



Hecho a mano:
the production of power relations in tourism practices
at the Santo Domingo market in Cristóbal de Las Casas
and in San Juan Chamula, Mexico.

Sacha Buisman
Wageningen University
November 2015

*Hecho a mano*¹:
the constructions of power relations in tourism practices at the Santo Domingo
market in Cristóbal de Las Casas and in San Juan Chamula, Mexico.

‘Definitions belong to the definers, not the defined’, (Morrison 1988).

Sacha Buisman
Wageningen University
November 2015

MSc program:	International Development Studies
Specialization:	Rural Development Sociology
Thesis code:	RSO 80433
Supervisors:	Joost Jongerden Hamzah Muzaini

¹ *Hecho a mano* is Spanish for 'made by hand'. It is an expression commonly used on the artisan market in San Cristóbal de Las Casas by the vendors who promote their handicrafts. The expression *hecho a mano* articulates the idea of something being 'authentic' and is used to 'add' value to the product.

Permission is given by the persons that are portrayed in the pictures (made by the author) that are used in this thesis report.

Abstract

The aim of this study is to gain insights in how power relations are produced in tourism practices. This is studied from a performance perspective, which argues that the identities of people and places are constructed in acts and doings: the performances. This perspective stresses the temporality in which realities are constructed, because they need to be performed in order to be constructed. Performances of people and places are always enacted relationally, which gives rise to the multiplicity of constructed identities.

Power is conceptualized in a Foucauldian way by seeing power as a certain fluid relation that is produced in the relational performances of people and places. Hence, in order to see how power is produced in tourism practices, the focus has to be on the relational performances of people and places that construct these power relations.

Two places in Mexico were selected for this research: the crafts market of Santo Domingo in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, and the indigenous village of San Juan Chamula., located ten kilometres northeast of San Cristóbal de Las Casas. These places were selected because they are both 'touristic', in the sense that they are popular destinations for holidaying and traveling (foreign) people. Observations and interviews in these two research settings have been carried out to collect data, which is presented in thick descriptions in order to grasp the multisensual ways in which places are constructed. Three portraits will be presented, which shows how the identities of 'the tourist', the 'local' and 'the tour-guide' are constructed in performances. Furthermore, data is collected in participant observations during organized tours to the indigenous villages.

In the conclusion, the concept of the tourist bubble will be introduced to show how power is relationally produced in tourism practices. Tourist bubbles are considered as produced in the performances of people, they are shaped by the multiple ways in which people perform and relate themselves to others. Two different performances in which tourist bubbles are produced will be highlighted. First of all, the inward gaze, which is performed in the enactment of the 'selfie-gaze', the 'group gaze' and the 'family gaze'. Secondly, the concept of paternalism is used to show how people produce tourist bubbles.

Acknowledgement

‘Power is everywhere’, also in the acknowledgement. Or maybe, especially in the acknowledgement. In the winter of 2014, I read a news article about a PhD-student from Wageningen University who was ordered to discard God from the acknowledgment of his dissertation². I was rather upset after reading this news, I consider the acknowledgement as a ‘personal public space’ in where you should be allowed to thank whomever you want³. I see it as a separate part from the scientific matter that will be presented afterwards. That time, I promised myself that I would make a statement for the freedom of expression in the next acknowledgement that I had to write myself. The next time is now. And especially now, where our society and the societies around us seem to get more polarized and people might radicalize because of feelings of alienation, or exclusion, or whatever other reason, the freedom of speech is important. According to John Stuart Mill, the freedom of speech is important to prevent the harm of others (Nys: 21). I still wish to believe this. Even as I still wish to see the value of open and public dialogue as a way in which mutual understanding between different people is created.

I am not sure how to bridge these two paragraphs, but I would like to first of all thank my supervisors. Joost Jongerden, thank you for his advices and support during this entire process. Which started with ‘almost going to’ Cuba, to possibly interning in Saint Vincent, to changing internship places in Mexico and eventually conducting this fieldwork research when I decided to extend my stay in Chiapas after finishing my internship. I will remember especially one wise piece of advice that you gave me when I only had a few weeks left in Mexico and I was trying to collect as much data as possible: *‘if you look to the right, you cannot see what happens on the left’*. And Hamzah, thank you very much for providing me with so much valuable, and numerous (!) comments on my draft versions and during the meetings that we had.

I would like to thank the people at the Institute of Indigenous Studies, the I.E.I-UNACH, for learning me about their region, sharing their research subjects with me and providing

² No acknowledgements of God: <https://resource.wageningenur.nl/en/show/No-acknowledgements-for-God.htm> (18/11/2015).

³ Such as thanking Alexis Sanchez, a football player from Arsenal: <http://metro.co.uk/2015/10/26/arsenal-fan-thanks-alexis-sanchez-at-the-end-of-university-thesis-in-engineering-5463156/> (18/11/2015).

me with insights that triggered my interest in the relation between the indigenous people of Chiapas and tourism. *Gracias* Dra. Anna for giving me this enriching opportunity at the institute. Special thanks goes to Mra. Maria Elena and Alejandra, for always knowing exactly which book I needed in order to find an answer to my question or to research a certain topic. *Alejandra, muchas gracias por enseñarme muchísimas cosas interesantes sobre las indígenas en Chiapas. Me encanté mucho nuestras discusiones en las tardes cuando no hubo mucho gente en la biblioteca. Gracias por tu paciencia con mi español y espero que ya estes lista con tu tesis también!*

My gratitude goes to all the people, tourists, locals and tour-guides, that I met in San Cristóbal de Las Casas and San Juan Chamula who were willing to share their stories with me. Thanks to all the people that gave me permission to use their images and the people that send me their *selfies* and holiday-pictures, this thesis became possible.

I want to thank my grandfather for his years of sending me any possible newspaper clipping that might somehow be related to any of my interests. The (digital) clippings on tourism, Chiapas and Mexico, sustainability, and the indigenous people of Latin America that you have send me over the last year have been very valuable to me. I hope to receive your newspaper clippings for a bit more time.

As statements should be put into practice in order to change existing structures: I would like to thank Nina Simone, for her *profane* musical support during this writing process.

Table of Contents

Introduction	7
Maps of San Cristóbal de Las Casas and San Juan Chamula, Mexico.	9
1. Tourism in San Cristóbal de Las Casas and San Juan Chamula, Mexico.	10
Performance approach in tourism studies	12
2. Research objective and research questions	15
This objective leads to the following research question:	16
3. The conceptual framework	17
On power.....	17
‘Everybody gazes’	17
Paternalistic relations	18
On place	19
‘Enclavic’ and ‘heterogeneous’ heterotopias	20
Tourist bubbles.....	22
On people	22
4. Methodology and research methods	24
Performance perspective	24
Research methods	25
Gaining access to the tour-guides	26
Thick descriptions and portraits.....	26
Participant observation during tours and interviews.....	27
The performances of a tourist researcher.....	28
5. The Santo Domingo market and San Juan Chamula	29
Place ballets around the church.....	29
The Santo Domingo market.....	30
San Juan Chamula.....	35
Reflection on heterogeneous spaces	39
The construction of enclavic spaces: organized tours to the indigenous villages.....	41
Reflection on constructed enclavic spaces	49
Conclusion on heterogeneous and enclavic spaces.....	49
6. The portraits	51
The tourists: Sharon and John.....	51
Reflection on the tourist: Following the gringo trail or going off the beaten track	53
Performing tourist photography	57

Performing togetherness in tourist photography	59
The tour-guide: Raul	61
Reflection on the guide: social separator or cultural translator?.....	65
The indigenous local: Domingo from San Juan Chamula	70
Reflection on the indigenous local: ' <i>hecho a mano</i> '	73
7. Conclusion	77
Producing porous tourist bubbles.....	77
The inward gaze	78
Paternalist relations: 'Don't stare at them like they are monkeys'	83
Bibliography	90

Introduction

Initially, I came to San Cristobal de Las Casas, in the south of Mexico, to do my internship. In my first weeks in the city, I passed through the main street every morning on my way to my Spanish classes. There were always groups of people, foreigners, waiting in front of different tourist offices. The first days, there was always at least one guy that approached me and asked me if I wanted to go on a tour to the indigenous villages. After some time, the guys started to recognize me and stopped approaching me. Out of curiosity, I went to visit one of the indigenous villages, San Juan Chamula. I was very much impressed by the church and the chicken-slaughter rituals of the locals inside the church. But even more, I was impressed by the number of tourists that were following their tour-guide around in the indigenous village. Organized tours to the indigenous villages seemed to be a ‘booming business’. There and then, I decided that I wanted to write my thesis about ‘something like the relation between tourism and the indigenous people’. These notes were scribbled down in my notebook on one of my following visits to San Juan Chamula:

‘Cómprame algo, señora, cómprame estos cinturones. Tengo hambre pero no tengo dinero para comprar tortillas⁴’, a little girl approaches a group of tourists that just arrived the square in front of the San Juan Chamula church. A tourist in a khaki pants with a sunburned face ignores her while he looks through the lens of his camera. He instructs his companions where to position themselves for the picture. Meanwhile, the guide points at a stone that lies on the foot of a wooden cross in the middle of the square and says:

‘this stone is a Mayan clock. The indigenous Mayan people in this village know what time it is by reading the shadow that the sun makes on the rock. Now, follow me. We are going to enter the church, put your cameras away because it is absolutely forbidden to take pictures inside the church’.

The people in the above situation are all *doing* something. They take pictures, they try to sell souvenirs or they deliver a story to a group of people. The argument in this thesis will be that identities, of ‘the tourist’, ‘the local’ or ‘the tour-guide’ in this case, are constructed in the enactments of people. People construct their identities in practices, and these practices are

⁴ Translated from Spanish: ‘Buy me something, ma’am, buy these belts. I am hungry but I don’t have money to buy tortillas’.

performed in relation to places and to others. My interest is in power and how power is embedded in these tourism practices. Following a Foucauldian conceptualization of power, power is seen as a certain relation. This leads to the assumption that power relations are produced in the enactments and performances of people and places. Which results in the following research question: *how are power relations produced in tourism practices at the Santo Domingo market in San Cristobal de Las Casas and in San Juan Chamula, Mexico?*

People act in multiple ways in many different places. In order to see the multiplicity in which tourism realities are produced, research is conducted in different settings in order to see how practices are temporal specific and spatial bounded. The performance perspective will be used in this thesis, which might provide valuable insights in tourism realities due to its specific focus on the in-the-moment practices. This perspective gives space to see the dynamics of tourism practices, and how they are spatially and temporally bounded while there are also certain repetitions in how identities are constructed in practices. I will show how power is omnipresent in tourism practices and it produces fluid and temporal realities that are constructed in the relational enactments between people and places.

This thesis is divided into three parts. The first part reads as an introduction and background in which the objective and research questions of this study will be presented, followed by a conceptual framework and the methods that are designed to conduct the research. Part two presents the data and fieldwork observations of this study. The first part focusses on the two places in which the data is collected: the Santo Domingo market in San Cristóbal de Las Casas and San Juan Chamula, in Mexico. The second part introduces three identities, namely: ‘the tourist’, ‘the tour-guide’, and ‘the (indigenous) local’. The apostrophes here stress the fact that these portraits should not be read as essentializations of certain identities. Rather, they are attempts to fully focus on the tourism practices by using a performative perspective. The final part will bring the data and theories together to show the complexity in which power is relationally constructed in the tourism practices of people in San Juan Chamula and at the Santo Domingo market in San Cristobal de Las Casas, in Mexico.

