resorts or homes of their own that they encounter. Notably left out of this important exchange of information are cruise ship tourists.

The expatriate community on Cozumel is characterized by an insular community that operates through a private community on Facebook, in the businesses that each operate (e.g. coffee shop or yoga studios), and via text message. Such vital information they gate keep refers to common island practices that a longer-term grino/a needs to know in order to stay on the island for a stay on the island longer than a month. They know how to navigate the intricate immigration laws, where the best comida rápida restaurants are located, and how to get the “locals-only” savings card to use for discounts at retail and dining places around the island. The ex-pat community in Cozumel, despite its competition with cruise ship tourists themselves, represents a cruise ship tourist mentality when it comes to enjoying only that which is safe and familiar. Popular civic festivities like the first night of the community Christmas celebration called Posada, celebrated on December 12th with Día de la Virgen de Guadalupe, is one of the most important dates in the Mexican calendar. Yet it is unknown to most of the ex-pats with whom I spoke just the day before the celebration in 2011, although church bells, sermons, and singing could be heard pouring out of Corpus Christi Church.

Cozumel’s expatriate population is concerned with preserving the pristine quality of the water, land, and animals of the island—something most cruise ship tourists do not have time to process in their short time while touring Cozumel. The Cozumel Humane Society and Cozumel Turtles (Tortuga Marina 2013), marine sea turtle salvation program, are popular organizations upheld with the support of expatriates.
At one local bar, where many locals (including ex-pats and Mexican nationals) and tourists mix on regular basis, two young bartenders in their twenties, from central Mexico, spoke of the way the reef used to be prior to the construction of Punta Langosta, one of the three cruise ship piers on the island. “Much of it was destroyed when they built the pier and now with all of the cruise ship traffic [heading from North to South], many corals and reef systems are completely destroyed in order to make room for that deep of [a] channel” (interview, January 2012). We discussed the island’s delicate environmental state as well as each of their journeys from their homes on Mexico’s mainland to Cozumel in order to find better paying jobs in tourism on the Riviera Maya.

At the same time our personal discussion was unfolding, a couple in their early to mid-40s from one of the cruise ships drank at least five shots of tequila each, shouted obscenities, and became an increasingly sloppy pair of patrons. The juxtaposition between concerned local and oblivious cruise ship tourist is stark when it comes to concern over the environmental impacts of cruise ship tourism on the island.

Contestation and Façade of Paradise: Juxtaposing Cruise Ship Tourists and Expatriates

This recent incident against Carnival Triumph does speak to larger issues concerning the entire industry, due in part to the rapid growth of cruise ship tourism and sustained popularity (see Chapter 3). This story proves indicative of the state of the industry as a whole. The fiasco exposes the industry’s tenuous grip on its own manufactured illusion of paradise, constructed for tourist consumption. Once a few toilets overflow, the whole illusion of serenity and cleanliness that the cruise ship industry upholds is quickly broken. Cruise ship tourists take to social media in an outcry against
rancid conditions, their vacation ruined. The cruise ship industry, especially with cruise ships sailing itineraries in the warm waters in and around the Caribbean\textsuperscript{29}, have historically created an assurance among cruise ship tourists that their vacation is expected to remain pristine. “The norm is warm: semitropical seas are picturesque, weather is predictably good, and passengers can book with the assurance that their vessel’s keel will remain relatively even” (Macmillan 1985:190). This norm of passenger expectation was established after World War II, with the invention of mass-transit aircraft and air conditioning, both revolutionizing comfort while traveling. The “patterns of shipboard life” now (unbeknownst to tourists) combat the heat and humidity of a tropical vacation as the ship’s space has been molded to allow for ample deck space for swimming and sunbathing while indoor temperatures hover around cool climate (Macmillan 1985:192).

The New York Times aptly comments on the aforementioned cruise ship industry’s public relations disaster: “The problems of the Triumph fit into a larger picture, too, one painted by a booming cruise industry that increasingly is priced for the middle class but that critics say has become too large too fast and needs stronger, more consistent oversight” (Brown et al. 2013). More imperative than a call for bureaucratic “consistent oversight,” however, are the broader implications of this self-serving facade and its impact on local port-of-call communities. The industry has successfully incorporated ideals of all-inclusivity, hedonism and lawlessness into everyday life on board— untenable ideals that permeate both the cruise ship industry and port-of-call communities. The cruise ship industry has constructed these piers to generate an

\textsuperscript{29} For this chapter, I will use the generalization of the term “Caribbean,” meaning, as the U.S.-based cruise ship industry does, the entire region including Spanish, French, and Dutch-speaking Caribbean islands as well as the Maya Riviera, or eastern coastline of Mexico in the state of Quintana Roo.
immediate guest-host dynamic, yet in an ultimately sanitized and controlled way. Such homogenization of experience is deliberate to create safe and recognizable expressions of paradise. The cruise ship industry has instilled the idea that familiar brands ensure a safe experience, which means no hassling from locals, threats of insecurity, or illness while ashore. These terminals also provide an environment of reckless abandon for cruise ship tourists, sentiments first generated on board, extending later to passengers’ adventures on land. On board, passengers are encouraged to let loose, forget their worries, and embrace the pleasures of leisure: shopping, gambling, relaxing, dancing, drinking, and eating. Such pleasures are individualized, giving one a sense of autonomy among the masses; every person’s pleasure is for him or herself.

On Christmas Day 2011, I was invited to a party for couples living and working in Cozumel from various places around the world, from New Orleans to Mexico City. The party’s location was a house further inland; a massive, inviting, and warm home welcomed me during that hot day in December. It was a two-story house on a quiet residential street across from a school with a playground with open, high ceilings towering over the alluring aromas of food being prepared by one friend, a local chef, while the rest of the partygoers mingled between the garden outside with a patio, small pool, and large trees. During this magically serene Christmas dinner, conversations swayed between local politics, fond memories of creature comforts from the U.S., and upon the mention of my role—marked as different by being the only single female at the party—tourism. One ex-pat who has been in the island for over fifteen years said cruise ship tourists “only wanted to wear balloon hats,” insinuating that all cruise ship tourists did while ashore was drink at the internationally owned and operated restaurant/bars (e.g.
Senor Frogs and Carlos n’ Charlies) that gave tourists free blow-up balloon hats with their alcohol purchase. He was correct in this identifiable marker unique to cruise ship tourists as everyday a cruise ship was docked at least one cruise ship tourist donned a balloon hat in public. Another guest who owned a business commented that they needed this steady flow of cruise ship tourists for their business to survive, especially when it is the “low season” with less average tourists to the island (see Figure 51, a daily arrival of cruise ship passengers to Cozumel) A man who owned a popular dive tour indignantly added, “I hate them.” This range of feelings toward the daily arrival of cruise ship tourist to Cozumel from longer-term tourists, expatriates, and Mexican nationals is representative of the diverse nature of cruise ship tourism to the island. Cruise ship tourism is expressed as a silly joke (e.g. tourists in balloon hats), a needed source of sustainable income, and rage at their constant “infiltration.”
Figure 54. Cruise Ship Arrivals for Sunday, January 19, 2014 as Published in Cozumel's Newspaper, El Seminario. On January 14, 2014, six cruise ships were docked at once in Cozumel's three cruise ship piers: Puerta Maya, SSA Mexico (International Pier), and Punta Langosta, “Treat visitors well! Smile!”
It was concluded from this accomplished group of frequent island tourists, expatriates, and some permanent residents of the island that the identity of the entire island is put at risk by cruise ship tourism. One guest opined, “The cruise ships come in and take over. It’s not like other towns in Mexico where the center square of town is their identity” (interview, December 2011).

This thought, the crisis of island identity, extends to the ways in which the cruise ship industry portrays Mexican identity and culture in the spaces it creates at each port-of-call community. The façade of cruise ship tourism, first produced on board, is a tenuous veil to the realities of tourism including, perhaps the most glaring in the Carnival Triumph example, illness and lack of ship resources (e.g. water, food, and proper sanitation). This engineered façade extends on land not simply by failing to consider any of its environmental impacts but also, and more relevant to this study, by shaping port-of-call communities into culturally homogenized, controlled, and sanitized spaces of sale. The contentious relationship between cruise ship tourism and Cozumel; cruise ship tourists and Cozumel’s expatriates and other tourists is symbolic of the strain that this mass tourism genre manifests among local livelihoods.

The Cultural Commodification of Cozumel: Cultural Commodification in a Port-of-Call

The ways in which cruise ship mass tourism is staged for tourist consumption is the focus of the rest of the chapter. Though staging of tourism, culture becomes commoditized and thus consumed. This trope is demonstrated in the development of all-
inclusive resorts throughout the region of Caribbean mass tourism. In an example of Hilton International hotels staking a claim and building a brand in (and of) the Caribbean in the 1950s, Evan R. Ward (2008) suggests, “Hilton International hotels sheltered the less adventurous traveler from the vicissitudes of foreign culture by offering the comforts of home and a negotiated cultural introduction to the host country” (Ward 2008:40). This branding schema, made popular by Hilton in the 1950s, is still in use today over sixty years later. Caribbean vacations (including the Mexican Caribbean), for example, that take place either in all-inclusive resorts or on and off board on a cruise ship vacation, exemplify how culture can become commodified, as once packaged, it becomes easy and financially accessible for tourists to purchase and perform leisure (for more on performing leisure, see Chapter 5).

How does mass tourism both “shelter” tourists and offer a “negotiated cultural introduction to the host country?” The answer can be found in the ways culture is commodified. The standardization of culture as a commodity is “indispensable to contemporary capitalism” (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944:2). Adorno and Horkheimer's 1944 theory of the “culture industry” is exemplified in the modern mass tourism industry as both function from positions of power, manifested in various forms of top-down subjugation and manipulation of the host community including its culture, land, and people. “The man with leisure has to accept what the culture manufacturers offer him” (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944:3). Like modern visual art and music, the culture industry predetermines the impressions its consumers will have, making for a culturally sanitized experience. “The product prescribes every reaction: not by its natural structure (which collapses under reflection), but by signals” (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944:9). Absolute
imitation and repetition of a simulacrum, shaped by an imagined paradise, creates spaces that are unoccupied and unsoiled by indigenous bodies, and ripe for hedonistic pursuits. This imagined paradise becomes reality in mass tourism and form the framework of the culture industry of the packaged or all-inclusive vacation experience. The U.S.-based cruise ship industry has engineered and controlled spaces in port-of-call communities like Cozumel steeped in simulacra of imagined paradise. For example, in an advertisement for Cozumel’s Margaritaville, the bar/restaurant is advertised as a “State of Mind,” with a picture of a full margarita, deserted ocean, prepared food, and a Caucasian, blond-haired snorkeler. This advertisement could be for any of the restaurant/bar’s seaside locations in the Caribbean. Cozumel’s local population is completely void of publication other than the address of the restaurant.
Figure 55. Advertisement for Cozumel's Margaritaville
Ward (2006) consistently credits the success of the internationalization of the Caribbean region to its succinct branding. The way in which the overall tourism genre of Caribbean mass tourism vacations (e.g. all-inclusive trips to Club Med or, in the case of this research, a Caribbean cruise ship vacation to Cozumel), its surrounding city, and even the country, become a brand name unto themselves (see Figure 54). The Consejo de Promoción Turística de Mexico has branded Cozumel as “Heaven on Earth” and has ran a series of advertisements that communicate this sentiment with tourists portrayed with religious iconography of angel wings and halos while they enjoy scuba diving, deep sea fishing, and playing in the sand with their kin.
Figure 56. Cozumel Advertisement, “Heaven on Earth” (source, Consejo de Promoción Turística de México)
One example of how this brand recognition of leisure has been sustained in the region can be seen in the initial creation of Cancun as an international tourist destination in the 1960s and 1970s spanning its popularity still today as a spring break destination for U.S. college students (see Chapter 4 for history of the region). Moreover, Cancun as an international tourist destination has grown, and continues to grow, into an entire coastline of all-inclusivity, stretching from the tip of Cancun and Isla Mujeres, past Playa del Carmen, to Akumal, and straight southward to the entrance of the Sian Ka’an Biosphere Reserve, located minutes from Tulum.

In the context of Caribbean tourism, including the Riviera Maya, the commodification of culture includes an illusion of unpackaged beauty. A paradise that is native to the region and untouched by other tourists. “The mechanical reproduction of beauty, which reactionary cultural fanaticism wholeheartedly serves in its methodical idolization of individuality, leaves no room for that unconscious idolatry which was once essential to beauty” (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944:11). The U.S.-based cruise ship industry mechanically reproduces beauty of “reactionary cultural fanaticism” by through the sale of photography. In such photography, emphasis is placed on both the individual bodies of cruise ship tourists as well as stereotypical representations of their surroundings. For example, packaged portraits of cruise ship passengers that each cruise line produces for sale include iconography of the port-of-call. In Figure 55, two cruise ship tourists on Royal Caribbean’s “Jewel of the Seas” are photographed disembarking in Cozumel. A deserted beach and a piece of hand painted pottery flank the photograph of the two cruise ship passengers. These two images flaking the cruise ship tourists, the deserted beach and the pottery, are iconography of the Mexican Caribbean. These
images could be stock photography, usually purchased from online databases and licensed for commercial use, as they are not unique to the Yucatán Peninsula, Cozumel, or the Caribbean culture.

The U.S.-based cruise ship industry, in this example Royal Caribbean International, broadly characterizes Mexican and Caribbean culture in its photography for cruise ship tourist consumption by using homogenized representations. “Representation is the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system) to produce meaning” (Hall 1997:61). In this

Figure 57. Royal Caribbean's "Jewel of the Seas" Souvenir Portrait in Cozumel (source, CruiseCritic.com)
example, “meaning” of Mexican and Caribbean culture is convoluted to be void of local bodies or representation. Deserted beaches and brightly colored pottery can be symbolic of a specific region of the world yet these representations, again, are lacking the uniqueness of this specific locality. In this way, power is produced by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry in the way they engineer meaning of the local port-of-call by not using cultural semiotics appropriate to the region.

Returning to Ward’s (2006) historical exemplification of how culture was first commodified in the Caribbean, a “negotiated cultural introduction” between an international business and the local community took place when Conrad Hilton built retail stores located within or near the Havana Libre hotel in Cuba in the 1958. These stores are representative in of a process of cultural commodification not just confined to the act of tourists consuming material objects (i.e. goods for sale); rather, Hilton began a cultural project using “local cultural motifs as a vehicle for promoting a global brand” (Ward 2008:38). This is evidence of how a popular chain of hotels first used cultural motifs to promote a global brand in the late 1950s (see Figure 56 and 57). Commodities in mass tourism are the material (hotel rooms, souvenirs, and tour packages), yet Conrad Hilton was first to suggest that commodities are also the immaterial (feeling, identity, or ethnicity). These vintage images from Cuba’s heyday in the 1950s and 1960s as an international tourist destination (Figures 58 and 59) and represent a singular national identity of Cuba. These images depict Cuba’s spaces for tourists as a platform for sexual expression, or “romance,” including a space to be free to dance, drink, and use the local community for sexual pleasure (see Figure 59).
Figure 58. "Visit Cuba: Land of Romance" Postcard Produced by the Cuban Tourist Commission (source, Peter Moruzzi)
The immateriality of tourism’s commodities encompasses tourists’ idealized constructions of paradise, relaxation, pristine and/or untouched physical environments, local hospitality, sexual subjectivity, and host populations’ displays of ethnicity as “the exotic Other” (Cohen 1988:380). In the context of mass tourism in the Yucatán Peninsula and Riviera Maya, including cruise ship tourism in Cozumel, “saleable
“Otherness” remains a central narrative. This is exemplified in Carnival Cruise Lines online advertisement of Cozumel as a port-of-call destination (Figure 58). The webpage displays an image of the archeological zone, Tulum, located on the mainland (accessible by a thirty minute ferry from Cozumel to Playa del Carmen and about an hour south once there). The iconography is void, again, of local population and the image is not even of the island itself. “Otherness,” in this example, is literal. Carnival displays an image completely removed from actual locality (i.e. an image of Cozumel is not presented on the website listing it as such) in hopes of marketing the archeological site as the point of sale.

![Carnival Cruise Line's Webpage Advertising Cozumel as a Port-of-Call Destination](accessed March 29, 2014)

Tourists’ quest for the pristine, exotic, or timeless nature of their vacation is often branded in packaged or all-inclusive travel (e.g. Sandals resorts throughout the Caribbean with the cruise ship as the main destination onto itself). The ethnicity and identity of the
host population become branded in and of itself for tourists, albeit often from a “safe”
distance, with sanitized summations of ethnic markers, and ultimately controlled by the
industry. “Ethno-commodities” are displayed and marketed to tourists as the
"incorporation of identity and the existential grounding of ethnicity" work in tandem (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999:46). Culture is marketed along with these romantic
notions of travel and can be just as easy for tourists to access as the vacation itself. “All
the ‘natural resources,’ including cultural traditions, have their price, and if you have the
money in hand, it is your right to see whatever you wish” (Greenwood 1977; Schroeder
2002). Royal Village is Cozumel’s newest mall-like construction for cruise ship tourists
located across from International Pier and a short walking distance north from Puerta
Maya. A description of the property on their official website reads:

The Mall “Royal Village Cozumel” is located in Cozumel, Quintana Roo at
Rafael E. Melgar Avenue, km 3.5. Conveniently located only steps away from the
two International Cruise ports of our island within a privileged venue among lush
gardens and nature including two “Cenotes”. The Royal Village Cozumel
Shopping Center offers guests and visitors a fusion of modern and pre-Hispanic
Mayan architecture elements along with spacious and contemporary open
corridors. The Royal Village Cozumel is where the best shopping options and the
most exquisite lunch and dining selections converge; where the best of your
vacation will take place (www.royalvillageczm.com).

This description is clearly marketed toward English-speaking vacationers to
Cozumel. The description also demarcates the proximity to the two closest cruise ship
piers as well which suggests the space is for cruise ship tourists to enjoy. Further, the
description uses various terms of “ethno-commodities” to market and brand this space.
The “cenotes” at Royal Village resemble more like small crevices in the limestone
bedrock that are beautifully landscaped with lush flora, yet are not the same in the
traditional sense of the word. The naturally occurring sinkhole, or pit, cannot be swam in
or even climbed down in, as they resemble more like outdoors fountains. Royal Village employs the use of the word *cenote* in its marketing to entice cruise ship passengers to see an example of the traditional Yucatecan landscape.

The description of Royal Village as a space for cruise ship tourists to enjoy also exemplifies the use of “ethno-commodities” by offering “guests and visitors a fusion of modern and pre-Hispanic Mayan architecture elements.” These “pre-Hispanic Mayan architecture elements” are intentionally presented to tourists to accept or reject as so desired. Such elements are constructed in direct juxtaposition to international dining and retail chains: Hardrock Café, Nike, Diamonds International, Mont Blanc, Lacoste, GNC, Vans, Claire’s Accessories, and Harley Davidson. Synthetic replicas of a “pre-Hispanic Mayan architecture elements” are blended with ideals of comfort and safety for cruise ship passengers from the U.S. and Canada in shopping and dining at recognized outlets.

In such constructed, and ultimately manipulated, environments, the tourist gaze is easily accessible and attainable by “signposting” (Urry 1995). Signposting decodes variations or distinctiveness of culture, local identities, and ethnicities—making consumption instant and easily recognizable. For example, in Royal Village, the sacred Maya calendar, *el tzolkín*, has been replicated in the middle of the shopping center in the form of large wooden boulders lying atop a shallow pool. Each boulder is carved with a particular god representing good and bad energy that determines the “density of each person” (Torres 2010:64-69): *zac, chen, mac, kayab*, etc. All of this is now placed in front of Martí, a Mexican sporting goods store that sells brands like Nike, Colombia, Adidas, Asics, New Era, and Speedo, which operates more than 200 stores nationwide.
The contrast between international retail stores and reproduction of a sacred part of indigenous history is jarring. It represents an opportunity for tourists to question what they are seeing and how it is integral to the environment they are now visiting. It is like seeing a replication of Michelangelo’s *David* in an airport gift shop. The cultural symbol and recreation of an ancient past is constructed for tourists to view but in an environment of sale, not of cultural education or even in ways to give back to the local community, as these spaces for sale are built to benefit the international businesses who build them.

Furthermore, in Royal Village, this display of the Maya calendar is adjacent to another sign, one that is bright blue, printed on shiny tin that reads: “Welcome this path will take you directly and safely back to your cruise Enjoy [sic] it and come back soon.”
This signpost symbolizes the dynamic nature of cruise ship tourism. It directs cruise ship tourists, and no other types of tourists or locals who may visit Royal Village, where their cruise ship is located. The path for cruise ship tourists to take back to their cruise ship is both “direct” and “safe.” Diamonds International, a popular jewelry store chain located throughout port-of-call communities in the Caribbean, looms in the background. The path leads cruise ship passengers is lined with such international retail and dining chains, familiar and safe to cruise ship tourists.

Figure 62. Signposting and Contrast: Safety, International Retail Store, and Cruise Ship Tourism

The social construction of Mayaness, leisure, and safety in cruise ship mass tourism relies on the communal acknowledgement of commodified space by both hosts
and guests. Tourists are active participants assigning roles, representations, and expectations to host communities. In January 2014, one retired couple from Florida sat down near the Maya calendar replica in Royal Village. It was a hot, cloudless day in Cozumel, and as the time neared noon, many cruise ship tourists were seen escaping the sun and finding refuge from the heat inside the stores and benches of the shopping complex. The couple was sailing on a Royal Caribbean cruise and Cozumel was one of their favorite ports-of-call because of the warm weather and the great deal of shopping that is available to tourists who disembark. They were impressed with how “upscale” Royal Village but commented it was too expensive. The couple was searching for a new pair of swimming trunks for the husband but gawked at the nearly MXN$900 price tag (roughly US$70) at Martí sporting goods store. They did not end up buying anything that day at Royal Village but said they enjoyed walking around the mall, citing safety as a factor to why they wanted to take the day for their leisurely stroll: “Travel to some parts of Mexico is unsafe, but Cozumel is one of the safest places you can go. Good to know [about other parts of Mexico being unsafe], but we would have gone out anyway.” They felt confident their time spend in Cozumel was a “carefree” experience and liked how close Royal Village was to their ship at International Pier. They continued,

We heard tons about the cartels but know that it is not an issue on Cozumel. We have been here and always hear about crime [but] never have had or seen any issues besides drunk tourists that think they are in the USA. [That] did not make me change my mind. We love Cozumel and the people of [Cozumel] (interview, January 2014).

Even though this retired couple from Florida read about Mexican drug cartels they felt compelled to assure me their love of the island and people of Cozumel was not affected by such media reports nor about the fact that there are “drunk tourists that think they are
in the USA” on the island. He communicated a cultural understanding and awareness of the space he inhabited as constructed for cruise ship tourists to revel. In an interesting contrast, as the couple was walking away, I noticed the husband’s shirt that reads, “Drinking Pillaging Flogging Wenching [sic]” in big text on the back and in smaller text, underneath, reads, “Just Another Day in Paradise” (Figure 61). This tee shirt is symbolic of an acknowledgement by cruise ship tourists of a constructed paradise, not one of actual “pillaging,” but one of sale (see also Figure 3). This cruise ship tourist bought the actual tee shirt, wore it while in a space intended for cruise ship tourism, and therefore assigned a representation of the host community. As represented in the language of this tee shirt, meaning is produced through the interpretation of visual signs and images (Hall 1997:19). The social construction of Mayaness, leisure, and safety in cruise ship mass tourism is contrasted by the nature of cruise ship tourist’s behavior at Caribbean port-of-call communities that includes revelry, abandonment, and drunkenness (see Figures 38 and 46).
The Construction of Power and Cultural Commodification

The aestheticization of commodity production (in tourism) is a fluid concept, as it lies within embedded structural frameworks (Appadurai 1996). Frameworks of global commerce, national and international marketing campaigns, and tourism development strategies shape the ways in which tourists assign roles, representations, and expectations (Hall 1997). “These relationships, however remote, are fundamentally embedded within the global structures of power and knowledge” (Atelijevic et. al. 2003:136). Power hierarchies construct the way image and representation, even belief, about tourism destinations are shaped for (foreign) consumption. Tourists’ own structures of belief also shape the representation of tourist zones. For example, tourists’ quests for self-
development and improved livelihoods for themselves, their families, communities, states, and countries are involved in the production of the representation of host populations while traveling and at home. Cruise ship tourists who purchase souvenir tee shirts that represent “paradise,” Mexican identity, or the act of sailing on a cruise ship as hedonistic pleasures are narrowing the understanding of the actual locality and its culture of each port-of-call community. For example, at Fat Tuesday restaurant and bar in Puerta Maya, the following tee shirts are for sale: “Went on vacation Left on Probation,” “Fat Tuesday Cozumel XXL Cojones,” and “Get Ruined at Fat Tuesday Cozumel, Mexico” (with a reconfigured cartoon image of chac mool drinking) (Figure 64).
Figure 64. Tee Shirts on Display for Sale at Fat Tuesday in Puerta Maya
According to the FCCA, “Many passengers will take a shore excursion, leaving only a few hours to see and do everything else the destination has to offer before hurrying back to the ship” (FCCA 2002:9; see Figures 51 and 52). Carnival Corporation & PLC, along with Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., has refocused tourists’ itineraries upon disembarkation by supplying a faux-experience, a purposefully staged façade meant to imply the existence of organically produced, locally owned and operated businesses in the port-of-call community to which they dock. As exemplified by Puerta Maya (see Chapter 4) and Royal Village in Cozumel, the U.S.-based cruise ship industry intentionally segments cruise ship tourism and isolates it to a “cruise center,” or “theme park” which they own and control. Moreover, Royal Village intentionally markets Mexican and Maya forms of commodities to market to cruise ship tourists to enjoy while they shop and dine at international businesses located within the confines of the mall. This contrast between cultural replicas (e.g. Maya calendar) and non-locally owned or operated businesses (e.g. Harley Davidson) is intentionally marketed as safe and a space specifically for cruise ship tourists to experience. Spaces such as Puerta Maya and Royal Village represent a display of intentionally marketed and constructed cultural commodification by the U.S.-based cruise ship tourism industry.

---

30 The FCCA (2002) notes the cruise ship industry’s construction of Xcaret, “the popular nature theme park” and how it will be “accessible to cruise ships thanks to the proposed development of a new cruise port by Carnival Corporation” (ibid., 9).
Throughout the Yucatán Peninsula and Riviera Maya, indigenous Maya culture is also appropriated by the tourism industry. Mayanness is a term that signifies any physical characteristic symbolic of indigenous Maya culture. Mayanness often connotes generalizations, mischaracterizations, and racist symbols. Examples span scope and space in the region: from handmade, spray-painted tee shirts with mythic characterizations of indigenous warriors sold in Pisté to a luxury hotel in Cancun with towering statues of indigenous god-like men in its entryway. The mass tourism industry
in the region translates indigenous culture and history into each tourism commodity on a
grand scale in terms of advertising and architectural elements. Yet, it is not the mass
tourism industry that makes produces these items for sale or replica décor to tourists, it is
specific real persons with businesses of different sizes from factories in Mérida mass
producing handicrafts to a side-business of one vendor tie-dyeing shirts on the street all
alone. Commodities with indigenous themes include souvenirs, hotel décor, and tours,
and are seen throughout Latin America and the world (Little 2004; Comaroff and
Comaroff 2009; DeHart 2010). Because we already know there are such products
throughout the global tourism industry, we must focus on the more large-scale means of
representation. Meaning, the way indigenous themes are used by the mass tourism
industry in the region’s overall marketing and branding. One example is the name
associated with the Eastern coastline of the Yucatan Peninsula, Riviera Maya. This term
symbolizes Maya culture in mythic proportions by essentially binding the entire Eastern
coastline of Mexico to its vestiges of indigeneity and a singular ethnicity (i.e. Maya
history, culture, and identity formation). The central part of the state of Quintana Roo,
Felipe Carrillo Puerto, is characterized by a high percentage of indigenous people. In
2005, 87% of the area’s inhabitants were considered to be indigenous and 67% of the
area’s population over the age of five spoke Maya as a first language, with 8% of the
population speaking only Maya (INEGI 2005).