Maps of San Cristóbal de Las Casas and San Juan Chamula, Mexico.



Figure 1: Location of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, in the state of Chiapas⁵.



Figure 2: San Juan Chamula, 10 kilometres northeast of San Cristóbal de Las Casas⁶.

⁵ Where is San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Mexico? <http://www.worldatlas.com/na/mx/chp/where-is-san-cristobal-de-las-casas.html> (17/11/2015).

⁶ Atractibo Turistico: http://chiapaslocalizacinycostumbres.blogspot.nl/2011_01_01_archive.html (17/11/2015).

Tourism in San Cristóbal de Las Casas and San Juan Chamula, Mexico.

Tourism is an important industry and source of income for Mexico. The country welcomed over 29.1 million visitors in 2014⁷, a new record which makes the country the second fastest growing tourism destination in the ranking of the World Tourism Organization. The earnings from international tourism in 2013 were over 14 billion dollars⁸. In the first quarter of 2015, the international arrivals in Mexico grew again by 8%⁹. Mexico is a popular cruise tourism destination with almost 6,5 million of Mexico's tourists arriving by cruise ship. 'Beach tourism' is the most popular form of tourism and the most visited places for this are Cabo San Lucas in Baja California, Acapulco in Guerrero and Cancun.

The popularity of beach-tourism in Mexico is captured in the representation of the country as the ultimate holiday destination, expressed in images of sun, sea, *sombreros* and *cervezas*¹⁰. But Mexico 'as a tourist destination' can also be represented around other markers. The tourism product of Chiapas, the southernmost state of Mexico is constructed on images of natural beauty, archaeological vestiges, colonial cities, picturesque villages and the richness of living cultures¹¹. San Cristóbal de Las Casas has been one of the most popular destinations since decades, due to its location in the mountains, the city has a pleasant climate. The Lonely Planet describes the city as a 'place where ancient customs coexist with modern luxuries. San Cristóbal is at the heart of one of the most deeply rooted indigenous areas in Mexico'¹².

San Cristóbal de Las Casas is a highland city with 186.000 inhabitants¹³ in the south of

⁷ Tourism industry saw record visitors in 2014: <http://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/tourism-industry-saw-record-visitors-2014/> (02/11/2015). Article is based on data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO): <http://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284416899> (02/11/2015).

⁸ International tourism, receipts (current US\$): <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.RCPT.CD> (25/10/2015)
This amount is expressed in receipts, which are explained as '[...] the expenditures by international inbound visitors, including payments to national carriers for international transport. These receipts include any other prepayment made for goods or services received in the destination country. They also may include receipts from same-day visitors, except when these are important enough to justify separate classification'.
<http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/mexico/international-tourism> (27/02/2015).

⁹ UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, Volume 13, August 2015:
http://dtxq4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/unwto_barom15_04_august_excerpt_0.pdf (25/10/2015)

¹⁰ Translated from Spanish: 'sombreros and beers'.

¹¹ Chiapas Tourism State Office: <http://www.colegiomexsur.edu.mx/english.html> (15/02/2015)

¹² Introducing San Cristóbal de Las Casas: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/mexico/tabasco-and-chiapas/san-Cristóbal-de-las-casas> (13/11/2015).

¹³ Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía:

Mexico. The government has several campaigns that highlight the cultural and historical heritage of the state. So is San Cristóbal labeled as a *pueblo mágico*¹⁴ by the Ministry of Tourism. This governmental project awards villages that 'preserved their cultural and historical richness'¹⁵ by giving them the special status of being 'magical'. San Cristóbal earned this status for the 'colonial and prehispanic traditions that live alongside in harmony' and the 'splendid architecture, handicrafts and gastronomy'¹⁶

Another tourism campaign that constructs the identity of Chiapas in a particular way is the *Mundo Maya*¹⁷ project. This project consists of a route that connects various Mayan sights and temples, in Mexico and Central America, with each other. San Cristóbal is referred to as 'the gateway to the Mayan world'¹⁸: a variety of popular Mayan sites and temples are easily accessed from the city. The indigenous people are often portrayed as forming a bridge to the Mayan history with their traditions, culture and temporal lifestyle. Within the discourse of the *Mundo Maya* campaign, the indigenous people are described as the living representations of the ancient culture that visitors encountered at the Mayan sites of Palenque and Tonina (Magnoni, Ardren et al. 2007). The tourism product in Chiapas is constructed on a rich (present) cultural diversity and a rich Mayan history, embedded in a stunning natural environment.

The tourism sector in San Cristóbal de Las Casas offers lots of opportunities to encounter the 'living Mayan culture'. The colonial city is surrounded by dozens of indigenous villages, where the Tzotziles and Tzeltals, two groups of indigenous people, live. San Juan Chamula and Zinacantan, located in the highlands northwest of San Cristóbal, are some of the most visited indigenous villages. In the weekends, these communities 'welcome' between 300 and 500 tourists per day. The majority of the visitors come as part of organized tours, with between 30 and 50

<http://www3.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/Movil/MexicoCifras/mexicoCifras.aspx?em=07078&i=e&tema=est> (11/07/2015).

¹⁴ Translated from Spanish: 'magic city'.

¹⁵ The governmental program has labelled 83 villages as so-called *pueblos mágicos*. The other two villages in Chiapas are Chiapa de Corzo, Comitán. See: <http://www.pueblosmexico.com.mx/> (11/07/2015).

¹⁶ San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas: <http://www.visitmexico.com/en/magicaltowns/south-region/san-Cristóbal-de-las-casas> (13/11/2015).

¹⁷ Translated from Spanish: 'The Mayan world'.

¹⁸ San Cristóbal de Las Casas is part of the *Ruta Maya*, a governmental tourism project that promotes 'sustainable' tourism in the *Mundo Maya*, a region that included the southern states of Mexico and parts of Guatemala and Belize. The website states how the southeast of Mexico lies in the Mayan World. Visually, they try to make a continuous connection between the 'living Mayans' and the ancient Mayans. '*3.000 Years and still captivating the imagination of the Traveler*'. For more information on *Mundo Maya* see: <http://mundomaya.travel/> and the Wageningen University Master's thesis (2014) by Carmen Rocío Galarza Zapata (15/02/2015).

groups 'touring' the villages every day. The experience is described as an opportunity 'to learn about ancient Mayan customs of the Tzotzil people'¹⁹. The continuity between the ancient Mayan civilizations and the indigenous people in the villages of San Juan Chamula and Zinacantan, as often articulated in governmental campaigns and travel guidebooks, is strategically used to promote tourism activities in a particular way.

This specific construction of the tourism product in Chiapas seems to attract many people. San Cristóbal de Las Casas has experienced an explosive growth in numbers of visitors. In 2007, San Cristóbal welcomed 627.206 visitors, which is a growth of 100% in comparison to the year 2000²⁰. In 1988 there were 21 hotels in the city and the average number of daily visitors never exceeded 200 (Van den Berghe 1994). At the moment, there are over 150 (registered) hotels in the city. In search of indigenous cultural life and Mayan closeness, people can travel to Chiapas to experience something different than the 'sun, sea, *sombreros* and *cerveza*' side of Mexico.

Performance approach in tourism studies

The positive and negative influences of tourism on a region and its inhabitants are extensively debated in academic literature. Studies often executed in such a way that a particular point of view is forwarded, studies are written from a particular perspective.

Tourism can be analysed from a socio-economic perspective (Williams and Shaw 1998, Rosentraub and Joo 2009), or the relation between tourism and the degradation of the natural environment can be studied (Mowforth and Munt 2003, Holden 2007). Murray shows for example how tourism in Cancun, where enormous all-inclusive resorts are congested on a 14 kilometer long strip of beach-land, has been proved to have a devastating impact on the region's landscape. The degradation of the ecosystem, the vegetation losses due to the expanding urban and touristic infrastructure and the overexploitation of the fishing resources are the mentioned examples of the negative impacts of tourism on the region and its people (Murray 2007: 349) The influence of different forms of alternative tourism on regions has been studied in great depth and the results are just as diverse as the variety of names under which alternative tourism is known (Mowforth and Munt 2003, Sin 2009, Truong, Hall et al. 2014)²¹. Voluntourism, a form of

¹⁹ <http://www.getyourguide.co.uk/chiapas-l2165/indigenous-villages-san-juan-chamula-and-zinacantan-t33814/> (02/05/2015).

²⁰ <http://www.turismochiapas.gob.mx/sectur/media/descargables/omt/Chiapas2015>: 94-109. (02/04/2015).

²¹ Holden presents different case studies of alternative tourism projects in his book. A successful example of integrated rural tourism in Senegal, shows to have a positive impact on the local community (2008: 166). The development of a tourism area in Malaysia in the 1980's turned out to be an environmental catastrophe, without any

tourism in where people do voluntary work in (mostly) developing countries, has recently been criticized for the emotional damage that this form of 'help' does to orphans that the volunteers work with²². While a case study from Sapa in Vietnam shows how the majority of the villagers consider community-based tourism as a potential mean through which they could improve their economical position (Truong, Hall et al. 2014: 1084).

These examples from the literature are solely mentioned here to show how tourism can be studied from multiple perspectives and that data is often presented in such a way that it corresponds with the perspective that is foregrounded.

In this study however, I want to follow the academics that focus more on tourism practices rather than on the negative or positive impact of different forms of tourism. The argument will be made that tourism is constantly practiced and constructed through the performances of different actors in relation to different places. This so-called performance perspective sees realities as constructed in the enactments of people and places, and as they constantly perform in different ways, so are the constructed realities fluid and temporal. Looking at tourism from a performance perspective gives space to see how power is actually practiced in these relations and encounters between people and places. Power is not a given or static fact that is held by or 'owned' by certain actors or institutes, it is performed in daily practices and encounters. The ways in which different actors 'view, grasp, conceptualize, understand, imagine, and construct each other' (Maoz 2006: 222), shapes how they enact their relations with each other and shows how power emerges relationally in tourism practices.

The performance approach is applied in tourism studies in multiple forms. Hyde and Olesen study the mundane practice that people perform prior to their travel: the packing. They argue that 'packing is a performance that helps the tourist to create and express self-identity across time and space' (2011). Noy (2008) applies a performance approach to look at how people enact on the pages of a visitors book in a museum. The discursive productions on the 'paper stages' on which tourists enact certain identities should be understood as 'aesthetic, multi-modal,

economical benefit (ibid: 175).

²² For recent critics on voluntourism, see:

<http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/4496/Buitenland/article/detail/3775943/2014/10/25/Er-is-zeker-wat-mis-met-al-die-westerse-vrijwilligers.dhtml> and <http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/voluntourism-is-a-waste-of-time-and-money--and-gappers-are-better-off-working-in-britain-9816837.html> and the debate on voluntourism in *De Nieuwe Liefde* in Amsterdam, on the 2nd of March, 2015: <http://denieuweliefde.com/dnltv/kijk-mij-eens-goed-doen---dilemma-s-rond-voluntourism.150.html> (09/02/2015)

and politically charged performances' (ibid: 525). According to Noy, a performance approach is especially successful to illuminate tourists' norms and conducts. The written performances give insight in what tourists do and how they behave while they are 'on tour', rather than solely reflecting what tourists think (526). The conceptualisation of tourism as performance seeks to move beyond the passive gaze of the visual and explores the embodiment of the acts of production and consumption (Ateljevic and Doorne 2005: 2). A performance approach tries to grasp these bodily tourism practices, that are multisensory, corporeal and active (Rakić and Chambers 2012). It emphasizes, among other things, the socio-temporal materialities of places as one of the many factors to account for the dynamics and multiplicity in the performances of tourism practices. It is a relational approach, that 'acknowledges the intersections of the senses and people in people's visual encounters with places' (Urry and Larsen 2011: 196).