This relatively high level of indigenous speakers may in part be due to the Mayan Zone’s [central Quintana Roo] historical isolation from the rest of Mexico. As a
result of insurgent rebellions by Mayan inhabitants and lack of infrastructure links
to the rest of the country, this area was a de facto independent Maya nation until
the early 20th century, and was only officially incorporated into the Mexican
territory in the 1930s (Reed 2001). This history of conflict and isolation created a
tradition of independent community governance and distrust of external
government actors that is still evident in some ejidos today.
In comparison, the state’s more coastal cities and towns have a greatly varied population due to tourism. Cancun’s (municipality of Benito Juarez) population of 661,176 in 2010 welcomed 4,041,429 tourists who stayed in hotels or resorts (practically half of the country-wide statistic of 8,606,936 tourists) while Cozumel’s 2010 population of 79,535 welcomed roughly six times the amount of tourists to the island with a total of 526,151. It is interesting to note how “indigeneity-for-profit” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009) was developed on a mass-scale through the use of the word “Maya” to signify and represent spatiality of an actual diverse population.

The U.S.-based cruise ship industry has created a space based on the desire to consume lifestyles and identities in “thing-like form” (Dicks 2003:11) and has employed the practice of theming an entire landscape (including its history and culture) for their use. The terms and their associated identities, “Maya, Mexican, Caribbean, Exotic, Other,” are branded as saleable goods or embedded within the tropes of services offered to cruise ship tourists in Cozumel. Cultural commodification has been widely discussed in previous literature but is limited in its scope due to the analysis of only actual objects without association to larger structural processes such as the interests of international businesses competing for tourism revenue (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009). What makes indigeneity-for-profit in the context of U.S.-based cruise ship tourism unique, widening the scope of cultural commodification, is threefold: (1) the piers and associated shopping centers in a cruise ship port-of-call are physically engineered into a theme park for cruise ship tourists that is built upon a narrative of saleable otherness, (2) the process of engineering and sustaining this theme park is present throughout port-of-call communities in the Mexico and the Caribbean (see Chapter 3, the cruise ship industry-
owned private islands), and (3) this is an example of how the U.S.-based cruise ship industry works as a bureaucratic, authoritative power in tandem with multinational businesses in upholding this constructed environment of sale and commodification of the other. The U.S.-based cruise ship industry works as authority in relations to external economic coercion and persuasion in the creation of “guaranteed” and “approved” spaces for cruise ship tourists in port-of-call communities (see Chapter 4).

Cruise ship tourism either works to erase ethnic markers or grossly misrepresents what is Maya in both Cozumel and Costa cruise ship port-of-calls. One example as naming a port *Costa Maya*, translated as “Maya(n) coast”, or Carnival’s port and associated shopping center in Cozumel, *Puerta Maya*, or “Maya gate.” These names essentialize an entire ethnicity to make the destination seem more exotic or unique to cruise ship tourists. *Puerta Maya* engineered a photo opportunity where cruise ship tourists leave the pier and associated mall with its name, a representation of their time in the shopping mall, and a marker for tourists to use to signify where they are at that given time (see Figure 63). Cozumel’s name is similar in its function as a tourism product. Since its inclusion in the global lexicon of island lore and shared history, *la isla de golondrinas*, or in English, *the island of the swallows*, has been Cozumel’s namesake. The publicized translation of Cozumel as the “island of the swallows” fortuitously lends itself to the mythology and branding of the island’s Maya past with present-day tourism. A more sound account of the name’s historical beginnings can be recorded from the Yucatec Maya translation of Cozumel as “Cuzamil,” as cited in the Chilam Balam (Roys 1933). The etymology of each translated Maya words, *cuzam* (golondrina or swallow)
and il (de or of), which can be cited as foundation to the more flowery and popular translation of “la isla de golondrinas,”31 (Valdés 2008).

The U.S.-based cruise ship industry, responsible for the majority of the cruise ship tourists in Cozumel, participates in shaping tourists’ experiences once disembarked on land (see Chapter 3). In addition to manipulating space and issuing recommended maps, the industry also employs cultural critiques of port-of-call communities. Like a museum displays artifacts or an archeological site defines patrimony, the U.S.-based cruise ship industry in Cozumel shapes tourists’ experiences of cultural representations of ethnicity and heritage. The U.S.-based cruise ship industry (Royal Caribbean International and Carnival Corporation & PLC) manages a series of cultural critiques of port-of-call communities. During a cruise vacation, tourists can attend onboard presentations about the host community. This is defined by the cruise ship industry as a “port briefing” or “port talk,” a “briefing conducted on board by a member of the cruise staff providing information on one or more ports of call to passengers. The briefing includes information about shore excursions, shopping opportunities, customs and immigration information as well as disembarkation plans and security notices. In some instances, the port briefing also recommends local merchants who, in cooperative relationships with the cruise line, agree to guarantee merchandise and services. This provides additional income for cruise lines inasmuch as resulting sales are commissioned (Israel and Miller 1999:149-150). A staff member, often with a position title like “Port Shopping Guide,” delivers this

31 Special thanks to Dr. Quetzil Castañeda with help solidifying this definition and its Yucatec Maya usage.
information. These presentations center on detailing the “guaranteed” shipping, dining, shore excursion, and entertainment options (see Chapter Four).

**The Local Side of the Negotiation of Sale: Vendors in Chichén Itzá Compared to Vendors in Puerta Maya**

Focusing on unidimensional, presupposed forms of local negotiation (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009) or threatened Maya indigeneity as a consequence of or caveat to mass tourism development (Walker 2009) limits our analytical scope. Larger structural processes of governance, industry control, and global economic positioning between local and international businesses help to better analyze the development and longevity of mass tourism in the Yucatán, especially related the presence of the cruise ship industry in the region.

As previously theorized, indigeneity, specifically Mayaness, is a commodity in modern mass tourism. From the outsider's perspective, it may seem like heritage, tradition, ethnicity, and identities are threatened, yet that is hardly the case (Castellanos 2010; Cocom et. al. 2011). Negotiation and agency are normative, as indigeneity does not signal passivity in mass tourism, including cruise ship port-of-call communities, in the Yucatán. For example, at Chichén Itzá, more than one “invasion,” has occurred. Such an “invasion,” as described by Quetzil Castañeda (1996; 2009), is a juridical term and a popular concept that is applied to the politics of the artisans at Chichén Itzá. This concept is described as a communal attempt by the local community, mostly Maya, to “traffic in handicrafts and to make artisanry themselves” by local artisans of Pisté and
extends to other artisan markets spanning the entire corridor from Cancun to Mérida. The argument of these multiple invasions is structured to show that the introduction of state discipline, governance, and structures of authority, even economic strategies of controlling income, are, in fact, triggered by the invasion. The invasion prompted the State’s attempt to silence, govern, and overtake the archeological zone and thus its international tourism revenues (Castañeda 1996:74). This vacuum of power and authority was what allowed the invasions to take place and the invasions in turn triggered state intervention to control the space of the archeological zone. In actuality, the state does not control it except in the name only (e.g. INAH and CULTUR).

In contrast to local artisan invasions at Chichén Itzá, port-of-call communities such as Cozumel, maintains order and surveillance of those businesses in contract with the U.S.-based cruise ship industry. The invasions are representative of different types of control, as in the case of cruise ship tourism, a corporation has control over the space in which it conducts its business and owns as private property. Yet, in efforts to subvert control of governmental and political entities, Maya communities have historically invaded, occupied, and remained plugged into the financial and societal opportunities that mass tourism of the region provides. Local Maya laborers have also historically migrated to partake in mass tourism as day or stay-over laborers, especially evident in the development of Cancun’s Zona Hotelera (Castañeda 1996; ReCruz 1996; Castellanos 2010).

____________________

32 Castañeda cites the mid-1980s (1982-1987) as the first invasion, with three to four hundred vendors occupying the archeological zone of Chichén.
In December 2011, in Cozumel’s Puerta Maya, I met a group of men in their early 20s who worked around the island hotels and at each of the three cruise ship piers, wearing outfits depicting Maya warriors in costume similar to characters from mainstream movie *Apocalypto* (2006). Their attire included intricate feathered headdresses, painted faces, bare feet, many strands of beads around their necks, and tattered loincloths (see Figure 63). They said they only work for tips. This included being dressed like Maya warriors to take pictures with cruise ship tourists and other tourists at the island’s hotels as well as playing various musical instruments for tourists’ tips. The purpose of these costumes was to solicit cruise ship tourists to pose for pictures with them for money. They mentioned that they perform dances at the various resorts and hotel around the island as entertainment for tourists and this was contract work. The entire exchange was awkward, as they surrounded me, some more engaged in conversation than the others, while each keeping an eye out for a potential customer. As soon as a group of three younger women from the cruise ship approached, our conversation was over, as the group encircled the cruise ship tourists in jovial display of their charm. This group of men was using Mayaness and indigeneity for sale, to their own profit, while working both inside and outside of the confines of U.S.-based cruise ship tourism. Their position working within the physical structure and locality of Puerta Maya is significant because Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. or Carnival Corporation & PLC has not established a contract with them while every other business (i.e. retail, dining, tour, and kiosk business) needs an established contract. Rather, this group of men work hard to gain money form cruise ship tourists while they are in port at *every* port, a fluidity and flexibility unique to the piers and associated malls related to cruise ship tourism.
James Clifford (1997) suggests that within the framework of contact zones (Pratt 1992), the relationship between geographically and historically separated groups “processes of mutual exploitation and appropriation may be at work” (Clifford 1997:440). This is exemplified within the context of cruise ship tourism in Cozumel and in the performance of Puerta Maya’s “Maya warriors.”

Figure 66. Maya Warriors at Work in Puerta Maya

In mass tourism sites like Chichén Itzá and cruise ship piers in Cozumel, Maya cultural and ethnic markers are often appropriated by local vendors or performers in order to profit from tourists. These markers are often stereotypical representations of Maya
Traditional Maya culture becomes a murky illustration for tourist consumption. Such performers’ agency and negotiation is dependent on exogenous money and exogenous definitions. For example, tourists in Chichén are confronted with a bevy of replicas and handmade woodcarvings, clothing, blankets, jewelry, and wall hangings (to name a few of the thousands of products for sale), with Maya motifs including warriors, religiosity and mysticism, and animal incarnations. Both sites are also spatially similar in that each was strategically developed as a “Disneyland” (Castañeda 1996:121) by archeologists, in the case of Chichén, and the U.S.-based cruise ship industry in Cozumel. As Castañeda aptly quotes the American archeologist Alfred V. Kidder (1930), both spaces ascribe to the theory, a foundation of mass tourism development, in which “public interest must be aroused” (ibid.,121). Mayaness, therefore, is engineered to attract tourists, appease developers, and create a “show window” (Kidder 1930:99) to display culture to an international audience.

Clifford uses examples from museum theory, collections of material culture and physical artifacts where “differences of power, control, and design of budgets determined who would be the collectors and who the collected” (Clifford 1997:440). When comparing the sale of cultural products in Chichén with that of Cozumel’s cruise ship piers (i.e. in and around Melgar), Clifford’s assertions of power in terms of “collector” versus “collected” are obvious. Less obvious, however, is the local perspective. From Pisté to Cozumel, vendors who sell in mass tourism sites are not disadvantaged and marginalized in the eyes of their contemporaries; rather, like tour guides and

33 For more debate surrounding the politics of Yucatec Maya representation in mainstream culture, see Castañeda 1996, 2006, 2011; on Oaxacan indigeneity see Brulotte 2012; and on Guatemala, see Little 2004; DeHart 2010.
restaurateurs, they hold a certain political and social connectedness that is regarded
highly. A major difference between the two sites, however, is the desperation that cruise
ship tourism causes among local businesses of Cozumel.

**U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry and the Desperation of Sale in Cozumel**

The U.S.-based cruise ship industry controls the spaces in which cruise ship
tourists shop by establishing a contract with local businesses to receive profits from
money spent in their approved spaces (e.g. Puerta Maya, International Pier, Royal
Village, and Punta Langosta cruise ship piers and terminals). These contracts essentially
eliminate competition from local businesses. Multinational businesses, like Wal-Mart
(e.g. Mega, Aurora, and Sam’s Club in Cozumel), Hooters, and Starbucks (to name a
few) thrive in and around each pier while local businesses must compete. A local
business owner in a long line of souvenir shops selling everything from silver jewelry,
*lucha libre* masks, and U.S. football ponchos aired out his defeated feelings on the
subject, “Cruise ship passengers don’t want to shop here. They get everything at Mega
then go back to the ship. I can’t sell things for less. I have to stay open” (interview,
August 2012).
This is a common theme presented from tour guides, taxi drivers, and the local business owners and operators which are interspersed between international businesses on Rafael Melgar Avenue, in and between each of the island’s three cruise ship piers. It was explained by these businesses owners and operators that a buy-in fee to become an “approved” and “guaranteed” retail, dining, or tour company with a cruise ship line (e.g. Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. or Carnival Corporation & PLC). When I spoke with one souvenir shop employee, he cited this “flat fee” paid to the cruise ship company to have his establishment recognized on a cruise ship map was USD $10,000 (interview, August 2012). In addition, an annual portion of revenues is given to the cruise ship company to maintain such a contractual and economic agreement.
The connection between the U.S.-based cruise ship industry and approved stores is illuminated most by one informant who works in Royal Village. His jewelry store just opened and tiled floors were still sparkling clean. Rows of silver rings, bracelets, watches, earrings, and necklaces were neatly displayed on round tables scattered in the middle of the store and hung on each of the walls. In addition to the silver jewelry, there were woven backpacks, a few *huipil*-inspired women’s blouses, and figurines for sale. The first month his jewelry shop opened in the mall, he was already feeling pressure from Royal Caribbean to sell more product. He said it was a hard balance between having a store located in downtown San Miguel, near the main square across from the ferry pier, and this location which was farther away from non-cruise ship tourist foot traffic—there had only been a handful of tourists who even came into look at what he was selling that whole month. Yet, he wanted to expand his store to open this second location in Royal Village to ensure cruise ship tourists come (and buy) directly to this location from the cruise ship without spending their money beforehand. As a young couple from a nearby cruise ship entered the store, our conversation suddenly stopped. The shop owner focused all of his efforts in explaining to the couple the pricing of the silver jewelry, by weight, and showed them some of the pieces they pointed at to try on. At last, the couple walked out empty-handed, complaining it the jewelry that they wanted “too expensive for their blood.” The shop owner looked at the front door of his store in longing, saying, “It’s like that all the time. They never bring enough money or expecting that things will be close to free. I just can’t sell for less and expect to stay in business.”

Spending the morning, seeing the store owners’ frustration come to light at such an arrangement, leads me to situate the U.S.-based cruise ship industry in direct conflict
with locally owned and operated businesses around the island. Cozumel as a cruise ship port-of-call is a dynamic space of representation and sale. The contractual agreement with the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, the price of goods sold, and the amount of cruise ship tourist foot traffic actually entering and buying are all points of contention for local business owners.

Figure 68. Representation of Sale in Cozumel: Internationally Owned and Operated Businesses in Space of Cruise Ship Tourism
Conclusions: Representation and Cultural Commodification

Onboard Cruise Ships and in a Port-of-Call Community, A Representation of Safety

In Cozumel, space is governed by the cruise ship industry, and in cases of the “approved and guaranteed” businesses, a percentage of total revenues must be paid directly to the cruise line. As such, the competition between local and multinational businesses (or at least businesses with multiple sites either on the island or throughout the Caribbean) is palpable. In Pisté, there is no Hooters or Wal-Mart subsidiary (yet), the closest being in Valladolid or farther, in Mérida and Playa del Carmen. Cozumel’s proximity to spaces controlled by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry along with the presence of multi-sited, non-local businesses produces a collective climate of competition, pressure, and sometimes desperation for cruise ship tourism revenue among local businesses.

Politically, in the development and maintenance of Mexico’s mega-resorts, government and international interests are negotiated on a global, the negotiation between corporate business and government agents happens behind closed doors to set up contracts, projects, benefits, kickbacks, etc. The promotion of tourism to Mexico is a political project. Stakeholders consciously quell rumors of political unrest, while the international public views commercials of white sandy beaches and umbrella-laden drinks. The dynamic reality of daily Mexican life is voided from the tourist gaze in mass tourism zones such as the Riviera Maya. More recently, the state has to defend its popular mass tourism zones from media accounts that stigmatize the region as one of
lawlessness, danger, and violence associated with narco-trafficking. Internet commentary on travel sites concerning the U.S. Department of State’s travel warning swell with rumor about which resort community is safe or not safe for international travel (Pucci 2010). The U.S.-based cruise ship industry engineers spaces primarily “guaranteed” and “approved” to ensure the safety, or veil of it, for cruise ship tourists. Onboard, the U.S.-based cruise ship industry also creates a veil of safety, security, and maintenance of calmness as evidenced how much is shielded from “reality” when a media disaster breaks out on board.

States of exception work in tandem with states of panic in the tourism industry of the twenty-first century (Lancaster 2006). “Panics, and their residues, are woven into the warp and woof of modern society because they precipitate edicts, statutes, laws, institutions, and other durable forms of social organization” (Lancaster 2006:5). To translate this idea to Mexico’s mass tourism industry, transnational corporations, such as the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, forges profit from states of exception and promulgates social control though states of panic. Yet, mass tourism, especially all-inclusive tourism on land or in at sea, needs absolute peacetime and safety in order to assuage the always fearful and anxious tourist (see Chapter 3). Panic among tourists is counter to industry-profits, like the panic started at the beginning of this chapter, creates economic crisis for those who seek to profit from cruise ship tourism. This is why Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC decisively translate such a “veil of peace,” that is experienced onboard, to the physical spaces in a port-of-call community on land. This is exemplified in the piers and associated shopping spaces in Cozumel
therefore crafting a seamless transition from ship to shore in the confines of spaces engineered solely for the enjoyment of cruise ship tourists.

Laws that are created in situations of panic to withdraw the law, or withhold the functioning of legalities (state of exception) is not the same as forging of laws and legalities or the making of loopholes and exceptions to existing laws to further create profitability. These are two different goals, to create more profit versus create more social control, both are achieved through the inverse sociopolitical strategy or dynamic. Yet, analyzing legalities in the context of cruise ship tourism, the formulation and exercise of power is evident. This is exemplified through the formulation of contracts with local and transnational businesses in exchange for a percentage of profits and a buy-in fee as well as the establishment of such piers, exclusively for cruise ship tourists, in the beginning.

Theorizing the spaces of cruise ship tourism in Cozumel, which include each of the three piers where cruise ships dock, collectively illustrates an institution of cultural commodification. “Institutions, then, not of confinement but of exhibition, forming a complex of disciplinary and power relations” (Bennett 1998:73), as in Foucault’s incarcerated panopticon (Foucault 1977). As such, power, surveillance, and maintenance of a revenue-producing status quo define spaces of sale for cruise ship tourism. Like museum’s “exhibitionary complex,” these spaces are “progressively more open and public arenas where, through the representations to which they were subjected, they formed vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power (but of a different type) throughout society” (Bennett 1998:78). In a historically rooted authoritative power play, cultural commodification in port-of-call communities, including the façade of cruise ship tourism, resembles a museum as an “open and public space, sought rhetorically to
incorporate people into the processes of the state (Bennett 1998:99). Throughout this chapter, I argue not only that the processes of legalities, representation of indigeneity, and cultural commodification occur; moreover, the infiltration of multinational, multi-sited businesses, ranging in scope as the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, Wal-Mart, and Starbucks to smaller chains like Diamonds International, all work in tandem to engineer a homogenized tourist experience.
Preface to Chapter VI

Ethnographic Vignette: Selling a Dream

Right before Christmas Day in 2011, I spent the day at Park Royal Hotels and Resorts in Cozumel. This corporate hotel and resort chain is located throughout the Riviera Maya, including two resorts in Cancun, and throughout Mexico, including Acapulco, Ixtapa, and Huatulco. Park Royal, as it is commonly called in Cozumel, is an all-inclusive resort complete with one Italian-themed and several Mexican-themed restaurants, a chac mool replica in the entrance, and a swim-up bar in the expansive outdoor pool and beach area. According to the sales manager, most vacationers to the resort are from the United States, as 70% of all people staying at that time were from the U.S., Canada, and Europe. That day, all 300 rooms were full as the pools swelled with people and the small, manmade white sand beach was littered with towels, sunbathers, umbrellas, and children splashing in the ocean.

Seeing the resort from an “insider’s perspective” was enlightening. I met Esteban, originally from Mexico City and now living in Cozumel for a few years because there were “better jobs working in tourism on the coast,” who gave me a tour of the property. His job is called a “liner,” a person who shows the property and gives tours of the amenities and rooms. His main goal as a liner, as he explained to me in English, is to be a “hype person—get them excited about owning part of the dream.” This was a specialized tour, the one Esteban and other employees working the timeshare sales give to all guests looking to possibly buy a timeshare from Royal Holiday, an imprint of Park Royal centered on the timeshare business of each of their hotels and resorts. Needless to
say, Esteban grew more annoyed during our hour-long tour when I interrupted his sales pitch, a well-choreographed speech, with questions about the property, cruise ships, and his customers. He wanted me to focus on the aura of the staged suite he showed me, available for purchase and with every upscale amenity one could find at any five-star resort (e.g. a spacious, spa-like bathroom, king sized bed, and central air). The suite came complete with a massive balcony overlooking the property that was large enough to fit a table with four chairs and two loungers. A young couple, looking painfully sunburned, came into the suite as Esteban and I were leaving. They were guided by another Park Royal team member, a young woman, attractively dressed in a fashionable pantsuit with sky-high heels, who was promising the couple that the suite could be available during the time of year of their choosing as “old” concepts of timeshare were now dated. She eagerly said that this vacation option is now more flexible and accommodating to “today’s busy lifestyle.”

As we made our way to back to the sales floor, through the manicured gardens, over the large pool with a small walkway bridge, listening to the calming sound of tropical birds and dodging an encounter with an ancient iguana, I realized that that the resort was an escape from the hustle and bustle of Avenida Melgar, just steps outside the front entrance. Most Cozumelenses simply referred to the busy street, which ran along the shoreline in a semi-circle around the island, as simply “Melgar.” There were four cruise ships docked at Puerta Maya and International Pier that day, and Melgar was crowded with cruise ship tourists making the walk, scooter, taxi, or bike ride into downtown San

34 She was confronting the notion that timeshares, once purchased, included many blackout dates where the unit would not be available or only available for a limited amount of time for very specific dates during a calendar year.
Miguel, passing Park Royal on their way northward into town. The noise from Melgar seemed like a distant memory as Esteban led me into the air-conditioned salesroom. Yet I quickly realized the sounds from Melgar were only replaced, as one kind of chaos was exchanged for another in the salesroom.

Park Royal’s salesroom hummed with activity. Employees, dressed similarly to Esteban and his younger colleague who were offering tours of the suites, were scurrying about the office with papers, clipboards, and walkie-talkies in hand. There were couples and families, vacationers looking for more information or wanting to sign on the dotted line to purchase a timeshare, hunched over the tables with salesmen and women trying their best to be accommodating. Two sales were made or “closed” in the time I was witness to well-oiled and choreographed sales floor. Each was punctuated with a jovial toast of juice, beer, mixed drinks with tequila or rum, or water as the entire sales floor, guests and employees alike, applauded and raised their glasses to a congratulatory speech in Spanish, then translated into English. Uproarious applause from everyone in the showroom followed.

The sales floor space was as impressive as the staged suite. Large floor to ceiling windows overlooked an infinity pool, clear turquoise and as flat as glass, with a swim-up bar, complete with a palapa, or thatched roof, to the right named “CruiseBar” [sic]. The pool overlooked the clear waters of the Caribbean Sea. Snorkel and diving boats, fishing boats, and the occasional speedboat tour full of cruise ship tourists were seen traversing the vista seen from the sales floor. The floor looked like a busy restaurant, small tables where people engaged in what appeared to be thoughtful and
exciting conversation. Families with small children sat beside young couples while retirees sipped on cocktails and listened to the sales pitch.

I was informed that most people who chose to buy a timeshare come to Park Royal from other hotels on the island to use their facilities for the day or are already vacationing on the property. Not many cruise ship tourists “make the deal,” preferring to enjoy a Day Pass, a ticket that costs around $40 USD for all you can eat and drink, and includes the use of the amenities of the Park Royal during their day disembarked in Cozumel (José, interview, December 20, 2011). Outside of the resort’s walls there are a few kiosks on Melgar to attract cruise ship tourists into buying the hotel’s Day Pass. The workers in these kiosks, employed by Park Royal, are called “Hookers” whose sole responsibility is to stop people (cruise ship or stay-over tourists) on the street and sell them a Day Pass. The reasoning is simple: the more tourists “hooked,” the more likely they are to come into the salesroom, the better the chance that a deal can be closed. A salesman, living on the island for a while after working in Park Royal’s Cancun sister hotel, said bluntly of cruise ship tourists, “That’s a money ship” as one night we drove past a Celebrity cruise ship. “Those rooms are expensive, thousands of dollars spent on each cabin—not $90 [total] for a four-night Carnival cruise. Carnival tourists use their welfare check or max out all their credit cards to pay for their vacation on some crazy Internet deal.” He went on to describe the differences between each particular cruise line tourist as he sees them at the property of the Park Royal. He described cruise ship tourists on Carnival Cruise Lines as “only here [visiting the resort for the day] to take advantage of the Day Pass” while cruise ship tourists on Holland America, Norwegian Cruise Lines, and Princess Cruises “sit down with us and are more likely to take a
meeting because they have more money to spend.” He continued, “People aren’t as likely to take the pitch seriously as they only come to take advantage of the Day Pass—eat and drink the day away” (interview, December 14, 2011).

Back in the sales room, the sales staff explained to me the multicultural nature of selling timeshares at Park Royal. The demographics of the sales staff are composed of more men than women coming from Mexico and from all over the world: Texas and the Bronx in the U.S., Poland, Italy, and the Bahamas, among others. This staff served a mostly international clientele, as previously mentioned, with vacationers to the resort mostly from the United States. Across from the intricately decorated faux-Christmas tree in the sales floor, a “liner” was seating the young couple from the tour we met earlier in the day. Like a shark to its prey, one of the “closers” approached the table. The “closer’s” job is to be ready to guide clients into signing the paperwork that ensures the sale of the timeshare. They come into the relationship after they have already been “courted” for a while by the other staff. I was told that “good closers can just look and know, even sense, when to step in at a table to sign the deal.” There are three larger tables designated to each floor manager with the head manager off to the side in a private office. The head manager tells the closers whose sale is up next, “who is next up to pitch,” by a constant rotation of names found in a dizzying (non-electronic) spreadsheet. The head manager, emerging from his private office, stands guard over the entire sales floor. He oversees and supervises the scene, telling the closers who is next in line to sign a deal, like a coach would tell a substitute batter to get in the game and hit a home run.