Tourism is a *corporeal* and spatial practice and tourism situations are experienced through bodies that sense their environment, bodies (*inter*)act with their environment. Bodies perform and are performed, through movement, 'in-between direct sensation of the 'other' and various sensescapes' (ibid: 152). Tourists are not merely sightseeers, the 'tourist gaze' is perceived as an embodied and multimodal performance that constructs social relations (ibid: 308). A performance perspective tries to grasp these complexities in which tourism realities are constructed, while it stresses the temporal character of the constructed realities.

Throughout this thesis, I will argue that practices matter the most if we aim at a fuller understanding of how tourism is constructed. A performance perspective has the ability to enrich tourism studies due to the focus on the in-the-moment practices between different actors and places in which tourism relations are produced. Power, which will be the key concept throughout this thesis, is perceived to be produced in exactly these interrelations between different actors. Hence, a focus on the practices gives insight in how relational power is manifested. Places and people are related entities which encounter each other through bodies in spatio-temporalities. The multiplicities of these temporal practices construct fluid realities, which are constantly under construction. A perspective that focuses on the multiplicity and temporality of performances of places and people could provide rich insights in how tourism realities and power relations are produced. The performance perspective, and how it will be operationalized in order to do research, will be further discussed in the methodology chapter.

Research objective and research questions

The objective of this study is to analyze how power is produced in tourism practices on the Santo Domingo market and in San Juan Chamula. This objective is approached from a performance perspective, which argues that identities of places and people become realities through their enactments. Hence, the focus will be on the practices of people and places in which tourism realities and power relations are constructed. Power is argued to be relationally performed, which implies that power is produced in the interactions and enactments of people and places. Working with such a ‘powerful’ concept as power, a clear definition is needed of *how* power is conceptualized. Foucault’s conceptualization of relational power will be the foundation from which power is perceived in this research. Power is seen as a (strategic) performance that is operated in day-to-day interactions between actors and places. It is the ability to influence relations with people and, as will be argued here, places. Hence, tourism practices and power relations are relationally constructed realities, which are constrained, reproduced and/or challenged in daily enactments. So in order to gain understanding of power relations in tourism, we have to look at the in-the-moment practices of people and places.

The objective is to grasp the complexity of power relations by emphasizing how the practices of people and places are constantly constructed, constraint or confirmed and re-constructed. The people, which are more specifically defined as ‘the tourist’, ‘the local’ and ‘the guide’, perform in different ways at different stages. Identities are constructed through performances, and as these performances are multiple and fluid, so are the resulting identities. Tourists for example are not solely consuming experiences but also ‘co-producing, co-designing and co-exhibiting them, once they enact them’ (Haldrup and Larsen 2009: 5) and also this is done in multiple ways. The places are seen as simultaneously performing and being performed, while they are constructed in the multiple practices and simultaneously influence the kinds of performances that the actors undertake (Edensor 2000: 327).

Hence, in order to see how power is produced in tourism practices, the focus should be on the corporeal and multiple performances of people and places in which these ‘messy and fuzzy’ power relations are produced.

This objective leads to the following **research question**:

How are power relations produced in tourism practices on the Santo Domingo market in San Cristóbal de Las Casas and in San Juan Chamula, Mexico?

Tourism practices are envisioned to be constructed in the multiplicity of performances of places and people. Hence, the main focus of this research on the production of power relations in tourism practices is operationalized in the following **sub-research questions**:

1. *How are places constructed in tourism practices?*
2. *How are people constructed in tourism practices?*

Although it might seem counterintuitive to discern places from people in the above presented sub-research questions, they are obviously inseparable in tourism practices. Nevertheless, this is purposely done in chapter four and chapter five in order to fully enhance the performance perspective by separately focusing on the enactments of places and people. In chapter six, places and people will be merged again in order to see the full complexity in which the practices of people and places construct power relations.

The following two chapters will describe the conceptual framework, the methodology and research methods that will be applied in order to answer these research questions.

The conceptual framework

On power

The main concept throughout this thesis is power, or more specifically: a Foucauldian relational form of power. Foucault would argue that power is everywhere, it is a fluid strength that is not locked in groups or institutions but it is a ‘complex strategical situation’, that consists of ‘multiple and mobile fields of force relations that are never completely stable’ (Cheong and Miller 2000: 374-5). Foucault refers to as the omnipresence of power. Power is conceptualized as a relation that is embedded in all situations and that flows in different directions. The fluid character of power give rise to perceiving it as possessed and dispossessed by a variety of actors in different settings and times. Foucault shows that power is not merely repressive but also productive. ‘Power produces, it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth’(Cheong and Miller 2000: 378). Although the power of the agent constraints the target, ‘the supporting institutions of the agents are expanding through the creation of technical discourses, professional disciplines, and bureaucracies’.

‘Everybody gazes’

Cheong and Miller (Cheong and Miller 2000) look at the relation between Foucauldian power and tourism. They see power relations as played out between *targets* and *agents*. The target is described as the subordinate actor in power relationship that exists only in relation to the agents (ibid: 376). Agents derive power not solemnly from enforcing it on targets but also from strategical and tactical inducement (ibid: 376). Cheong and Miller argue that brokers and locals are the so-called agents, while tourists are the targets of their power due to their unfamiliarity with the setting which makes the tourists insecure (ibid: 383). ‘Foucault’s agents perform their power *via* the construction and exertion of knowledge, normalizing discourse, and an ‘inspecting gaze’. The agents construct the gaze as they observe the target. The gaze is internalized by the target with makes it an internal self-constraining force, ‘to the point that he is his own overseer’ (ibid: 376-7).

I will slightly argue against the idea of Cheong and Miller that sees tourists as targets, while the locals and the brokers are the agents of power. By referring back to the above described

fluid character of power, I will argue that power is not ‘owned’ by anyone, it is enacted and produced in relation to others. Power is everywhere, although some actors might have more space to influence the relation in certain contexts than others. Maoz argues that there are no defined ‘dominators’ (or ‘agents of power’) and ‘dominated’ (or ‘targets of power’) as different groups simultaneously undergo and exercise power (2006: 225). She stresses the fluid character of power by stating that ‘everybody gazes at everybody’ (ibid: 225). Cheong and Miller mention the ‘inspecting gaze’ upon the tourists, which I will refer to in this thesis with the ‘local gaze’. According to Maoz expresses and manifests the local gaze the agency and power of the locals in Third World countries (ibid: 228). While the locals gaze at the tourists, the tourists of course gaze back. This makes the local and the tourist caught in a ‘mutual gazing’ process. This self-constraining force, in which the tourist internalizes the gaze, will be referred to as the ‘inward gaze’. I will show how this inward gaze is not solely a constraining power, as might be suggested by Cheong and Miller, and that tourists do have more power than the authors suggest by labelling tourists as the ‘targets of power’. The inward gaze is also a producing power, through which tourists’ produces so-called tourist bubbles. The production of tourist bubbles will be further conceptualized in the following chapter on place.

Paternalistic relations

The concept of paternalism is applied in this study to look at the relation between the tour-guide, the indigenous local or vendor, and the tourist. Martinez Novo defines paternalism as the:

‘phenomenon of discrimination without the expression of hostility. Affection is precisely the emotion that dominant groups wish to feel towards those whom they exploit. The everyday practice of discrimination does not require feelings of hostility, and, indeed, it is not at all difficult to fond regard for those whom we subordinated, especially when the subject of our domination accedes to the relationship compliantly’ (Novo 2003: 265).

Martinez Novo states that open hostility towards the indigenous people would probably not be accepted in Mexican contemporary society (2003: 265). Moreover, I will add to this that the (foreign) tourist would probably not accept the sight of open hostility between the tour-guide and the indigenous local either. The tourist has certain expectations of how the one should perform in

relation to the other. During tours to the indigenous villages, the guide informs the tourists about the lives of the indigenous people. He²³ tells about their customs, their traditions, shows the tourists particular elements and (sometimes) introduces the group to certain indigenous people in the village. Martinez Novo states that this form of paternalism resembles a 'colonial understanding of Indians as being legal minors who ought to be represented by *mestizo* advocates (2003: 262-3). The tour-guide could be seen as representing the indigenous villagers during the tour, as if he performs the role of a 'cultural translator'.

The above paragraph sketches an unbalanced power relation, in where the tour-guide exploits (the image of) the indigenous local on which the organized tour is constructed. However, I would like to propose a more nuanced image in where both actors actively perform the paternalistic relation strategically in order to benefit from the tourism activities. Moreover, the tour-guide and the indigenous local depend on each other's willingness to participate in order to deliver a successful performance. Seeing the tour-guide and the local as depending on each other's performances further problematizes the argument that Cheong and Miller (2000) make by stating that the tour-guide and the local are both 'actors of power'. Furthermore, it stresses a Foucauldian conceptualization of power as relational and emphasizes the fact that power is constructed in performances.

On place

Places are practiced because people *always do* things and they need places (a setting) to do so. Cresswell describes how materiality, meaning and practice are all interrelated:

'The material topography of place is made by people doing things according to the meanings they might wish a place to evoke. Meanings gain a measure of persistence when they are inscribed into material landscape but are open to contestation by practices that do not conform to the expectations that come with place. Practices often do conform to some sense of what is appropriate in a particular place and are limited by the affordances particular material structures offer' (Cresswell 2009: 2)

²³ Because I have only been able to observe tour-guides who were men, I will refer to them with 'him' or 'he'. I have met two female tour-guides. One Australian woman, who introduced herself as a tour-leader. She preferred to be seen as the 'experienced groupmate who was sort of in charge', rather than the tour-leader because she was guiding an 'independent organized group'. The other female guide that I met was a retired Italian woman who lived in San Cristóbal de Las Casas.

Hence, actors can perform according to the expectations of a place. Rakić and Chambers show this in a recent study at the Acropolis in Greece. They discerned how visitors walk in routinized patterns, which Seamon (1979) beautifully calls 'place ballets'. Everyone took similar routes and conducted similar activities (like walking and taking photos and talking to each other). The signs in the landscape instruct actors how to move, where to take pictures and what not to touch. These rules are confirmed by the visitors, resulting in similar 'place ballets' due to the controlled moving patterns. Places are constructed in such a way that actors obey to them; the performances of tourists are regulated by the materialities and regulations in place. Nevertheless, people can also contest the expectations of a place. Rakić and Chambers observed tourists touching the marble while signs in the landscape instructed them not to do so. According to tourists interviewed, these instructions were ignored in order to fully sense the place. 'Gazing' is not enough for a meaningful experience; people feel the urge to get a multisensual experience with the place that they visit (Rakić and Chambers 2012: 1626-7).

Places are produced and consumed by the multiple embodied performances 'on stage' of locals and tourists. These enactments are embedded in the places in which they are performed. People can constrain the 'formal' representations or they can confirm the 'expectations that come with place' (Cresswell 2014: 2). Edensor argues that the form of the space, its organization, materiality, and aesthetic influence the kinds of performances that tourists, guides and locals undertake (Edensor 2000: 327). Likewise, the performances of actors construct a place in particular ways, the enactments of tourists produces 'touristic' places while they might simultaneously be performed in other ways by other actors (Bærenholdt, Haldrup et al. 2004: 2). The production of tourist places relies on drawing together particular mobilities and proximities to afford a stage for performances (ibid: 6).

'Enclavic' and 'heterogeneous' heterotopias

To bring to concept of power into the analyses of spaces, it is important to gain insights in the regulatory processes in different tourism settings (Edensor 2008: 41). Foucault's interpretation of the domination of power over space proves to be helpful. The concept of heterotopia, which is defined as 'the juxtaposing in a single real place (of) several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible', can be used to identify two contrasting spaces (ibid: 42). The first space that Foucault describes is a space in which everything is not only accumulated but also

organised and classified by an ordering regime which places and contextualises all differences. The second form in which heterotopia is envisioned is as ‘the conglomeration of objects which is not composed to form an ordered whole but is placed together arbitrarily, and is unfixed, in flux. [...] These unfixed heterotopias resist definition, epitomise fluidity of purpose and are characterised by a shifting panoply of occupants and passers-by, and an ever-changing medley of activity, stimuli and movement’ (ibid: 42-3). The latter space is to a lesser extent under the sway of some overarching convention of ordering, and seems to ‘allow’ a greater range of opportunities for a variety of experiences and performances. Hence, places can be more ‘ordered or disordered’ and this resonates to the space for actors to enact in a more ‘constraint or free’ way.

Edensor uses Foucault’s idea of these two contrasting forms of heterotopic spaces in his conceptualization of ‘enclavic’ and ‘heterogeneous’ spaces. Enclavic spaces are organised spaces, which are characterised by the maintenance of a sharp distinction between tourists and locals. Tourists can be envisioned as performing in a bubble that shields them from ‘potential offensive sights, sounds, and smells’ (Edensor 2008: 45). The tourists within the enclave may be described as resembling a group that is ‘cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, as they together lead an enclosed, formally administrated round of life’ (ibid: 49). An important aspect to add to this is that tourists not only are performing within a tourist bubble, they also perform the tourist bubble. Hence, tourists are co-constructors of the tourist bubble while they also consume the space within the enclave. The embodied performances and sensual experiences of the tourists are constrained and regulated, not only by external surveillance but also through self-monitoring and the disciplinary gaze of the group (Edensor 2000: 328). This is what Cheong and Miller (2000) referred to as the ‘inspecting gaze’ and which I will refer to in this thesis as the ‘inward gaze’.

Conceptualized in a binary opposition with the enclavic space is the heterogeneous space. These mixed-purpose places emerged from unplanned and contingent processes (ibid: 331). Tourism could be one of the economic activities in the space but it does not need to dominate the space. Heterogeneous spaces are meeting points for different communities, and a variety of performances and identities are enacted. The tourism economy in heterogeneous spaces is labour-intensive, often typified by small family-run businesses. These spaces are marked by ‘constant streams of temporary pleasurable activities, entertainments, and transitions’ (ibid: 332). These are places for sociality for different people; they come to gossip and chat, to enjoy beautiful sights, to

observe others, to stroll around and hang out. Tourists and locals mingle in heterogeneous spaces as they go about their separate, and common, businesses.

The binary opposition between heterogeneous and enclavic places might be useful in order to see how some places are less ordered or more structured but it suggests places as fixed spaces. Moreover, it does not provide insights in how places are performed spaces and how the performances of actors construct spaces while they are simultaneously influenced by places. Rather, places will be imagined here as influencing the enactments of actors, providing them with a greater or a lesser amount of ‘freedom to perform’ or constraining the performances to a greater or a lesser extent. Tourist places are hybrid and spatio-temporal spaces which might have more ‘enclavic’ or ‘heterogenous’ elements, this should be taken into consideration in order to gain insights in the multiplicity in tourist performances.

Tourist bubbles

Tourist bubbles were initially conceptualized by Cohen in 1972 as ‘environmental bubbles that confine and isolate mass tourists by ‘protective walls’ (Cohen: 166-7). Even though ‘tourists like to experience the novelty of the macro environment of a strange place, [they do this] from the security of a familiar microenvironment’ (ibid: 166). Edensor describes tourist bubbles as enclavic spaces in which the tourists are shielded from ‘potential offensive sights, sounds, and smells’ (Edensor 2008: 45). He argues that tourists perform within these spaces, where I already stated above that tourists are co-producers of these spaces. The data will show how these corporeally performed tourist bubbles further blur up the distinction that Edensor makes between heterogeneous and enclavic places, tourist bubbles are temporal and spatial constructed entities that are produced in multiple settings under different circumstances. The data will show how tourists construct bubbles in their enactments of different inward gazes. Tour-guides and locals also produce these bubbles for tourists, as will be presented with examples from the organized tours to the indigenous villages. These produced spaces are not fixed, they are highly fluid and need to be enacted and re-enacted all the time in order to manifest itself. The practices of different actors and places shows how power is relationally performed in the constructions of these tourist bubbles.

On people

Just as tourist places are constructed in multiple ways, so are tourist identities. ‘Tourist performances are embodied practices and, therefore, as with ‘any performance, [they are]

inherently contingent processes' (Tucker 2007: 141). Cheong and Miller (2000) argue that package tourists, like the tourists on organized tours to the indigenous village of San Juan Chamula, are the 'extreme cases' of being captives of tourism industry 'agents', such as travel brokers and guides. Although the movements of package tourists might be regulated by the enactments of the tour-guide, this does not provide much information about the more nuanced ways in which tourists perform and give meaning to their on-tour experiences' (Tucker 2007: 140). However, it does emphasize the ways in which identity performances are influenced by their relationality to other actors and their environments. Identities are fluid and temporal, and as will be shown throughout this thesis, they are strategically performed.

Comaroff and Comaroff envision 'ethnicity, culture and identity *not* as analytic constructs but as concrete abstractions variously deployed by human beings in their quotidian efforts to inhabit sustainable worlds' (2009: 21). Identities are constructed relationally and can be performed strategically, depending on the context and the situational conditions. This study will follow this fluid and contextual perspective on identity constructions in tourism spaces by seeing performances from a situational approach. In this view, 'simplistic conceptions of culture as bounded entities are rejected. The situational approach places emphasis on ethnicity as a set of social relationships and processes by which cultural differences are communicated' (Hitchcock 1999: 21). Tourism performances are seen as dialectical acts in where identities are 'negotiated' in a mutual relationship between different actors. Looking at tourism relations from a performative approach gives space to see how the performing actors 'play' with these temporal and spatial shifts in power in the relations that they engage in. Although the main argument of performed identities will follow the Butlerian idea that 'there is no I before the enactment of the I', this is problematized by the notion that 'there are always expectations of the I, and how the I should be enacted'²⁴.

²⁴ Cogitated by Hamzah Muzaini during a meeting in which we discussed the draft version of this thesis. (13/11/2015).

Methodology and research methods

Performance perspective

'Like music, tourism only exists through performances' (Baerenholdt e.a 2004: 46).

The focus in this study is on the practices of people and places in tourism activities on the Santo Doming market and in San Juan Chamula. What do locals, tourists and tour-guides do in these places, and through these places, and how are power relations produced in these multiple doings? For this reason, the concept of performances occupies a central position in this research. Basically, the idea of performances derives from the notion that there is not 'being behind the doing', identities only come into existence through the enactments of it. Therefore, enactments are the object of study. The performance perspective is inspired by the work of Judith Butler, who developed this thinking in her study at identity-constructions that aims at refuting the gender normativity. In *Gender Trouble* (1990), she uses a performative perspective to look at how identities construct their gender in processes of the enactment and re-enactment of certain norms and ideas. Hence, people are not born their gender; they constitute their gender in the enactments of it. A gendered identity is not a given fact; it needs to be established through *styled repetitious acts* in order to be manifested. This leads to the possibility to perform gender in deviant ways, ways that do not confirm the norm.

Butler (1988) used the concept of performativity, instead I will use the concept of performances throughout this thesis which is more commonly used in tourism studies. This study tries to grasp the tourist practices, as power relations are argued to be constructed in the practices. In addition to Butler, who focused on the identity constructions of people, places are also conceptualized here as constructed in practices. Tourists, locals or tour-guides are not given identities; they become realities in certain enactments. The same line of reasoning is applied to the identity constructions of places. Identities are not given, they manifest itself in enactments which are performed in relation to others. This makes tourism practices relational and temporal, and the resulting tourism realities fluid. As mentioned in the conceptual framework, power is conceptualized as a relation that is embedded in all situations and that flows in different directions. Relations come into existence through the practices of people. So if we want to see

how power is produced in tourism relations, we have to look at how it is performed relationally.

The following section will present the research methods that are used in this study on power relations in tourism practices.

Research methods

As stated above, the objective of this research is to understand how power relations are produced in tourism practices. These power relations are considered to be constructed in what people and places *do*, identities are enacted and re-enacted in the multiplicity of performances and enactments. For this reason, the selected research methods focus on the practices. Observations at the two research settings, the Santo Domingo market and in San Juan Chamula, have been used in order to grasp the activities and movements in space. Following Crouch, I tried to grasp the ‘multisensual encounters made with spaces, the intersubjectivity apparent in the way others move and gesture, and influence each other in the space I and they [other actors] cross’ (Crouch 2003: 1950). In order to grasp the spatio-temporal constructions of the research places, I conducted fieldwork for two months. However, I had already been in San Cristobal for five months for my internship and in this period I was already, although less structured and focused, collecting data. As I spent more time at the two research sites, I became familiar with the routines and repetitious movements and activities that were performed. I started to recognize people and vendors, and they started to recognize me. While I was interested in their activities, they were interested in what I was actually doing all the time and what I was scribbling down in my little notebooks. This mutual interest resulted in valuable conversations. I learned the importance of building rapport with your informants as I realized that the most valuable data was collected during the last two to three weeks of my fieldwork period. However, I did feel insecure about the data that I collected sometimes. Especially regarding the focus that I had on the practices, did I really capture ‘the performance’ of someone with what I scribbled down in my notebook? Therefore, it came as a relief to read that Crouch had similar doubts when he questioned himself: ‘how much do these notes record and communicate the ways in which individuals perform activities in space and time?’ (2002:1950). Another insecurity, my limited knowledge of Spanish, turned out to be not too much of a problem. Especially because the people that I was interested in, tourists and tour-guides, generally spoke English. With the indigenous people, I struggled in Spanish but because Spanish is also not the mother tongue of the indigenous people, we were sometimes

struggling both.

Gaining access to the tour-guides

Raul and Cesar, the tour-guides from *Raul y Alex Tours*, were a bit reserved when I first introduced myself, in my limited Spanish, and explained the purpose of my research. I explained that I was mainly interested in interviewing the tourists that went on their organized tours and I asked permission to wait with them every morning to interview the tourists. Raul told me later that he appreciated my openness from the beginning and the fact that I asked him permission first. The waiting time that we shared every morning provided me valuable data and insights. I could observe the daily routines of the guides and their enactments in relation to the tourists and the indigenous vendors. Sometimes, Raul introduced me to colleagues of him that passed by. By introducing me as an '*investigadora*²⁵', four of his colleagues were willing to be interviewed by me. A professor at my internship placement brought me in contact with a friend of her, who was a local tour-guide. After the interview with this guide, he gave me the phone-number of a friend who was also a guide. Via this snowball sampling method, I was able to interview six tour-guides. Some guides I approached 'in the field', while they were touring their organized group around. Many of the organized groups had 'free afternoons' on their itineraries, this gave me the opportunity to arrange interviews with tour-guides in their 'free time'. Tourists from organized groups, and especially elderly Dutch tourists, also introduced me to their guides or helped me by telling me in which hotel I could find their guide. Via these different strategies, I have been able to interview many different tour-guides, who mainly showed me the multiplicity in which tour-guides perform their role.