Poring over Park Royal’s glossy catalogues featuring the different timeshare options they sell, one of the closers described his job in greater detail to me, in hushed
tones so only I could hear, far from his colleagues’ purview. His tenacity for closing the
sale lit his face from a place seemingly deep within his soul—his smile and enthusiasm
never swayed as we debated the historical ramifications of all-inclusive resorts on the
island and to the wider region of the Riviera Maya, demographics of past and future
customers, and how hookers rarely become closers. He ended the conversation with an
unmistakable glimmer in his eye, saying that selling timeshares was “like selling a
dream.” This type of sales was different than his old job of selling cars: “It took time to
learn how to sell something intangible—dreams, fantasy... it took time to learn but once I
got it, it really took off” (interview, 18 December 2011).
Chapter VI. Cozumel as an Internationally Divergent Population

The “aura, dream, and fantasy,” said by Esteban during his sales tour and conveyed by the rest of the timeshare crew at Park Royal, is a powerful sense of attainable luxury. It is both material (the actual room) and metaphoric (owning a “piece of paradise” or “your own slice of heaven”). This dreamscape, advertised and sold as a surrealistic scene of idyllic vacation paradise, is ultimately a slice of packaged all-inclusivity.

This packaged all-inclusivity is similar to how tourists commonly view mass tourism environments (Pattullo 1996; Sheller 2003; Castellanos 2010). Mimi Sheller (2003) describes a constructed “fantasy torrid zone” as metaphor for how tourists construct a singular vision of resort vacations. She describes how cruise ship tourists commonly construct their experience in the Caribbean as representative of a singular region and thus as a singular, packaged vision:

While tourists on cruises generally noted the name of each place at which they stopped, they also blurred together an overall impression of ‘the’ Caribbean as a singular entity. It is the editing out of things that do not fit which enables this fantasy ‘torrid zone’ to be unceasingly packaged and sold for Northern consumers (Sheller 2003:64).

As evidenced by the timeshare employees of Park Royal in Cozumel, “selling a dream” is more than renting out a suite in a fancy resort: it is sold as a manufactured illusion. By this I mean the all-inclusive package is an engineered façade, much like that of a cruise ship vacation (see Chapter IV). For example, the room itself and its amenities may be customized to your liking, saturated with the spoils of all-inclusive leisure, such as 24-
hour room service, flat screen televisions, high thread-count sheets, and maid service.

However, like a cruise ship that has an onboard fire, the façade is subject to limitations. For example, tourists are only able to enjoy this space as a timeshare for a short time on the calendar (and subject to availability) and confined inside the resort walls. A family of four from Canada who was looking into the possibility of purchasing a timeshare at Park Royal the day I visited was charmed by the idea of owning vacation property in Mexico. They mentioned that their friends and family would be jealous that they would get the opportunity to leave Canada, especially during the depths of winter—they did not seem to realize or care about the multiple date restrictions of travel in owning a timeshare in a popular tourist destination. The illusion of ownership works as powerfully as the actual point-of-sale. Meaning the signature on the dotted line and exchanging money for the timeshare is the busywork in the process while the façade of actually owning of owning property (albeit one room) in a tropical location represents a powerful status marker.

Sheller (2003) also illustrates how the entire Caribbean is not only reduced to a singular entity in the eyes of tourists, but how this forms an “asymmetrical gaze” (Sheller 2003:62). As tourists physically move through space, whether it is by land or sea, the peoples of their environment in which they tour are seen as stagnant, steeped in stereotypes, and confronted with racism by tourists (Sheller 2003:60-70). By defining the “asymmetrical gaze,” Sheller confronts how Urry’s (1990) “tourist gaze” objectifies native bodies; that the tourism “gaze” objectifies native or host populations (cf. Veijola and Jokinen 1994). Tourists seek to satisfy their previously imagined manifestation of the environment to which they now inhabit on vacation by searching out the exotic (Urry 1990). In all-inclusive mass tourism (including cruise ship vacations), the quest of
difference or escapism from tourist’s everyday lives is shielded. Commodified vacations, especially exemplified in zones of mass tourism, are tailored around the ease at which ethnic symbols are consumed by tourists and cultural difference is sought, albeit in forms that are often staged, replicated, and deemed safe (by the resort or cruise ship) for consumption. Coerced consumption in tourism ultimately is a “continued quest for the next ‘unspoiled’ people, environment, beach, countryside, indigenous village” (Urry 1995:135). Such zones in mass tourism offer replicas or recreations of “unspoiled” compound-like environments—keeping the outside away from the tourist’s idealized representation of paradise.

Urry’s shortcomings are evident as the populations tourists gaze upon are not passive pawns blind to tourist encounters. Sheller (2003) argues that tourists’ privilege in moving through space enables them to view the local population as part of the landscape—not as living human beings but literally as objects blending into the background scenery. She confronts Urry (1990) by asserting that in the ways tourists actually experience local life, their act of gazing, is detached from reality. The ways in which tourists experience local life through modes of objectification create the theoretical framework of touristic consumption (see Chapter IV for more discussion of consumption and the commodification of culture).

Tourists reduce the local population to the prevailing culturally constructed stereotype of the region, both in terms of its physical environment and its population. Of the ninety-three cruise ship respondents that were interviewed in an electronic survey I produced specifically for cruise ship tourists as they disembarked and while returned from their vacation at home, the majority of cruise ship tourists who responded affirmed
that their decision to take a cruise ship was due to the “ease of travel.” Meaning, they purposefully opted to take this type of vacation because “you don’t have to think about it, you just go to each port,” (interview, 7 August 2012); “I don’t have to learn another language, get a visa, or be uncomfortable when I take a cruise” (interview, 5 January 2012). This sentiment both evokes the physical divide between tourist and local on the island and conveys cruise ship tourists’ sense of wanting to be apart from the local population. In Cozumel, this is affirmed by cruise ship tourists, other tourists to the island, as well as segments of the expatriate community. This chapter describes how an engineered façade, previously discussed as evident both onboard cruise ships and in the aforementioned ethnographic vignette in an all-inclusive resort and timeshare, is translated to other groups of people in a cruise ship tourism port-of-call community. The different groups of people in Cozumel are comprised of cruise ship tourists, tourists who stay in the island’s resorts and hotels, expatriates from the U.S. and Canada, other Mexican nationals who are either from the mainland or other regions of the country, migrants working in the tourism service sector, and native Cozumeleños. The focus of this chapter is analyzing the ways the “authoritative gaze” is actually a “perspective” rather than an object, “like a camera, an instrument that is used or not used, left in the hotel room.” This perspective is defined as,

Ways of looking and seeing, and other kinds of structures, institutions, bodies, practices, spaces, habits, etc., that are used to shape vision, visuality, ways of seeing, the ways things are seen, and defines what is to be seen or not seen (Castañeda 2014, pers. Comm.).

This goal of this chapter is to describe ethnographically how particular segments of Cozumel’s population adopt the asymmetrical gaze as a perspective to interpret the ways
they adapt, negotiate, interact with, communicate in, and, overall, the way they live in a port-of-call community. The population segments of Cozumel that are represented in this chapter are the expatriate community, non-cruise ship tourist, and Mexican nationals. Further, the objective of this chapter is to describe how they use this perspective to define both their existence within Cozumel and Cozumel, Mexico, and the Caribbean as a whole.

**Intersectionality of an Island Population: A Study of Sheller’s Asymmetrical Gaze**

Sheller’s (2003) asymmetrical gaze can also be applied to the ex-pat community of Cozumel. Although Sheller describes only tourists as those who employ the asymmetrical gaze, the expatriate community, once tourists themselves, has appropriated a similar lens to view Cozumel, their new, non-native community. Upon arrival to a day of volunteering at an English-language school, the director, an expatriate himself, coyly asked me after introducing himself, “What are you running from?” He explained he had been on the island for “a long time” and “has seen some things.” His inquisition started with that blast of an accusation and relented only after I explained my research. He accused me of running away from the United States and that I had to have an explanation for leaving, and for wanting to move to Mexico. When I said I did not have such an explanation and rather described my research, he coolly replied, “Everyone here is running from something” (interview, November 2011). His perception of other expatriates to the island, as evidenced in his question, is steeped in judgment of the
expatriate community of Cozumel (and one that was hard to forget). He was hesitant to accept my motives for wanting to move to Mexico, for pursuing my dissertation research about the cruise ship industry, and for other expatriates on the island—albeit he is part of that social group himself.

The expatriate community represents a vibrant segment to Cozumel’s population. National statistics from the 2000 census in Mexico (el XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda 2000) define the expatriate population as el extranjero residente, resident aliens, as well as immigrantes internacionales, international immigrants, (both labels stated in the same set of statistics) who were born outside of Mexico (INEGI 2000b:25). The total number of “personas nacidas en el extranjero,” foreign-born people, living in Mexico is 492,617 and 87.5% born in North America with 343,591 from the U.S. (INEGI 2000b:24). In comparison, the total population of the state of Quintana Roo is 1,325,578, where the municipality of Cozumel is located, and the population total of Cozumel is 79,535 (INEGI 2000). Estimated totals of expatriates living in the state of Quintana Roo ranges from “five and nine million international immigrants” as it is combined with other states throughout the country with similar numbers of immigrant populations including the states of Morelos, Guerrero, Durango, San Luís Potosí, Aguascalientes, Sinaloa, Nayarit, and Veracruz. It is noted these are states are “attractive [to international migration] for their history and quality of life and others for their importance as a tourist destination (author translation, INEGI 2000:25).

In Cozumel, the expatriate community has a strong presence online through Facebook, various websites, and a bi-monthly newsletter entitled “Cozumel4You.” Even the title, “Cozumel4You,” connotes an island that is filtered and tailored especially to the
expatriate community. Posted on the Facebook page and printed in the newsletter are links advertising the island’s small businesses owned and operated by the expatriate community. Such entrepreneurs are yoga instructors, restaurateurs, tour guides, vacation rental salesmen, professional photographers, writers, diving instructors, or real estate agents. Others are stay-at-home moms and retirees. Charity and volunteerism flow among certain expatriate circles as readily as frequent partying.

Mimicking the way the cruise ship industry constructs sensationalized rhetoric about the safety or security of certain stores (e.g. “approved” and “guaranteed” maps, see Figure 40), and therefore against the people of Cozumel, segments of the population on the island use their own construction or perception of paradise to create myths amongst each other about the value of their Mexican and tourist surroundings: the physical environment, language, and culture. Ethnocentrism and classism underpin most conversation regarding the island’s laws, customs, tourists, and local population.

In the case of the expatriate community, I would like to stress that while these sentiments are not universally shared by the entire expatriate community, this particular segment does create a metaphorical border around itself as predominantly English-speaking, socioeconomically community within the population of the island. The unique lens with which each expat, tourist, and migrant from the inland views him or herself, locals, tourists, island living, and his or her role in its structure is at times arresting and a clear example of Sheller’s asymmetrical gaze. In following vignettes, I use George Gmelch’s *Behind the Smile: The Working Lives of Caribbean Tourism* (2003) as a model for presenting ethnographic descriptions of conversations between ethnographer and informant. These short vignettes are intended to provide a context of the different types
of perceptions regarding how the island, tourists, and other expatriates, view the ways in which Cozumel is an international space where each of these population groups interact, converge, challenge each other daily.

**Donna**

I met Donna\(^{35}\) in a locally owned coffee shop. As it was midday with no cruise ships in port, she and I were the only people in the shop along with the staff. The sun was beating through the large front window yet inside was cool, dimly lit, and relaxing with soft music playing in the background. Donna, middle-aged, stocky, white woman from the central part of the U.S., sparked conversation with me, saying she was happy to see “friendly face” after she asked me if I was from the states. As we sat together, she openly explained her and her husband’s history with Cozumel. They came in late 1999 as cruise ship tourists and “instantly” fell in love with the island. Her husband became an accomplished underwater photographer and they decided to build a house in Cozumel. She detailed her trials and tribulations concerning local building codes and construction workers for nearly forty minutes. She said it was difficult in hiring “trustworthy handymen” to help with the construction and various home improvements as she explain a constant cycle of workers would come in and out to their home, showing up late or not working at all. Donna also explained how the bureaucratic “red tape” also held up the construction of her house on the island. She vented about the language barrier and how it was difficult for her to effectively communicate what she needed be done both in terms

\(^{35}\) All of the names in this chapter have been changed to respect the individuals interviewed.
of her home’s construction as well as what was expected from her from government officials.

Sipping our coffees in the cozy café, the bright orange sun slowly setting, she casually added, “What do you think about this Maya thing?” I was caught completely off guard at her question. Perhaps reading the look of shock on my face or my stunned silence, she quickly buffered the comment, stating, “They’re very proud of it and make a point to let you know they speak it.” Donna was referring to the presence of the indigenous Maya population of the island as well as non-English speaking Mexican nationals. I asked her what she meant and she continued to explain how she feels threatened when “they” call to her in broken English on Melgar about persuading her to come into their store and shop. “If only they would know more English, it would be so much better for them.” She associated English language skills as a way to for local businesses to generate more revenue from tourism. She added the English-speaking customers would feel “more comfortable” shopping and therefore spending money at such an establishment. She elaborated by introducing her own business plan. She said she wants to establish a mentoring program to equip local teachers with the tools to effectively teach English in order to boost the varied economic benefits of English language acquisition for business owners and employees on the island. We spoke at length about her proposition, yet at as the conversation dwindled, perhaps growing weary of my analysis of her idea, she declared it was a pipe dream by citing the local government as being “difficult” to work with.

Donna explained her experience as an expatriate and homeowner in Cozumel was steeped in difficulty. Difficulty in communication her wants and desires concerning the
construction of her home and walking down main tourist artery of Melgar Avenue, assimilating with an ethnically diverse population, and understanding a bureaucracy that is different than what she is accustom to in the United States. Her perception of language acquisition as a means to attain a better business model, and therefore more revenue, from tourism may not intentionally be misguided. Rather, her perception is symbolic of a distance she has constructed for between herself and the local, non-tourist, non-expat community of Cozumel.