Thick descriptions and portraits

In order to highlight the practices of tour-guides, (indigenous) locals and tourists, most of the fieldwork data is presented in the form of thick descriptions and portraits. Inspired by Geertz' way of precisely and beautifully narrating the Balinese cockfights (Geertz 2002), an attempt is undertaken to present the Santo Domingo market and San Juan Chamula in a similar liveable way. The thick descriptions on places tries to put the performative perspective into practice by showing the multi-sensuosity of places and the multiplicity in which the 'formal' representations are interpreted and performed. The multiplicity in which places are performed stresses the fact that places are hybrid, even if there are attempts to represent them in particular ways. Three

²⁵ Translated from Spanish: 'researcher'.

portraits will be presented, being: ‘Sharon and John the tourists’, ‘Raul the tour-guide’ and ‘Domingo the (indigenous) local’. These portraits should not be interpreted as essentializations of certain identities. On the contrary, the reflections that follow every portrait show the multiplicity of performances. The whole ranch of different ‘guides, locals and tourists’ that will be portrayed in the reflections will show that tourism identities cannot be homogenized, they are enacted in multiple and relational ways.

Participant observation during tours and interviews

Participant observation during organized tours to the indigenous villages gave the opportunity to conduct research in ‘short-lived, mobile and intense context in a complex environment in which internal and external spaces coexist and are rapidly changing’ (Tucker 2007: 242). The examples from the organized tours that will be presented throughout this thesis were collected during two different tours in which I participated as a tourist²⁶. I informed my fellow tourists and tour-guides that I was doing a research so I could have pointed conversations on themes that I considered valuable for my research with them during the tour. Tucker describes the advantages of this participatory method as follows: ‘by being a fellow passenger on the coach, the researcher was able to interact with and observe the performances of the tourists and of the tour manager(s) *in situ*’. (2007: 242). Participating in the organized tours is an embodied approach to understand and observe ‘tourist practices via a process of self-witnessing’ and first-hand experience (Scarles 2009: 467). Moreover, it provides an opportunity to experience how tourist identities are constructed, and performed, in the organized tours.

To gain insights in the relation between tourist performances in place and ‘formal’ representations of these places, tourists were interviewed in two different timeframes. Before tourists go on an organized tour to the indigenous village of San Juan Chamula, they are questioned about their expectations of the tour. These interviews have the intention to gain insights into the formal representations of San Juan Chamula. These interviews were mostly relatively short, less than 10 minutes, because the tourists had to leave with Raul and Cesar at 9.30 am. The questions had the intention to hear about the expectations of the tourists. What they expected to see and do in the indigenous villages, what do they already knew of the village and where they obtained information about the indigenous villages. But also, how does the tourist

²⁶ Both the tour-guides, Cesar from Raul y Alex tours, and Alonso from Otisa Tours, knew that I was conducting research on tourism practices and relations when I participated in their organized tours.

imagine the lives of the (indigenous) peoples and what are the expectations of their tour-guide? These presumptions are considered to influence the tourist enactment and ‘gaze’ during the organized tour. The same tourists are interviewed after their return from the tour to the indigenous village in order to hear about their experiences during the tour. The aim of comparing the first ‘expectations’-interviews with the second ‘experience’-interviews is to gain understanding of how tourist performances ‘on stage’ are influenced or shaped by the ‘formal’ representations. The questions have a strong focus on the practices: what they did, where they went, and what they ate, etcetera. But also if the expectations that the tourists prior to the indigenous village-tour had, are met with the experiences during the tour. These interviews were more extensive in time and information because the tourists were ‘free’ and had no scheduled activities in the afternoon. I recorded over 50 interviews with tourists, the majority were in English, some of them in Dutch or in Spanish, and one interview was in Frisian. However many of the conversations that I had with tourists, but also with locals and tour-guides, were not recorded. I made notes during these conversations and recorded my personal reflections of the conversations afterwards.

The performances of a tourist researcher

While I was interested in their ‘tourist activities’, many tourists were interested in my ‘research activities’. Apart from being asked what my research was about, many people wanted to know how it was for a ‘blond, white girl’ to live by herself in a city in the south of Mexico. These questions and the following conversations led to processes of reflexive thinking and valuable insights, such as my role as a ‘researcher’ and the realization that, indeed, ‘everybody gazes’. After the interview, many tourists used me as a source to gain ‘insiders information’ from when they found out that I had been in San Cristóbal de Las Casas for a longer time²⁷. They wanted to know where the best restaurants were, where they could buy the best amber and which places I would recommend them to visit. I enjoyed this reciprocal element, as I could give back some information for the insights that they provided me with. These interactions with tourists made me realize how similar ‘the ethnographer’ and ‘the tourist’ might be. I questioned myself how what I was doing differed from what my informants were doing. Or, as Crang says more beautifully: ‘how do we respond to a situation where we are travelling to learn about people who are travelling and learning’ (Merriman and Cresswell 2012: 206)? He suggests that although the

²⁷ Before conducting my fieldwork for my thesis, I did an internship for five months at the Institute for Indigenous Studies (I.E.I-UNACH) in San Cristóbal de Las Casas.

ethnographer and the tourist might not be the same creature, they are at least species that are part of the same continuum. This leads Crang to the perhaps ‘painful’ conclusion that the *homo academics* might be uncomfortably closely related to that embarrassing relative: [the] *turistas vulgaris*’ (Merriman and Cresswell 2012: 205). Reflecting back on my research, I think that exactly this closeness might have been the reason why tourists, who saw me as an ‘equal’, were so willing to share their information with me.

5

The Santo Domingo market and San Juan Chamula

Place ballets around the church

The following chapter will introduce the two places in which this research was conducted.

The Santo Domingo market in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, described as a ‘colourful outdoor market of indigenous crafts that surrounds the *Iglesia Santo Domingo* and its side chapel, the *Templo de la Caridad*’²⁸. San Juan Chamula, an indigenous village located in the mountains north of San Cristóbal de Las Casas is often described as one of the key attractions in Chiapas, it offers ‘awesome insights into a culture completely distinct to what you experience if you live in an industrialized nation’²⁹. Although the ‘formal’ representations will not be further discussed here, it is important to mention the strong emphasis that these ‘formal’ produced images have on the indigenous character of these places. Because, as will be shown later, these ‘formal’ representations (partly) construct the expectations that tourists have of the places that they (will) visit.

The Santo Domingo market and San Juan Chamula are selected; firstly, because they are the most visited tourist places in San Cristóbal de Las Casas and its surroundings. Without any exception, every tourist that I interviewed went to the Santo Domingo market and almost all of the interviewed tourists went to San Juan Chamula or were planning to go there. For this reason, similarities and differences in tourist practices in different places can be indicated. Secondly, these two places make an interesting comparison as they differ in how they are visited. San Juan Chamula is mostly visited with an organized tour, while many tourists visit the Santo Domingo

²⁸ Santo Domingo Craft market:

<http://www.travelbymexico.com/sanCristóbal/atractivos/index2.php?nom=kscrmercarte> (27/10/2015)

²⁹ Guide to San Juan Chamula: <http://www.mexperience.com/travel/colonial/san-juan-chamula/> (27/10/2015)

market without a tour-guide.

The differences between San Juan Chamula and the Santo Domingo market is focused on by departing from the distinction between ‘heterogeneous’ and ‘enclavic’ tourist places, as conceptualized by Edensor (2000). Nonetheless, instead of following Edensor by seeing places as either ‘heterogeneous’ or ‘enclavic’, I will argue that places are constructed as being ‘more enclavic’ or ‘more heterogeneous’ in the enactments of people. As place-identities are constructed in performances, so are the produced spaces. The places can be enacted in multiple ways by different actors. Hence, I will show that tourist places are hybrid places that contain both enclavic and heterogeneous elements. In order to make this argument, the two places of this research, the Santo Domingo market and San Juan Chamula, will first be portrayed when they are not ‘toured’ in order to show the difficulty with the distinction that Edensor (Edensor 2008) makes by differentiating places in either ‘heterogenous’ or ‘enclavic’. The following descriptions will show that both of the places contain both ‘heterogeneous’ and ‘enclavic’ elements. The following subchapter, ‘the construction of enclavic places’, has the intention to show how San Juan Chamula becomes a more ‘enclavic’ space when it is visited with an organized tour.

The Santo Domingo market

It has been drizzling for the past three hours, it is a Tuesday afternoon and I enter the Santo Domingo market in San Cristóbal de Las Casas. I ask the first vendor I see how he is doing, he responds with the almost standardized answer: ‘*tranquilo, casi no hay turistas ahora*³⁰’. It is ‘extremely low season’, a tour guide told me this morning. The vendors protect themselves and their stalls against the rain with plastic covers. Parts of the alley are also covered with plastic; hanging only 40 centimeters above my head. The rain trickles incessantly on the plastic screens and is accompanied by the sound of thick drops that roll off the plastic covers and splash in the little pools between the gobbled stones on the ground. But the singing of the sparrows, which feels like it comes from all the possible directions, overrules all the other sounds at the Santo Domingo market.

Children are playing, they chase each other while they shout in Tzotzil and make gun-sounds. One boy is wearing shoes that are much too big for him, which makes it difficult for him to keep up with his friend. Their shoes click on the stones when they jump up and down the stairs, their voices echo between the market stalls on both sides of the narrow path and resonates

³⁰ Translated from Spanish: ‘Quiet, there are almost no tourists now’

back on the plastic covers above our heads. Their mothers are sitting behind tables, hidden away between all the cloths, colorful bags, stuffed loins and zebras and woolen scarfs and sweaters. They look at television screens, while the people that pass by look at the back of the televisions and see the lights of the screen reflected on the faces of the women. Some women are eating *tamales*³¹ while others are talking with their neighbors or through their phones. Other women are weaving blouses or stitching hair bands. Some vendors ask while I pass by: '*Qué te gusta, qué les damos?*'³². Others are not looking up at all.

A stray dog, almost without hair on his back, found himself a dry spot under an empty stall. Many stalls are empty today; the vendors seem to know from years of experience that they won't sell much on a day like this. And some vendors look like they think the same and regret the fact that they did not stay home too. The old ice-cream vendor comes by, the bell that hangs on his cart rings with every step he makes. The children run towards him, as soon as they hear his bell. They all seem to know each other. I continue my way to the stairs in front of the Santo Domingo church. There is more trash on the ground than on other days. Empty plastic cups, with visible traces of the orange juice that it once contained, lie in all the corners of the 13 steps that lead to the entrance of the church. The beautiful decorated facade makes people stop halfway the stairs, overwhelmed by the sight of it they seem to forget about the falling rain for a moment.

The facade is fully decorated with symbols, statues and flower motives. The central part is flanked by pillars that create two side structures which end in two open towers with pointed roofs. The eight statues all stand in their own niche and they all miss their hands. The two lowest statues are also missing their heads. From a closer distance, the net that protects the delicate sandstone from birds is clearly visible. There are some holes in the net, which the pigeons use to find their way to their houses in the towers on both sides. The little sparrows, their squeaking heard as an endless stream of sounds in every corner of the market, do not need to find the holes in the net. They can fly through the small gauzes without being disturbed.

The rain suddenly stops while I climb the stairs to the church. The intensive mountain sun tries to evaporate all the traces of the rain as quickly as possible. The streams between the cobblestones are slowing down as they no longer are supplied by the water falling from above. This change in the weather provokes a change in the activities at the market. The people from the

³¹ A Mexican dish from corn-flour in a leaf wrapper.

³² Translated from Spanish: 'What do you like, can we give it?'

stalls poke wooden sticks against the bottom of their plastic roofs that heavily hang down due to the weight of the created water reservoirs. The water comes down with loud splashes, creating new streams that try to find their ways between the stones. The vendors start to uncover their stalls, folding up the plastics that protected the woollen cloths from getting soaked. Tourists take off their waterproof jackets and plastic ponchos and take their cameras out of their bags and pockets. The vendors leave their stalls to get food from the taco stall or to go to the toilet.

More girls and women say: '*Qué te damos, qué te gusta, díme*', when I pass by. I stop at a stall to look at necklaces made from amber. Amber is fossilized tree resin that is taken from a small mountain village called Simojovel, located two hours north of San Cristóbal. Amber feels like plastic to me, it is very light and does not absorb temperature like stones or fossils do. I wonder if it might be fake amber. The vendor, a young guy with a big amber bracelet around his neck, comes towards me and tells me that he will give me a good price. '50', he tells me. Before I can say anything, he already lowers the price: '*dame 40*³³'. I ask him if he sells a lot these days. 'No, not so much. And I make very little profit. There is a lot of competition on the market'. He explains to me that the competition also comes from outside the market and is forced upon them by the guides. The income of the tour guides partly comes from the commissions that they receive by what the tourists from their group buy. In the 'official' amber shops in the centre, they receive at least 10% commission from the shop owners for bringing in costumers. The vendors on the Santo Domingo market sell their amber for lower prices than the shops but do not give commission to the tour guides. 'So the tour guides tell their groups that our amber is fake, so the tourists will only buy at the 'official' shops where they show the tourists their 'proofs of authenticity' and certificates. And the guides get money for every piece of amber that is sold. For doing nothing, basically!' The bracelets and necklaces lay on a white cloth, ordered in beautiful straight lines and sorted on colour and size. A black light stands in the middle of the table, to deliver proof to the suspicious buyers that are looking for 'real amber'. He shows me how it works, a real piece of amber lights up with a blueish glow. Two other pieces of material, that look very similar to the first one, are placed under the lamp. They do not glow nor shine in a different colour. 'You see, these are ordinary pieces of glass and plastic! This (holding up the first piece) is real amber! We sell just as real amber as the expensive shops in *Real de Guadalupe* do'. I ask him how his business changed over the years. 'There are more and more tour guides now so we sell

³³ Translated from Spanish: 'Give me 50'.

less because of them. We still sell a lot to Italians, Italians love amber. They buy a lot here and sell it again in their own country. Their profit is often enough to pay their entire holiday in Mexico with. Italians are clever. But they mostly travel in organized groups so they buy less because their tour guides tell them we sell fake amber. The Chinese found their way to Simojovel and they start to buy up the available amber now. In some years, there will be no amber left. The Chinese are also smart, but in a bad way. They make powder of the amber and glue it on plastic and glass stuff. Under a black light it looks just like amber so people think it is real!’ I buy an amber bracelet for 40 pesos, tested and proven to be real amber under the black light, and continue.

Two young ‘bigger’ women walk in front of me, they talk in English with a strong American accent. They are wearing shorts and the flip-flops on their feet make clicking sounds and splash water up their big, white and uncovered legs. They stop at a stall and ask the price for a woollen sweater in English. One of the girls makes the gesture of money and a ‘writing gesture’ in the air. The old Chamula woman, in a furry black skirt that comes till her ankles, stands up and walks to the girls. She grabs a roll of toilet paper from under the table and writes the price on it. *‘Muy bonito, hecho a mano’³⁴*, she says to the girls who are converting the price in pesos to the equivalent in American dollars. They conclude that the price is too high and leave without saying anything. The vendor, with the roll of toilet paper still in her hand, looks at the white legs while the girls walk away.

Some stalls further, a woman shows interest in woven tablecloths. She feels the fabric, moves her finger up and down the stitched flowers and bird motifs, turns it around to see how the sewing is done and weighs the cloth in her hand before she smells it. She carries a baby in a scarf on her back. She talks in German with her friend, who also carries a baby on her back, and switches to Spanish when she asks the vendor something. The vendor is more interested in the baby and asks how old the baby is and what his name is. She calls her neighbour and they talk in Tsotsil with each other while they feel the hair of the baby. The woman that just came over asks if she can hold the baby and the German mother lifts the baby out of the carrier. The baby looks at all the women surrounding him without any expression on his face. The vendor takes over the baby and holds him in her arms. The other vendor softly pinches the baby’s chubby arm while she asks the mother where the father is from. The four women are constantly switching languages

³⁴ Translated from Spanish: ‘Very beautiful, made by hand’.

as they are talking, from German and Tsotsil to Spanish in order to talk about motherhood and the colourful embroidered cloths.

I continue my way to the little stairs that lead back to the facade of the church. Three tall white women on high heels walk in front of me, the cobbled stones making it difficult for them to walk. They speak loudly in Spanish and I can hear from their accents that they must be from a big city in the north of Mexico. One woman wants to make a picture of an old, wrinkled, indigenous woman carrying a woven basket on her head. The weight of the basket curves her back while she leans heavily on a stick in order to walk. The old lady responds by shaking her head while she hides her face behind a banana leaf that she pulls out of the basket on her head. The woman on high heels pushes down the leaf with one hand while she makes the picture with the iPhone in her other hand. '*Una foto, una foto*', she says while the old lady tries to walk away. The tourist turns to her friends and tells them: 'She doesn't want to be on the picture but I do take her photo because she looks so *linda, la verdad le parece muy linda*³⁵'. The tourist continues making pictures of the old lady, while the old lady keeps on protecting her head with the banana leaf.

I arrive at the stairs in front of the facade of the church again. There are many tourists now, all carrying cameras and making pictures. I sit down on the upper step, feeling the heat of the sun absorbed by the stones burning straight through my trousers. '*Siéntate, siéntate! Sientense ustedes, yo digo*³⁶', an old woman commands two children to sit down while she points at the stairs. The rest of the family all group together. The young family members are seated in front of the older people, while the latter position themselves behind the children. The composition suggests that the children should be the focus point of the picture. The people put their arms around each other, the little girl in the front row puts her hand on the shoulder of the little boy next to her. One guy who stands on the left side holds a bottle of Coca-Cola behind his back and another woman hides a plastic bag behind her legs on the ground. The picture-taker shuffles backwards, while he keeps his eyes and the camera on the family. To me, it resembles the religious act of a pious person leaving the church while walking backwards in order to keep its eyes fixed on the altar. After every step he points the camera at the family composition before making another step backwards. At the single last step he stops and kneels down, placing his left knee one step higher than his right foot. As if going to say a prayer to the family that stands on

³⁵ Translated from Spanish: 'Pretty, to be honest, you look very pretty'.

³⁶ Translated from Spanish: 'Sit down, sit down! Sit down you (two), I say'.

the altar, he squats in order to make the background and his posing family fit the frame. The background, the Santo Domingo church, with its beautiful decorated façade, creates the stunning decor on which this family is juxtaposed. He says: '*ya, listo? Sonreír!*³⁷' The posing family replies by putting smiles on their faces, some of them say: '*whiskey!*' The guy presses the button, the shutter sounds and he recovers from his squatted position. He makes his way back up the stairs to join the family again. He puts the camera in his pocket and the whole group continues the activities they were doing before they were interrupted by the picture-taking moment. The bottle of Coca-Cola hisses while the guy opens it to take a sip, the children start to chase a pigeon and the granny walks to one of the stands on the right side of the church to look at souvenirs.

The stage, the upper stairs of the Santo Domingo church, is already taken by other picture-taking people. A father places his young daughter on his knee, the girl licks from a pink popsicle which has the same colour as her dress. The father kneels down; his buttocks hovers some centimetres above the stair. The mother stands on exactly the same step as the previous tourist while she moves her sunglasses from her nose to her hair. She closes her eyes a bit, slightly blinded by the sudden brightness of the sun. The girl puts on a 'cute smile' as soon as she sees her mother with the camera at the bottom of the stairs. The mother looks at the screen of her pink phone while she touches it five times with her left index finger. She swipes back some times and seems to be satisfied with the result. The father lifts his daughter up and puts her on her own feet while she continues to eat from her ice-cream. While he is doing this, he almost bumps into a couple that was standing behind him. They are too busy to pose for their selfies to notice. The girl holds the selfie-stick in her hand while the boy puts his arm around her waist. They both wear sunglasses and fluorescent sport shoes. It seems that most of the tourists are occupied with making photos, mainly of themselves, their family or loved ones. I stand up and leave, feeling a bit 'out of place' without my camera or my loved ones between all these photo-snapping tourists.

San Juan Chamula

From San Cristóbal de Las Casas, a *colectivo*³⁸ will reach the market square of San Juan Chamula in 20 minutes. Old and rusty Volkswagen vans leave the busy market in town with a minimum of five passengers, it climbs up the mountain passes before it reaches another busy market square. Food carts are scattered all over the square and the smell of *tamales*, *empanadas* and *papas*

³⁷ Translated from Spanish: 'Are you ready? Smile!'

³⁸ Public transport

*francesas*³⁹ is mixed with the smell of kerosene that is used as the fuel for the frying pans. The trash of the food carts lays everywhere on the ground, the plastic cups and white foam plates with traces of red salsa sauce on it, are moved back and forth by the wind. The stray dogs have a hard time trying to find something eatable between the plastic messes. I cross the central plaza and enter the square in front of the church through an arch that is flanked by two rubbish bins. As if the arch marks an invisible border, the square is incredibly clean. An old man in a white fur coat kneels down and scrapes chewing gum away between the gobbled stones, using his nails.

A very old and short woman pulls my sleeve, she lifts up her arm to show me the colourful belts and bracelets that are draped over her wrinkled skin. '*Cinturones, mira, muy bonitos*⁴⁰', she reaches her arm up even higher. The sun accentuates her wrinkles and the lines make shades on her face. I tell her that I am not interested and continue my way to the entrance of the church. The vendor keeps on walking next to me, asking me to look at her items. A group of children is seated at the bottom of a green painted cross in the middle of the square. There is a pine branch tied to the back of the cross that creates a small strip of shade for the children. They jump up and run towards me. At least six children gather around me, showing me the souvenirs in their baskets or draped over their arm. I hear '*hecho a mano*', '*regalo de San Juan Chamula*' and '*comprame algo, por mi tortilla*⁴¹', mingled with words in Tsotsil that I don't understand. Some older boys carry foam boards with jewellery pinned onto it. It makes a tingling sound when they move the board which makes me doubt if the brown pieces on the necklaces are really amber. Everyone talks through each other while they are showing me similar items and name different prices. I am a bit overwhelmed by the attention of so many children and I don't feel completely at ease. I try to make clear that I am not interested in buying anything while staying friendly even as they continue to pull my sleeve and pinch my arm.