**Nigel**

Cozumel’s Starbucks is located in Punta Langosta. This cruise ship pier and “Only Shopping Mall in Cozumel!” (which is incorrect as there are two others, Cozumel Royal Village and Puerta Maya) is two-stories and the Starbucks is located on the ground floor, at the bottom of the escalator that runs up to the pier itself. One busy morning, there were two Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.-owned cruise ships docked at this pier. As such, the café was filled to capacity with cruise ship tourists buying bottled water, frappes, cappuccinos, lattes, and pastries. Among cruise ship tourists connecting to their loved ones back in the states on Skype, text, or phone call on their smartphones and laptops, Nigel walked over to my table and asked to share the space with me. He said he was in his seventies and came to Cozumel to enjoy the warm weather, and to “thaw out my bones,” as he was originally from England. He explained that he was living in Cozumel for the winter and was looking for a specific bird species that is thought to be found only in the uninhabited, central part of the island. Nigel was warm, thoughtful in his answers, and above all excited to share his knowledge about ornithology. His
patience reached its zenith as he scientifically described that this specific bird may or may not be extinct, that it was a gamble to search for it relentlessly on a daily basis knowing it may not appear. Above all, he lovingly described his fondness for adventure and the island that trumped any frustrations with his (heretofore fruitless) quest. After leaving bird watching in Malaysia he moved to Mérida, the Yucatán’s largest Spanish colonial city on the western side of the peninsula. He stayed in Mérida for a year, enjoying the outdoor concerts of classical music and colonial architecture. When he asked about what I was doing on the island, since I was not a cruise ship tourist, we joked about my age. He said I looked too young to teach college undergraduates and he was incredulous to the fact I was living alone in Mexico. He said shockingly, “What do your parents say? Do you feel safe?” In describing my research, especially highlighting our current surroundings in Punta Langosta as a manufactured space created by the cruise ship industry, he replied, “Everyone brings a little bit of America with you [on vacation].”

Nigel was a world-traveler, even living for a time in Mérida with a developed understanding of the country, but he was left incredulous when confronted with the thought that I would be living alone in Mexico “at such a young age.” He associated Mexico with safety, much like the U.S.-based cruise ship industry and cruise ship tourists, questioning the reliance of statistical data such as the current the U.S. Department of State’s Travel Warning assuring the Riviera Maya was in fact safe for international tourists to travel. As such, the warning currently reads (as of January 9, 2014), “Quintana Roo: Cancun, Cozumel, Playa del Carmen, Riviera Maya and Tulum are major cities/travel destinations in Quintana Roo. No advisory is in effect.”
Additionally, my conversation with Nigel revealed a truth about mass tourists (tourists who chose a mass tourism vacation, like cruise ship tourism). His observation at Punta Langosta suggests the familiarity with which mass tourists travel is inherit, in that we never unpack and constantly travel with “a piece of us,” our own constructs of heritage and identity. Moreover, his observation hinted how the Americanization of mass tourism sites around the world is now commonplace. As we sat in the crowded café, an internationally owned and operated, multinational corporate conglomerate in its own right, our shared experience of our own identity within this manufactured space was perfectly juxtaposed between cruise ship tourism, transnational corporation, and international traveler. Each entity flowing and shifting, never stagnant, and all converged this morning in a manufactured, non-native space. Additionally, Nigel’s patience is in direct opposition with Donna’s perspective riddled with frustration. Even while he is searching for an elusive bird on the island, his frustrations have not impeded is worldview or judgment about his surroundings. This example is relevant to understanding the nuance of perspectives in its creation of understanding a culture that is different than one’s own, as in the case of Donna and Nigel.

Beach Cleanup Organization

At 9:00am on a Sunday, I stealthily navigated traffic and made my way on my bicycle to the southern side of San Miguel, to a mile stretch of public beach, between International Pier and Punta Langosta. I was to meet up with a beach cleanup organization on the island. According to their web presence on Facebook, the group has been formed to “promote beach cleanup on the island of Cozumel, but membership and
meaning are open to all who care to join in by cleaning up their curb, neighborhood, favorite park bench, or wherever you find inspiration.” Their Facebook group has 562 members as of April 2014. This group is organized by a group of expatriates on the island who arrange for volunteers to meet once a month at a local beach to collect trash that accumulates from the tides, nortes, and beach visitors. While there is no formalized membership to the group, it is often a chance for friends to meet, catch up with one another, and to work towards helping the environment and common good of the island.

Figure 69. Trash Accumulation on Cozumel's East Side, photograph taken February 23, 2014 (source, Elizabeth Sterne)
The weather that morning was pristine; the sun was high in the cloudless sky, and the Caribbean Sea was sparkling like a diamond. For about three hours I made my way southward, casually meeting the other participants as I filled bags with sea-flogged cutlery, sandals, beer and liquor bottles, shampoo containers, and yards of fishing line. Occasionally one of us found a piece of garbage that could be mistaken for something new: a small toy truck, hair comb, or swimming goggles. After hauling the bags into the back of a pickup truck, I was invited to the organizer’s ritual lunch date at an expat-owned and operated restaurant and beach club.

Among plates of crispy French fries, fresh fruit, iceberg lettuce salads, and bottled water, I learned that the women share a strong bond with one another. Some expats have lived on the island only six months, and others as long as nine years, keeping in touch via the Facebook page and frequently spending time together. Each of the women had either husbands or boyfriends on the island and their own dogs, which they toted around like prizes and cared for like babies—one woman ordered a snack for her canine. The Mexican server spoke English with the women and as he struggled with some words, they were quick to raise their voices in annunciation or assertively point to their orders on the bilingual menu. They collectively laughed when I casually asked if any of them spoke Spanish, as one woman responded that she was dating a Mexican man who was “teaching her all she needed to know.” They described that over the years they had seen a lot of changes on the island. Carmen, overweight, bleached blonde, and fifty-something, commented, “You used to be able to sit and recognize fifty people at a time; now with all these cruise ship tourists, that’s impossible!” During the lunch, I listened to the local *chisme*, or gossip, about each of their expat sisters. “*Who* is she dating?” “She
was so drunk!” “They sell the best (insert any number of objects) on the island.” Feeling wholly out of the loop, I nervously offered some of my knowledge about major Mexican national holidays, asking about their plans for the next day’s celebration of the Virgen de Guadalupe. Their blank stares informed me of their response. The strained social dynamic was alleviated as the conversation shifted to a debate about where to find the Balinese-import store.

The beach cleanup organization symbolizes a bridge between local and expatriate communities in Cozumel. Their work, cleaning up beaches on both sides of the island, benefits everyone: cruise ship tourists, government officials, and the general public. This organization provides a valuable public service to the entire island. The organization also represents an open space for different segments of the population (non-cruise ship tourists who may be staying on the island for a length of time, expatriates, and the local community) to mingle, meet, and work toward a common goal as it operates in a non-exclusive manner as all are welcome to join the cause both online and during monthly beach cleanups.

The chisme after the beach cleanup provides an interesting perspective of expat life on the island. This particular group of expat women have banded together because of Donna’s aforementioned difficulties in assimilating to Mexican culture. Their bond is representative of any community living outside of their own native land in adhering to their native language, foods, and customs (e.g. doting on their pets). This particular perspective is unique in that it becomes normative, a central narrative for all to follow, for the other members of this group.
Kimberly

Kimberly, an island resident for eight years and an avid world traveler as a photographer, spent the day with me touring local eateries, indulging in tacos al pastor and homemade helado. She was barely comfortable making small talk with each food vendor, shyly whispering, “Gracias.” Her easy demeanor shined as she maneuvered the busy sidewalks, skillfully navigating tourists and locals while claiming a spot on the pavement for her own. One small restaurant we stumbled upon was known for its pozole. We spoke in depth about regional and national Mexican politics as we heaped fresh radish slices, cilantro, and avocado onto steaming bowls of shredded pork and hominy stew. The national presidential election was that year and she offered her theory of the Mexican political process, “It’s a boys club, you know.” Our conversation turned to describing how island life is riddled with paperwork and frustration. Kimberly described that it was a “mountain of paperwork to go through” when it her and her husband had to pay bills, when they made large purchases, or when they applied for residency. “The thing I miss most about the U.S.A. is the order of things, or at least the outside appearance of order…Mexico is [flooded] with rules, regulation, and paperwork.”

Speaking of my time spent working at an anthropological field school in Pisté, Mexico, about three kilometers from Chichén Itzá, Kimberly, seemingly out of nowhere, affirmed, “Maya houses have no sense of space or privacy.” When questioned about her reasoning, she qualified her comment by observing the difference as “stark” between homes in Playa del Carmen and Cozumel. She continued, as more Maya have begun to recently “see modern architecture” with expats building homes, “traditional homes are no longer wanted.”
Kimberly, like Donna before her, also noted the difficulty she had with Mexican bureaucracy as an expatriate. Paperwork was inextricably linked to frustration and dreams of simpler processes of similar tasks in the U.S. Kimberly’s observation between indigenous or “traditional” lifestyles and architecture with modernity represents an interesting opinion regarding the dynamics between indigeneity and modernity in Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula. It is difficult to rationalize her understanding of space and identity when compared to the U.S. Does a New Englander from rural Maine go to New York City and feel suddenly incomplete or less modern without modern accommodations built from concrete and steel? Overall, Kimberly’s frustrations echo Donna’s and the expat group of women in the beach cleanup organization as their perspectives are directly influenced and affected by the difficulty in transitioning to a culture, language, and worldview other than their own.

_Eduardo_

On my last night on the island in August 2012, an event was coordinated at a local beach bar and restaurant to benefit an island resident, a fellow expat, who needed fundraising for her cancer treatments. A portion of the night’s bar tab was to be donated and a live auction was the main fundraiser for gift certificates and bottles of alcohol. A group of young, alternative-rock musicians-turned-classic-1970s-beach-jam-band for the night joyfully played “Margaritaville” as the “who’s who” of the island’s expatriate community streamed into the party. Some were casual with bathing suits and dogs in tow. Others dressed as if attending the hottest dance club in New York City, in short
skirts, high heels, and sparkly tank tops. Everyone seemed to know each other and
cliques quickly formed as groups cornered off in different sections of the party.

As the night wore on, drinks steadily flowing by this point, a local celebrity
appeared. He was infamous among the expatriate community, known for his womanizing
and laid back, “anything goes” demeanor with foreign tourists and expats. Eduardo
jovially worked the crowd. He was rather stocky but strongly built, with an unbuttoned
Hawaiian shirt that exposed his chest, hair that grazed his shoulders (which he made a
point of touching carelessly as he spoke), and multiple shell necklaces made with leather.
As I extended a handshake, he pulled me in and smiled warmly, seemingly right through
me. I wanted to know more about him, especially after seeing the raucous welcome he
received from the high-heeled crowd of fifty-something’s at the bar and reputation of
fierce loyalty to and from this crowd of expats. As we engaged in conversation, Eduardo
told me he was born in the Yucatán and I quickly replied, “I’ve lived in Pisté the last two
summers, which town were you born in, is it near there?” He coyly smiled and turned to
answer an onlooker’s question about his notorious invitation-only boat parties. I pressed,
“Do you speak Maya? I’m learning Maya in Pisté! What brought you to Cozumel from
the Yucatán? What do you do [as a job]? I’ve heard you are something of a quasi-tour
guide!” He turned and looked me straight in the eyes, seemingly annoyed, then raised his
glass in cheers to stop my badgering. I felt defeated, embarrassed, and again, out of the
loop.

Although not an expatriate in the traditional sense of a non-national coming to
call Cozumel home, Eduardo holds an important position in the expatriate community of
Cozumel. No matter the truth to the *chisme* that surrounds him, he is a cultural broker
between local, tourist, and expat who come to call Cozumel their slice of paradise, no matter whether it is as a cruise ship tourist for a few hours or an expat living on the island for decades. His expressive and dynamic demeanor engages all who enter his orbit. How he yields this power is exceptionally interesting—part playboy, part cultural gatekeeper, part aging hippie. Consciously avoiding my questions was part of maintaining his social standing and his position as a cultural broker. Eduardo himself is straddling his own identity and selfhood with an Other. If he strays too far to one side, like talking about where he was born or what language he speaks, then he cannot stay on the fence anymore. He will be out. Or outed. He has keenly brokered his position to remain mysterious to outsiders and loyal to his supporters.

Eduardo represents a balancing act between expatriates, tourists, and Mexicans living and touring the island. His presence also harkens an understanding of the larger social, linguistic, stratifications between inland Yucatán as mostly a site for heritage tourism and the Riviera Maya as a site of mass tourism. His silence when confronted with the origins of his links to Pisté, including Maya language or identity, suggests an internal struggle of selfhood. Tourists and expatriate’s perception of Eduardo as a local celebrity represents

**Conclusion: Perceptions of Space in a Port-of-Call Community**

The role of a non-tourist population in port-of-call community is an important addition to the story of cruise ship tourism as it revels the nuances of such a public space. Local perceptions need to be understood in terms of navigating tourists, fellow expatriates, government, language, and identity formation. For example, the community
of expatriates on Cozumel is as varied and diverse as the rest of the island’s population. Some are just looking for a good time with one another, sipping cocktails and dissecting the island’s latest social scandal. Others are working hard to build meaningful businesses or charitable causes, contributing to the social and economic wellbeing of the island. Some intentionally create borders between themselves and their local communities while others fully integrate and want to learn about their new country.

There are also certain perceptions by island residents that are used to categorize cruise ship tourists that visit the island. For example, one man in his late twenties, shared an epithet about cruise ship tourists to Cozumel as, “overfed, newlywed, or nearly dead.” This is popular adage among residents of the island categorizes this segment of Cozumel’s shifting population. A restaurateur originally from Texas labeled cruise ship tourists from Carnival Cruise Lines as “Carnies” due to their raucous, unrestrained behavior while disembarked. He added that for many, it is their first time leaving the U.S. and they can be pushy and loud not only as customers to his restaurant but around the island. Prevailing above all else is the notion that Cozumel is their island, not the tourists’, who are merely visiting and entitled to nothing. Tourists are second-class citizens to be pitied for their lack of knowledge when it comes to how the ferry to Playa del Carmen works, where the best dive sites are located, or how to avoid being charged the full cab fare when taking a taxi. Many cite the destruction of the environment as cause to become hostile toward cruise ship tourism while others mockingly dismiss the daily influx of balloon-hat cruise ship tourists, as a continued nuisance to their daily lives.

These perspectives about cruise ship tourists are unique to Cozumel as it exists as both a port-of-call community, operating for cruise ship tourism, and another way as a
permanent settlement for a portion of the population that does not leave after the last cruise ship sails away. These perspectives are important in understanding the nuances of each population segment. Above all, the effects of cruise ship tourism on a port-of-call community are complex, as this genre of tourism produces spatialized boundaries between host and guest. While the cruise ship industry creates physical borders on the land (i.e. at the three cruise ship piers and associated mall of the island), these aforementioned perceptions are fluid and subject to change.

Borders are fluid concepts yet, as in the context of cruise ship tourism, this is not the case. They are specifically engineered by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry for the enjoyment of cruise ship tourists’ sense of safety, familiarity, and ease of consumption. Similarly, the expatriate community of Cozumel (e.g. Donna, Nigel, the Beach Cleanup Organization, and Kimberly), and certain stakeholders in the tourism industry (e.g. Eduardo) create a personal façade, a borderzone of their own, to protect their identity from “the Other.” This argument is central to all mass tourist communities, from Tokyo to Martha’s Vineyard. Homeowners claim stake to the territory as their own while tourists flitter on the periphery of the “real, local, or underground.” One business owner, originally from the U.S. Northeast, surmises:

There are certain types of people [in the expat community] who feel privileged. They are oblivious because of their sense of entitlement; they don’t understand this is a different country and moreover different culture. As foreigners, we must accept that (interview, December 2011).
VII. Confronting Imperialism: Conclusions Regarding Constructs of Spatiality in Cruise Ship Tourism

Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua; 1988), Polly Pattullo (the entire Caribbean; 1996) and the documentary *Life and Debt* (Jamaica; 2001) describe the way all-inclusive resorts and mass tourism are potentially destructive entities to local culture. These publications argue that such all-inclusive tourism threatens the sustainability of environmental resources (e.g. potable water, farming, and social psyche of both host and guest). Cultural manifestations of an ultimately neocolonial relationship between transnational corporation (the resort), international tourists (predominately white or light phenotypes), and the host population is also described. Each of the aforementioned communities has historically faced economic and political marginalization from entities like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

In comparison to such regions, Cozumel does not face the same historically rooted economic or political hardships as many of its Caribbean counterparts. While multiple environmental threats (e.g. reef damage, wind farming, potable water; see Santander et. al 2011) to the island due to cruise ship and resort tourism are apparent, the data generated from this research shows the cultural and social implications of U.S.-based cruise ship industry are more dire to the stability and sustainability of mass tourism to the island. The spatiality of both host and guest is important when analyzing all-inclusive tourism as physical distance is purposefully constructed between host and guest. In the context of Cozumel, such space is engineered by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry.
In the context of cruise ship tourism in the Caribbean, and employing Cozumel as a case study as a port-of-call community, spatiality as an analysis for power is way to compare local and international entities. “Imperialism and colonialism should be conceptualized geographically– as constellations of power that are intrinsically concerned with land, territory, displacement, and dispossession” (Gregory 1995:448). The historical connection between Caribbean colonialisms (i.e. colonialism, neocolonialism, and post-colonialism) is translated in the context of cruise ship tourism as an imperial power based on a conceptualization of geography. A spatial division between local and U.S.-based industries, including Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC as a singular, foreign structure, is present in Cozumel. This spatial division, as engineered and governed by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, symbolizes a form of foreign imperialism in the island.

**Challenging Cruise Ship Tourism’s Construction of “Approved” and “Guaranteed” Spaces**

Competition with the U.S.-based cruise ship industry’s “approved” and “guaranteed” shore excursions is tangible among independent tour guides and operators. How does a privately owned and operated tour compete with hundreds of U.S.-based cruise ship industry-approved shore excursion options (see Chapter 4)? To compete, such tour operators are relying on savvy Internet marketing, positive TripAdvisor ratings and comments, and tapping into niche tourism markets. Rankings on TripAdvisor are calculated based on the number and level of visitor ratings. Further explaining the
TripAdvisor process, another independent tour, *Mayan Steam Lodge*, recently sent out an email to all past participants who submitted a review on TripAdvisor. The email urged past reviewers to resubmit another review under a new tool release on the website called “Review Express.” They say, “Remember, as an independent attraction, this is the only way we have for promoting and marketing our experience so the idea is very simple: help others to find us as others have helped you to find us” (personal email correspondence 20 July 2013). This tour functions independently from the U.S.-based cruise ship-approved tours and relies on prior customer’s comments, feedback, and “word-of-mouth” to promote this tour online.

Julia, an expat from the east coast who has lived on the island for half a decade, is an independent tour operator. Julia owns and operates a multi-dimensional tour company: she specializes in walking food tours around the island, cooking meals for tourists at their resort or hotel as a private chef, and she also conducts cooking classes for tourists. Julia’s webpage for her tours on TripAdvisor lists a total of 153 reviews with 150 excellent visitor ratings, two “very good” visitor ratings, and one “terrible” visitor rating. There are zero visitor ratings for either “average” or “poor” choices on the scale. Visitors to TripAdvisor who have been on Julia’s tour can provide the visitor rating (a five-star ranking system), a 100-character minimum review, as well as uploading photos taken during the tour. Many reviews cite the ease by which they found Julia’s tour from reading other travelers’ reviews on TripAdvisor, connecting to her website which is linked on the TripAdvisor page, then emailing her directly.

Julia told me about the difficulties in establishing her business as a premier activity on TripAdvisor. There is stiff competition among tours and attractions on the
island that operate independently from the cruise ship companies. Independent tours like Julia’s must reach potential cruise ship and stay-over tourists directly, without the help of an all-inclusive resort or an international cruise ship corporation like Royal Caribbean or Carnival to help market and sell their tour to tourists. Julia has spent countless hours developing and maintaining a website and Facebook accounts along with TripAdvisor profile pages specific to each of her businesses. She personally responds to every message posted on Facebook as well as keeping the lines of communication open through email with potential, current, and past tour participants. Needless to say, she seems overworked and tired.

Julia helped me to contextualize the struggle over which attraction is ranked as the number one activity in TripAdvisor’s “Things to Do in Cozumel” website\(^\text{36}\) (TripAdvisor 2013). She describes a positive ranking on the site as if it were a badge of honor, both a great professional marker among fellow island tours, and a point of sale for potential tourists. This badge of honor is both literal and metaphorical. It is literal in the sense that some tours have framed certificates (“Certificate of Excellence”) or wall art illustrating their positive TripAdvisor ranking (or even that they are listed on the website). Such markers are symbolic in their reflection of a tour’s particular badge of honor; such visual signs tell tourists either from their comfort of an Internet connection, once they are disembarked from a cruise ship, or are already vacationing in the island as stay-over tourists, of that particular tour’s prestige or superiority to other tours maybe not listed on TripAdvisor or when compared to tours with worse rankings.

\(^{36}\) As of July 29, 2013, there are 186 activities listed.
TripAdvisor attracts a unique type of tourist. Julia articulates the type of tourists who choose her tours: “They’re better tourists. Not fanny pack, Hawaiian shirt kind…the tour attracts a different kind of tourist, more adventurous…who wants to go off the beaten path” (interview, 1 December 2011). Julia has consistently compared the “balloon hat” tourist, often seen inebriated at Punta Langosta cruise ship pier, with this “different kind of tourist.” The “balloon hat” tourist of Cozumel is on the island for a few hours after disembarking from their cruise ship. Their main purpose is to get drunk at either Carlos n’ Charlies, Hooters, Margaritaville, or Señor Frogs—establishments that are neither locally owned nor “off the beaten path,” located only steps from the piers where cruise ship tourists disembark on Melgar. These bar/restaurants cater predominately to cruise ship tourists and are similar to the mass-appeal of TGIFriday’s, Applebees, or Outback Steakhouse in the U.S. Part of the appeal of these bar/restaurants is that they give away blow-up balloon animals, bracelets, flowers, and hats to patrons who are drinking. On any given day walking the streets of downtown San Miguel, near Melgar and especially in and around the three cruise ship piers (or even inside Walmart-like Mega), you can spot at least one “balloon hat tourist.”

In contrast, Julia’s efforts at attracting a different kind of tourist are rewarded by the amount of work she undertakes. She markets her services and tours directly to tourist online through email, Facebook, her company website, and on TripAdvisor. This type of independent tour allows for flexibility in services Julia offers and a platform for direct outreach to tourists while remaining independent from the control of the cruise ship companies. She offers a niche experience for tourists wanting to learn about contemporary food culture on the island.
Julia’s Walking Food Tour

As previously mentioned, Julia operates a food tour in which she guides tourists into what everyday life is like on the island. Food is such an integral part of Yucatecán culture (Ayora-Díaz 2012) that for tourists to experience street food, *comida económica*, food that is prepared with fresh ingredients and by hand, rather than mass produced and flash frozen—is essential to understanding the uniqueness of a particular culture. Julia accompanies cruise ship and stay-over tourists around some of San Miguel’s finest dining choices either by foot or in her car. Some tourists even make the ferry ride over from Playa del Carmen if they are staying at one of the mainland resorts on the Riviera Maya.

Walking out of the calm serenity of a coffee shop on a particularly hot and sunny day in December, you quickly remember again where you are—an observer embedded in a web of a mass tourism. Tourists crowd the busy main street of Melgar, hunting for souvenirs, some walking with giant sombreros on their heads, snapping pictures, with yard-stick margaritas in their hands. That such morning, I met up with a young Canadian couple who were traveling the Yucatán for their vacation while staying at Playa del Carmen. We met at 9:00am in front of the swallow statue where the ferry to Playa del Carmen is located (Figure 70).
We all jumped in Julia’s car and headed due east, away from Melgar, the cruise ships, and the tourists. Just a few blocks inland in San Miguel, we sat down in the small open-air restaurant on plastic red chairs, the sun warming our faces while we ate delicious homemade *tacos, tortas, and liquados*. After the group finished this first course, Julia said we were to walk to two more restaurants to sample some Yucatecan specialties, *cochinita pibil, salbutes, and panuchos*. Amidst walking and eating, Julia gave a history of Yucatec cuisine, shared the challenges of cooking with 100% imported products in the island, and spoke casually with the different vendors, servers, and fellow chefs at each of the four restaurants we traveled to. We also toured the island’s centralized *mercado* and
a local bakery—sampling fresh herbs, fruits, and pan dulce the entire time. We walked throughout the maze of small streets that make up inland San Miguel.

Along our way, the honeymooming couple spoke of their relaxing vacation they were having in Playa del Carmen and noted how busy Melgar Avenue is when cruise ships were in port in Cozumel. During the tour, the Canadian couple noted the distinct divide between the “tourist” and the “local” parts of the island. Leaving the hustle and bustle of Melgar, the couple commented, “Here you see school kids, Mexican families, papelerías, cocinas económicas! Just a five minute car ride and it looks and feels totally different than where the ferry drops you off!” (interview, 8 December 2011). Walking around inland San Miguel made an impression with the couple as they said they found it more welcoming than Melgar Avenue and the crowds of cruise ship tourists.

At the end of the day, feeling bloated and happy, we each said our goodbyes. Julia made a note that the best tip we could give her would be a positive TripAdvisor review. In their review on TripAdvisor, the couple say:

We went on the 'Cozumel Food Tour' (me and my girlfriend). And if you are looking for an authentic dining experience, which is very hard to find in the touristy areas of Mexico, then meeting with the Cozumel Chef for any of her tours is an absolute must. We went to a few (secret) amazing little eateries that really displayed authentic Mexican dining at its finest. If I could somehow bring those recipes back to Canada I’d be a very wealthy man. YOU MUST GO ON THIS TOUR! (TripAdvisor 2011).
Confronting the Packaged Dream: Independent Success

Running a successful business in Cozumel is based on multiple factors: customer traffic, positive TripAdvisor rankings, completing a certain number of tours a week, having steady cash flow coming in at a regular pace, and simply staying in business when the seasons change in terms of tourists coming to the island. As Julia has proven with her independent company, a positive TripAdvisor ranking is critical to an independent tour’s success and long-term sustainability. She is combating the corporatization of businesses in Cozumel by remaining independent. TripAdvisor provides a platform for tourists to connect and share their experiences. This platform represents a way to confront and
circumvent the U.S.-based cruise ship industry’s control over “approved” and
“guaranteed” spaces as well as franchised businesses who operate in contract with the
cruise ship industry. One reviewer writes of Julia’s tour,

We have been on over 25 cruises--and probably a total of at least 75 tours. This
tour was among the very best (at least in the top three!). I will post some photos,
which I hope will show how much fun we had. My advice to cruise travelers:
Before leaving your home, check out TripAdvisor to find the best places to visit
and the best tours of the ports at which you will stop. If you see a highly rated
tour, read all about it, and read the reviews from travelers. Don't be afraid to book
a popular, highly rated tour off a reputable tour operator's website. Each time we
have done so, we have experienced a great tour—often considerably smaller and
more personal than ship tours (TripAdvisor July 2013).