Suddenly, the screaming of the children, the sound of the market and the singing of the sparrows in the towers of the church is overruled by extremely loud firecrackers. Small dots of smoke mark the clear blue sky while the sound of the firecrackers echoes between the mountains. All the tourists are looking up, in shock and surprised by the sudden noise while the local children with their souvenirs don't even seem to hear it. As if the firecrackers are the initiators of

³⁹ Typical Mexican snacks

⁴⁰ Translated from Spanish: 'Belts, look, very beautiful'.

⁴¹ Translated from Spanish: 'Made by hand', 'a gift from San Juan Chamula', and 'buy me something, for my tortillas'.

all noises, the church bells start to ring. A man in a long furry white coat with a big cowboy hat on his head pulls a cord next to the cross that runs all the way up to the bells in the top of the church. With his full body weight he hangs on the rope and his movements correspond with the sounds of the bells. After some time, the man next to him takes over the job. He wears the same furry coat and his leather sandals with car-tyre soles are squeaking on the paved surface while he fights the power of the slinging bell from pulling him over.

The bright white facade of the church, heavily reflected by the intense sun, makes it difficult to see the beautiful painted details. The green and blue flowers and symbols on the arches seem to embrace the wooden entrance. A tourist storms out of the door, followed by a female tourist and a local older man in a black fur coat. The Chamulan carries a camera in his hands and the tourist screams to him in Spanish. From what I understand, the tourist took pictures inside the church. Taking pictures inside the church is forbidden, as explained by the two boys seated behind the ticket-counter at the entrance. The local men confiscated his memory card and they are only willing to give it back if the tourist pays the fine of 300 pesos (17 euros). The girl, probably his girlfriend, opens her clutch bag and takes a note of 500 pesos out of her purse. She tries to calm him down but he is very mad at the men that confiscated his camera. He screams to them that they are *pinche cabrones*⁴² trying to benefit from tourists by stealing their money. The local authority⁴³ responds: 'We told you, before you entered the church, that you are not allowed to take pictures and you still did it. You knew our rules but didn't respect them at all! We have our own rules here and violations of our rules are penalised by us'. The boys behind the table give the woman her change back while the man in the fur coat puts the 500 pesos in his pocket. The tourist is still angry and offensive, he requests a receipt of the fine and the boys behind the table write it for him on an empty entrance ticket. His 'girlfriend' tries to calm him down and forces him to leave with her. While the couple walks away, the guys start to laugh and joke to each other in Tsotsil. I hand over 20 pesos to one of the boys behind the table and he asks me if I understood the message about the restriction on photo-taking. I nod my head and put my camera away in my backpack. Behind their heads hangs a big sign that repeats the message in clear universal pictograms: a black camera with a big red cross through it. This must be clear for everyone.

⁴² A Mexican swear word for insulting someone. Could be translated with 'asshole'.

⁴³ There is no police in San Juan Chamula, the men that fulfil this function are called '*Los autoridades*'.

I push the heavy wooden door to open it and almost stumble over the threshold. The stark contrast between the fresh air and the thick smoke inside emphasizes the contrast between two worlds. The light inside comes from thousands of candles, the entire space is filled with the dancing and flickering lights that cut their ways through the curtain of smoke. The candles are everywhere, on the tables in front of the walls and planted in their own wax on the ground. And there are flowers. I think I have never seen so many flowers in one space. All the walls and tables are loaded with bouquets of red roses, yellow chrysanthemums and orange gerberas, mixed with green palm leaves. Completely overwhelmed, I make my first steps towards the lights when I almost stumble for the second time. I look at the floor and see a carpet of pine needles under my flip-flops. The pine needles make the white tiled floor beneath it slippery and I have to walk carefully not to fall. The smell of the fresh pine needles and flowers, mixed with the incenses that circle up in spirals through the thick smoke and the overwhelming smell of burning wax tickles my nose and make my eyes tear. The centuries of smoke created a thick black layer on the ceiling and the walls and I imagine how the lungs of the regular visitors would look like. *'Breath-taking'*, says a tourist next to me and that is literally what I feel.

Women, children and men sit on the beds of pine needles. The people face the burning candles and are surrounded by bottles of alcohol, soft drinks, chickens in cardboard boxes and plastic bags with eggs. The people say streams of words in Tsotsil, they bend their heads and rest them on the pine needles. They repeat this while they pass around small cups with liquor and drink from half a litre bottles of Coca-Cola. The children play with the pine needles, they put them in the candles and see how they slowly light up before they extinguish. A woman holds an egg in her hand and slides it over the stomach of her neighbour, up to her left arm and over her chest to her other arm. All of them, in total five adults, repeat the words of the woman and pass on the small cup of liquor that is refilled by one of the men on the right side. The repetition in their words and their actions creates a sense of unity between them. After the egg, the woman takes a chicken out of the box behind her and moves the animal around above the flames of the candles in front of them. The chicken chuckles softly while the woman repeats this gesture. A smell of burned feathers circles up and mingles with the others smells in the air. The woman circles the chicken some rounds around the head of her neighbour and again above the flames. The chicken does not seem to be very impressed. The woman positions her left hand under the head of the chicken while she presses the body of the animal to her right hip. She pulls fiercely

on the neck of the chicken that starts kicking with her legs and makes gurgling sounds. The woman places it back in the card box and quickly folds the lid. The box still moves for some minutes while the sound of scratching claws on card box is clearly audible. Then, it becomes quiet and the box does not move anymore.

While I manoeuvre between the seated people and the candles on the ground I get very conscious of my own presence. I try to be not too visible and I feel like I am disturbing whatever is going on here. I realize that I can only make sense of my surrounding by referring to what I know or have seen before. I can only interpret the people's behaviour as praying and the killing of the chicken as a sacrifice to expel a negative energy. I have no idea what is going on in the church. Are the people praying? Is it a ritual or are they talking to God? And which God are they praying to? Are they sacrificing the chicken after it took the evil spirit of the woman? Maybe my interpretations make no sense at all.

I reach the altar in the front of the church. The smoke and the darkness are the most intense here. A single beam of light comes through a window in the front, the light reflects on the ashes and dust that floats in the air. My breathing changes as I try to grasp more air. Jesus, hidden behind a wall of fresh flowers, is black and the images on the wall are almost completely covered with soot. I want to understand what the local people are doing but I feel very uncomfortable when I watch them. I continue my way to the other side of the church and the closer I get to the door through which I entered, the easier my breathing gets. I want to go out to get fresh air but I don't want to leave the church. Just when I decide to stay inside and walk to the front to see the altar again, a big group of French tourists with a guide enters. Their voices and their appearance make me change my mind. I step out, stumbling over the threshold again, into the light of the sun and the fresh mountain air. I walk back to where the Volkswagen *colectivo* dropped me off and step into the first rusty bus that is lined up. The driver shuts the door after me and climbs into the drivers seat, I am the fifth passenger so we are ready to go. After 20 minutes of speeding down the mountains, the bus drops us off in San Cristóbal de Las Casas again, at exactly the same spot as where I embarked that morning.

Reflection on heterogeneous spaces

The above descriptions of the Santo Domingo market and San Juan Chamula show the mingling of numerous different people that are all doing different kinds of stuff. Edensor calls these places 'heterogeneous spaces' and argues that they are usually located within bazaar areas

and markets in developing countries. These spaces are known for their spatial complexity; the criss-crossing streets and alleys, the flows of different bodies and vehicles in multi-directional patterns. These spaces are sites for multiple activities and these different enactments give rise to a multiplicity of performed places. Children run by as they chase their friends while tourists, victims of the ‘constant flow of distracting sights’ (Edensor 2008: 59), stroll past the market stalls, moving their heads from side to side as if they are watching a tennis match. The materiality of the place, such as the slippery cobbled stones on the Santo Domingo market and the pine needles on the tiled floor in the church in Chamula, change one’s bodily movements. The soundscape of the Santo Domingo market is filled with the sparrows that try to overrule the sounds of the honking minibuses that drive around the square, the shouting ice-cream vendors, the sounds of different languages of tourists, the playing children and arguing vendors. These spaces are not fixed, nor are the prices of things sold at the market as the repetitious acts of bargaining between tourists and vendors show. Heterogeneous places provide numerous of opportunities for tourists to interact with the local people, which can be part of a ‘desired tourist experience’ (ibid: 55). A Dutch tourist described the Santo Domingo market as follows: *‘this market is very lively, it feels truly Mexican’*. Heterogeneous spaces are marked by the constant stream of temporal activities, (bodily) encounters with others, impressions, transitions and emotions.

Edensor argues that one of the characteristics of a heterogeneous place is that it accommodates tourism as one of the (economic) activities but that the place is not dominated by it (2008). An example of this concerns the waste and rubbish on the streets of San Juan Chamula. Cesar, one of the interviewed tourists says: “tourists often ask me why the Chamulas do not clean up their streets. Some tourists even say that the locals should clean up because the trash gives [them] a bad impression of the indigenous people. But the Chamulas do not care, they clean up on their own special days, not to give a good impression to the tourists’. In this sense, San Juan Chamula can be seen as a heterogeneous place, tourism is just one of the activities that the space hosts. There is no tendency to construct a certain image for the tourists, based on ‘western’ notions of hygiene and cleanness, as the space is a mixed-purpose space and tourists are spatio-temporal dwellers in it

Heterogeneous places are marked by their spatial complexity, many tourists get lost in the criss-crossing alleys and narrow pathways at the Santo Domingo market. Tourists might feel

overwhelmed in heterogeneous places, due to the multiple temporal encounters and interactions. Nonetheless, although the Santo Domingo market and San Juan Chamula might appear as ‘disordered’ places at first sight, there is a lot of ‘order’ and spatial control. The fact that the square around the Santo Domingo church in San Cristóbal de Las Casas is the designated area in the city for a crafts market is already one example which underscores the order of seemingly disordered heterogeneous spaces. Furthermore, the observations have shown the routines in which different bodies move. Tourists and vendors perform spatial and temporal ‘place ballets’ on the Santo Domingo market. The market is mainly dominated by vendors and wholesalers in the morning, who are busily bargaining for the best prices. The women are cleaning up the space in front of their stands and have breakfast with their neighbouring family members and friends. The boys that sell water and tortillas constantly pass by and the guy who sells puddings always passes by the stairs in front of the church at 11 o’clock in the morning. The tourists slowly start arriving around noon, whereas it is busiest with tourists in the afternoon. Around five o’clock, the vendors start to tear down their stalls, their male relatives arrive to carry the heavy bags full of souvenirs and *hecho a mano* woven fabrics back to the storehouses. Hence, the Santo Domingo market is much more organized and structured than it might appear at first sight.

The above place-descriptions have shown the multiplicity in interactions between different actors in San Juan Chamula and San Cristóbal de Las Casas. These multiple corporeal experiences range from bargaining with vendors, to (verbal) fights with the boys in Chamula, to tourists that make pictures of themselves and others (without permission), the bothering sight of stray dogs and the unexpected exploding fireworks, and the sensed discomfort inside the church. These examples characterize the multiplicity of activities and impressions in heterogeneous tourist places. Nonetheless, in order to blur up the rigid distinction that Edensor makes between heterogeneous and enclavic spaces, I emphasised the ways in which seemingly ‘disordered’ places are far more organized and ‘enclavic’ than they might appear. I will problematize this distinction between heterogeneous places and enclavic places even further by showing in the next subchapter how organized tours produce enclavic spaces in heterogeneous places.