Figure 72. One Block Heading Eastward from Melgar Avenue in Cozumel

This review locates cruise ship tourists claims of safety for not wanting to book a non-
approved or “ship tour,” saying, “Don’t be afraid to book a popular, highly rated tour off
a reputable tour operator’s website.” This statement affirms that the U.S.-based cruise
ship industry formulates fear, hesitation, or skepticism among cruise ship tourists when
booking a tour in a port-of-call community. A question posted in a private Facebook
group and forum for Cozumel tours, asks, “In your experience, are booking excursions
not associated with the ship a bit lower in cost? How can you guarantee they are reputable? Or is it pretty much the same costs” (January 23, 2014)? One response states,

I've almost always done non-ship excursions and heck, sometimes we are with people on a ship's excursion. They sometimes use the same vendors. The operators are in business to stay in business. They will get you back on time if at all possible. We always give ourselves plenty of time. We even love to rent a vehicle and drive around some islands. Only if we are going somewhere quite a distance from the port, like Tulum in Mexico from Cozumel for example, will we use a ships excursion (January 24, 2014).

The operation of independent tours and platforms for communication among tourists looking to book such tours work to quell rumors of safety concerns. A guarantee or approval from a corporate entity like “approved” and “guaranteed” businesses in port-of-call communities, while surely grants cruise ship tourists “peace of mind” in an abstract way, is no method to justify a business’ reputation or the high costs of operation. Above all, as this text affirms, this construction of “approved” and “non-approved” entities does not necessarily ensure proper distribution of profits among the local operator and owner and the U.S.-based cruise ship industry.

**Inclusivity Fraught with Dystopia**

Cozumel is home to a unique blend of tourisms and tourists: from temporary cruise ship tourists, all-inclusive, stay-over hotel guests, backpackers from the mainland, to those “running away from something,” as the expat school director previously alluded. All converge and blend in this thirty-mile-long island that welcomes nearly three million cruise ship tourists annual and thousands on a daily basis (see Figure 54). Vendors, restaurateurs, hotel workers, timeshare sellers, and tour operators all work extremely hard
to produce an experience for each tourist they encounter. From a New Age Maya spiritualist from Mexico City, working as a shaman/tour guide for a popular steam bath for tourists, to a native New Jerseyan, working to establish herself as a private chef and food tour guide, each local Cozumeléño provides a service that stands out from the rest of the competition for tourism revenue. For example, these tours operate in competition with other tourism destinations in the Riviera Maya, the Caribbean, and Mexico. This includes pre-booked shore excursions offered on the cruise ships (see Chapter 4) and among other locally owned and operated businesses. Competition is also correlated with positive reviews and rankings in locally produced marketing publications or online travel sites, like Trip Advisor. Positive reviews, rankings, and comments submitted by tourists are prized commodities as they represent the possibility of gaining more or future business. In turn, negative reviews, rankings, and comments can damage a businesses’ reputation and negatively affect revenues as well as reputation among local residents (interview, August 2012).

While such communities and activities are vibrant and widespread, the physicality of space on the island is divided. A mere two blocks heading eastward, away from the busy main tourist artery of Melgar Avenue, you are suddenly transported into a different landscape. Yet this is not to label the non-tourist zone of the island as “authentic Mexico;” that romanticized notion is false. The two converge daily but in segmented ways, in the structured confines of the tourist zone as manufactured by the cruise ship industry. Such constructed spaces are the three cruise ship piers on the island: Punta Langosta, International Pier, and Puerta Maya. These piers are physical manifestations of
boundaries intended to satisfy cruise ship tourist’s desires of pristine paradise while keeping profits in the hands of the cruise ship industry.

Figure 73. Signposting and Designating Space: Cruise Ship Tourism in Cozumel
The U.S.-Based Cruise Ship Industry as an Imperial Subject

As woven throughout the body of this text\textsuperscript{37}, power is an overarching theme, synthesizing many concepts of cruise ship mass tourism into one central focus. It is imperative to note that there are degrees of agency among the local community of Cozumel, as power, even authoritative in nature, is not completely hegemonic. Individual and collective agency, concepts that Sherry Ortner (2006) uses to critique the way Bourdieu (1977) and Sahlins (1981) have omitted both (individual and collective agency) from their descriptions of power is useful in describing cruise ship tourism.

Ortner describes agency as not merely a form of U.S. individualism but a shifting force embedded within cultural construction. It is the focus of my research and perhaps a call to anthropology to expand Ortner’s conception of the way agency is “shaped, nourished or stunted” under different regimes of power (Ortner 2006:137). Focusing on the social construct of power in terms of regimes, whether they are multinational, political, or social in nature, is extremely useful when analyzing mass tourism. Moreover, this line of thinking works in thinking how applied work can answer community questions on how to best “support, collaborate, and help” the local population of Cozumel and other port-of-call communities under the theoretical guise of imperial power.

Authoritative power, as translated from Weber (1968), “implies the ability to require performance that is based upon the performer’s belief in the rightness of the system” (Allan 2005:170). In the context of Cozumel as a cruise ship port-of-call

\textsuperscript{37} The body of this text refers to the entirety of this dissertation.
community, this system is engineered by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry. This system of power is symbolic of how the cruise ship itself is the main focal point and attraction for cruise ship tourists and this idea remains intact while docked at a port-of-call community. In Cozumel, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC own and operate the spaces cruise ship tourists mainly inhabit while disembarked, located at Punta Langosta, International Pier and Cozumel Royal Village, and Puerta Maya piers and associate shopping spaces. Their ownership of these spaces purposefully shape retail, dining, and tours that operate here based in legality and contract agreements with both international and local businesses.

This intentionally created spatial segmentation between cruise ship tourists and the local community, and thus legitimated by the U.S.-based cruise ship industry. Both the cruise ship itself and counterparts found in port-of-call communities in the form of the cruise ship “guaranteed” and “approved” shopping, dining, and tours represent “exotic summations of paradise”—as first theorized by Urry’s tourist gaze (1990). These summations, however, are not “exotic” as they are constructed by the industry to be both mass-produced and replicated throughout port-of-call communities in the Caribbean (Preble 2008). For example, the same retail stores are found at multiple port-of-calls like Diamonds International, Margaritaville, and Del Sol apparel. This replication of experience, defined first onboard the cruise ship and translated on land in the form of “approved” spaces at port-of-calls, describe the U.S.-based cruise ship industry’s imperial position of mass-produced replicas of internationally owned and operated corporations.

The omnipotent nature and spatialization created by U.S.-based cruise ship tourism throughout Caribbean port-of-call communities does not necessarily imply social
coercion. Local negotiation with these structures of authority is certainly present in Cozumel. Locally owned or operated businesses can survive and even thrive either way, working independently from the U.S.-based cruise ship industry or all-inclusive resorts as exemplified with Julia’s tour company in Cozumel. One can even work within the system to their advantage like the timeshare staff at Park Royal. Each of these opportunities is just that: an opportunity for advancement, a steady income, and the chance to be a productive contributor to the local and multinational economy.

Above all, perhaps, is the fact that these are privileged positions within the framework of labor in a complex environment of mass tourism. Unlike most low-wage, hourly positions, such as those described by Bianet M. Castellanos (2010) in Cancun, like masons working to build each resort or housecleaner at a hotel, this text highlights more privileged positions of labor within the context of an international tourism destination. For example, timeshare sales and operating an independent tour business require an investment of both money and time. Additionally, these jobs require social networks including, but not limited to, reliable access to transportation, access and understanding of computers, a reliable Internet connection, and the ability to speak English.

A climate of competition exists in Cozumel that the U.S.-based cruise ship industry engineers. This is evident when comparing local business owners, operators, and employees participating with internationally owned and operated businesses for tourism revenue. This climate is tangible among island residents working in the service sector: from timeshare salesperson at a highly rated all-inclusive resort to a non-Spanish speaking (who is fluent in only Maya) kiosk vendor selling souvenirs from a pushcart in Puerta Maya. The legalities surrounding each agreement between local business and
cruise line is ripe for further study in questioning the industry’s motives and assessing local negotiation. Examining further confrontations between locally owned and operated businesses, independent from the U.S.-based cruise ship industry, also has the opportunity for further questioning. As such, the local community of Venice, Italy has been actively protesting the presence of cruise ships, specifically ships over 40,000 tons, which are owned and operated by Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Carnival Corporation & PLC.

Local concerns are manifold, and range from questions over the pollution — water, noise and air — created by the ships, to the impact on the lagoon’s ecosystem and the potential erosion of the marble of Venice’s buildings and their underwater foundations (Povoledo 2011).

Figure 74. A Cruise Ship Dwarfs Via Garibalidi in Venice (source, Manuel Silvestri/Reuters)
Environmental concerns of these large ships are mainly sited in online petitions protesting their continued presence in Venice. Venice as a port-of-call community is similar to Cozumel as tourism fuels its economy. In 2010, “at least 619 passenger ships and 581 passenger ferries made stops here [in Venice] — a de rigueur destination of many Mediterranean cruise itineraries — unloading more than two million visitors onto Venetian streets, usually for short stays” (Povoledo 2011). In comparison with Venitian cruise ship tourism, nearly three million cruise ship passengers disembark in Cozumel annually. Yet, does an entire city’s imminent demise due to cruise ship tourism must be the sole catalyst to ignite community mobilization against multinational entities? It does not have to come to the threat of complete structural devastation. As of January 2013,

> The number of cruise ships 40,000 tons or more sailing in Venetian waters must be reduced by 20 percent of the current volume. Then, in November, no cruise ships over 96,000 will be permitted to sail in the lagoon. Officials expect that cruise ship traffic will be rerouted through the Contorta Sant'Angelo Canal, which is farther away from the best-known parts of the city” (CruiseCritic 2013b).

While there are still calls for the complete ban of cruise ship tourism to Venice, the rerouting of cruise ships in Venice is a victory for the cultural landmark of Venice and for the movement against further environmental destruction. Social mobilization against the U.S.-based cruise ship industry is necessary to create awareness of the destruction, not just environmental as in the case of Venice, but rather cultural and societal as well as highlight throughout this text.
Figure 75. Mural Found in a Venice Street (source, Elizabeth Feldkamp)
References

Adorno, Theodor W. and Max Horkheimer

Agamben, Giorgio

Allan, Kenneth D.

Allen, Kieran

Anderson, Benedict R.

APIQROO

Appadurai, Arjun

Atelijevic, Irena and Stephen Doorne

Ayora-Diaz, Steffan Igor

Bauman, Zygmunt

Barthès, Roland

Baudrillard, Jean

Bendix, Regina

Bennett, Milton, J., ed.

Berman, Micha

Black, Stephanie
Blouet, Olwyn M.  

Bossen, Laurel  

Bourdieu, Pierre  

Breglia, Lisa  

Brulotte, Ronda L.  


Brown, Robbie, Kim Severson, and Barry Meier  

Bruner, Edward  

Bruns, Brian David  

Bruns, Brian David and Steve Urban  

Bunten, Alexis Celeste  

Byczkowski, John  

Caribbean Community (CARICOM)  

Carnival Corporation & PLC  


312
Castañeda, Quetzil E. and Jeffrey Himpele

Castañeda, Quetzil E.

Castellaños, Bianet

Clancy, M. J.

Classic Caribbean

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA)

Clifford, James

CNBC

Cocom, Juan Castillo
Cocom Juan Castillo and Saúl Ríos Luviano

Cohen, Erik

Comaroff, John and Jean Comaroff

Crick, Malcolm

CruiseCritic.com
2013. “Costa Maya Cruise Port.” Accessed here:
2013a. “Six Cruise Line Private Islands.” Accessed here:
http://www.cruisecritic.com/features/articles.cfm?ID=556

CruisePortInsider.com

Cudahy, B.J.

Culler, Jonathan D.

Dann, Graham

DeHart, Monica

Dickinson, Bob and Andy Vladimir

Dicks, Bella

Dowling, Ross K., ed.
Eco, Umberto

Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA)

Foucault, Michel

Forbes.com
http://www.forbes.com/forbes-400/list/

Frantz, Douglas

Frow, John

Garin, Kristoffer A.

Gane, Nicholas

Gibson, Mel

Giddens, Anthony

Gleeson-Adamidis, Joyce
2000. If I Were Not Upon the Sea: Under the Captain’s Table. Publisher: Author.

Gmelch, George
Graburn, Nelson

Greenwood, Davydd J.

Gregory, Derek

Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson

Hall, Stuart, ed.

Herring, Jay

Hiernaux Nicolas, Daniel, ed.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía, e Informática (INEGI)

Israel, Giora and Laurence Miller

Kidder, Alfred V.

Kincaid, Jamaica

Klein, Ross


Lancaster, Roger N.

Little, Walter E.

MacCannell, Dean

Mallon, Florencia

Mancini, M.

Mateboer, Hans

Matthews, Jennifer P.

Maxtone-Graham, John

Meier, Barry and John Schwarz

McClintock, Anne

McClintock, Anne, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat, eds.

McNulty, R. and P. Wafer
Medina, Laurie K.  

Meethan, Kevin  

Mowforth, Martin and Ian Munt  

Murphy, Arthur D. and Alex Stepick  

Ocean Conservancy  

OpenSecrets.org  

Ortner, Sherry  

Povoledo, Elisabetta  

PortMiami.com  

Port of New Orleans  

Pratt, Mary Louise  
PuertaMaya.com

RadioCoralTV

ReCruz, Alicia

Redfield, Robert

Ritzer, George

Rosaldo, Renato

Roseberry, William

Royal Caribbean International
2013. Royal Caribbean Travel Brochure. N.A.


Roys, Ralph L.

Sahlins, Marshall

Santander, Luis Carlos and Martín Ramos Díaz
Sampson, Hannah

Sheller, Mimi

Schoof, Renee

Schroeder, Jonathan

Schweppenhäuser, Gerhard

Skwiot, Christine

Smith, Valene L., ed.

Sontag, Susan

Stanley, Nick

Steggerda, Morris

Stephen, Lynn

Stoller, Paul

Taylor, Sarah

Thalji, Jamal
Tomlinson, John

Torres, Rebecca

Torres, Rebecca and Janet D. Momsen

TripAdvisor.com


Urry, John

U.S. Department of State

Van den Berghe, Pierre

Walker, Jim

Wang, Nina

Ward, Evan R.

Weber, Max
Wilson, Richard
Wood, Robert E.
World Tourism Organization (WTO)
Wright, Asia N.