The construction of enclavic spaces: organized tours to the indigenous villages

‘Wow, it feels like we are 2000 years back in time!’ – An Israeli tourist in the San Juan Chamula church

As discussed in the theoretical framework, tourist places can be imagined as ‘heterogeneous’ places or ‘enclavic’ places. The previous section was an attempt to show how San Juan Chamula and the Santo Domingo market are heterogeneous places, ‘mixed purpose places where tourists and locals mingle and go about their separate businesses’ (Edensor 2000: 331). Here, I will show how organized tours to the indigenous villages produce enclavic spaces, in which the guide, the locals and the tourists construct tourism bubbles. Enclavic places are defined as spaces in which tourists are ‘cut off from social contact with the local populace and shielded from potential offensive sights, sounds and smell’ (Edensor 2008: 45). Organized tours are spatio-temporal regulated spaces that are ‘*designed* to stimulate desires’ (ibid: 48). Meeting the indigenous people is assumed to be the desire that tourists have who go on these organized tours to San Juan Chamula. In this chapter, I will show how the activities, sights, movements and emotions during these organized tours are monitored through (self) surveillance, the place and by the tour guide. Nevertheless, the regulating influences of a guide are limited and can be disputed, both from within as from outside.

These organized tours to the indigenous villages do not construct hermetically closed entities as the above definition might suggest. This is not the intention of the organised tours to the indigenous villages, as ‘meeting the indigenous local’ is the main expectation of the tours. I imagine these organised tours as constructed ‘mobile porous tourist bubbles’ that hover around in heterogeneous spaces. The objective of the tour, to meet the indigenous people, is achieved in a regulated ‘ordered disordered’ manner through in- and exclusion of (indigenous) people and places in the enclavic space (ibid: 48).

‘Before we start the tour, I will give you some instructions on taking photos in the indigenous villages. You are not allowed to take photos of the authorities; you can recognize them on their black or white furred coats. You are also not allowed to take pictures inside the church. Obey these rules because you will get in serious problems if you ignore them. I am not in a position to solve it for you. You can take panoramic pictures, from a big distance. If you want to take a picture of an indigenous, you should ask the person first. And don’t stare at the people like they are monkeys’.

These are the words with which Cesar, the guide from Alex y Raul Tours, starts his English-guided tour with. 15 tourists are surrounding him, some of the girls are shivering in their shorts from the sudden cold in the mountainous village of San Juan Chamula. The group of former strangers has been traveling in a package tour for two weeks now. I am the only ‘outsider’ that partakes in this organized tour to the indigenous villages. The white van, our ‘mobile enclave’, drives us from the cathedral square in San Cristóbal to the cemetery on the edge of the village, where we listen to Cesar who gives us instructions on how to behave in the communities. As we continue, an Australian tourist says that she even heard that it is not allowed to make pictures if the locals can see you: ‘I read that you have to be very careful, these people can be very aggressive’. The tourists are subject to a disciplinary gaze, Cesar instructs them on how to act, what to photograph and what to do, in order to construct ‘appropriate’ tourist behaviour. Simultaneously, the group monitors itself, when people from within tell their ‘others’ what to do. This self-monitoring process is often observed inside the church of Chamula, where tourists tell their travel-companions to walk carefully or to talk softly. The Australian girl shared information that she read to instruct the others in the group. This was a common practice, more than once I heard tourists inside the church saying: ‘Watch out for the candles, I heard that if you touch them with your feet that the disease that they are praying for will go into your body’. The ‘inward gaze’ of the tourists protects the group as it regulates the behaviour and movements of the bodies within the tourist enclave. This idea on the inward gaze will be further developed in the discussion on tourist bubbles in the final chapter.

Cesar leads us along the hill to the parking area and stops in front of a restaurant. ‘Anyone who has to go to the bathroom?’ asks Cesar. ‘It is advised to use these ones before we continue, these toilets are hygienic and convenient. They cost five pesos’. As we wait for two girls that have to go to the bathroom, Cesar tells about the indigenous language Tsotsil that the Chamulas speak: ‘we will meet some local indigenous people today, if you want to greet them, you can say *liote*, and if you want to thank them, you can use *kolowal*. We continue our way, Cesar walks in front of the group and most of the tourists are talking with someone else while they move their heads from side to side to observe the surroundings. We arrive at a house and Cesar asks something to a man who is sitting on a bench while smoking a cigarette. He wears a white fur coat and nods his head as a response to what Cesar asked him. Cesar turns towards the group:

'This is one of the oldest martyrdom houses in Chamula. It is an important place because the men that do their obligated religious service come to live here for a year as they work for the community. I just asked if we can enter and they allow us to enter. It is common to give a small donation of around 10 pesos in order to thank the martyrdoms for their hospitality and to support their communal service. There is a box with coins on the altar but I will pass it around when we leave. Do you remember what you can say as a greeting in Tsotsil?'

Some of us mumble '*liote*' to the locals that are standing outside, before they enter a very basic room. The ground is covered with a layer of fresh pine needles and there are candles burning everywhere. The smell of the pine needles mingles with the incense that creates a layer of thick smoke in the room. There are two empty benches along the walls and Cesar instructs us to take a seat. He explains that the Chamulan men have to work for the community for at least one year, and tells about the rituals and customs that the religious leaders perform. We can try some *pox*, a sugarcane-liquor that the indigenous people drink during their rituals. Cesar passes around some plastic cups: 'the Germans always say that it tastes like schnapps and the Italians think it is most similar to grappa⁴⁴. You don't need to worry about your stomach, the liquor has been boiled'. Cesar gives a security-guaranty before the tourists bring the little plastic cup to their lips in order to take a tiny sip. Most of us express disgust by the taste and the strength of the alcohol. Most of the local children who were outside when we arrived are standing at the door now, they are laughing at the tourists that have to cough because of the strong alcohol. The boys are whispering in each other's ears as they discretely point at the tourists. As Maoz (2006) also points out, the tourists are hardly aware of the local gaze upon them, as they are too occupied with listening to Cesar and looking at the others in the group.

We leave the house after everyone put a coin into the box that Cesar passes around, some of us remembered how to say thank you in Tsotsil but most people say thank you or goodbye in English. After a short stroll we arrive at the central market, Cesar points at the different stands on both sides of the square. 'There are some nice souvenir shops over there, where they sell beautiful scarfs and hand-made cloths'. We stop in front of the church and an Irish guy asks Cesar

⁴⁴ Typical Italian and German alcoholic drinks.

if he can take pictures here.

'Yes, you are allowed to take pictures of the façade of the church and of each other but you are not allowed to make pictures of the local people, and especially not of the religious people that you can recognize through their fur coats. We will enter the church now and you are absolutely not allowed to take pictures inside the church. Just keep your camera or phone in your backpack and do not take it out at all. It will cause serious problems that I cannot solve for you'.

‘According to Edensor, ‘many tour operators are at pains to emphasise that they cannot be held responsible should the tourist venture out of the organised tourist space. Tour guides inculcate fear to curtail such movement, a strategy which may resonate with the tourists’ desire for safety’ (Edensor 2008: 51).

We enter the church and Cesar brings us to the back, as far away as possible from the thick smoke and praying locals. He explains the customs of the indigenous people by making comparisons in order for us to understand the meaning of the rituals that are practiced in front of us. One tourist asks if they slaughter chickens and when Cesar confirms this practice, she says that she will wait outside. Cesar tells her that he will join her and tells us that we can walk around by ourselves in the church. ‘You have free time now. We will meet again in 30 minutes at the middle of the square. You can have a look at the souvenir market that I just showed you, on the sides of the square. If you need anything, you can find me at the square’. Even during the free time, ‘the coverage of space is highly selective’ (ibid: 50). Cesar selects the landscapes and activities for the tourists, he instructed beforehand where which souvenirs can be bought and how the free time can be spend by the tourists. During this half an hour, the group of tourists divided in smaller groups but everyone went to the market on the right side of the square. The ‘free time’ was used to make group pictures, to eat some small snacks and to buy souvenirs at the stands that Cesar pointed to before. Everybody was back at the assigned spot in 20 minutes.

The white minivan waits in front of the square and brings us ‘in our mobile enclave’ to the next indigenous village, Zinacantan, where an indigenous local family is visited. There are multiple houses in the village that receive organized groups of tourists. There were already three

white minivans, ‘tourist-vans’, standing in front of the door of the house where we stopped. I have visited two different houses which gives the opportunity to compare how ‘indigenous life’ is staged in these two different spaces. Edensor states that tourist enclaves are in the first place designed for gazing (ibid: 51) and the visit to the house of an indigenous family clearly serves the ‘gazing’ purpose. The setting on which indigenous life is performed and staged is well-defined and marked. The tourist gaze is carefully directed and pointed into certain directions while other areas, and persons, are not designed to be gazed upon. When Cesar and his group arrive at the family house, the men disappear to the back of the house, disappearing from the ‘visible’ stage. Raul, the owner of the travel agency and driver of the minivan, gives nonverbal instructions to the women with the sound of his rolling engine in front of the gate. In response to this sound, the oldest woman of the house (‘the grandmother’) quickly installs herself behind her backstrap weaving machine, ‘the mother’ runs to the kitchen area to start the preparation of the tortillas and the younger girls arrange the shop and the ‘museum’. The houses are organized in a way to create single-purpose spaces, which is according to Edensor to ‘delimit economic and social activities which diverge from the servicing of tourists and their designated practices’(Edensor 2000: 329).

Both houses are spatially structured in similar fashions, the first space that the group is presented is the museum. The guide talks about the traditional clothes and customs of the indigenous people. Throughout his informative narrative there is a strong focus on the lives of the indigenous women, which corresponds with the present actors on the stage.



Figure 3: 'Museum props' used during the organized tours

The second stage that we were escorted to was the shop. This stage was introduced by the performance of women weaving on a 'traditional' backstrap machine. The guides explained the method of this technique and they gave examples of how much time it took to weave a particular item in order to stress the labour intensity of the handwork. 'You can make photos of her while she is weaving', says Cesar, most of the tourists take their cameras out of their backpack. The shop occupied the largest space in the house and a large amount of 'free time' was given to spend in this particular area. Edensor mentions how tours are often structured to take in retail outlets and commission arrangements are often set up among businesses, so that money from tourists is distributed among those based in the enclave' (ibid: 329). The indigenous families and the guides do have these arrangements and guides are often paid a commission of 10 to 15% from what is bought by 'their' tourists. Some guides stated to not ask for commissions from the locals. Cesar thinks that this is not 'ethically correct to do for example, while other guides stated that they did ask them. According to some guides, their salary is very low and the commissions are a way to make a little extra cash while the local people profit from them as well because they bring in clients that 'do not bargain'.



Figure 4: the 'traditional' back strap weaving technique performance in the shop

The regulations that are exercised over enclavic spaces can raise feelings of resistance and provoke constraining enactments. During our 'free time' in the family house shop, I followed a tourist who wandered off from the group. He opened some doors on the side of the house and said to me that he was looking for beds. 'I want to see where this indigenous family sleeps. It could be this room because indigenous people often have multifunctional rooms. What is the living room during the day can be the bedroom in the night; they just take some mattresses from

somewhere. Or even sleep on the ground! I just came from a tour through Central America, where I visited the Kuna [indigenous people from Panama]. They explained that their rooms are multifunctional, so probably it is the same case over here'. Being a bit disturbed by the fact that there were so many tourists strolling through this 'traditional indigenous house', I was interested in how the other tourists experienced the organized tour. I asked the tourist what he thought of the organized tour. He answered: 'I think it is truly authentic! It gives so much insight into the lives of the Mayan people. Because I just came back from Central America, I can compare these different peoples. On the San Blas islands [where the Kuna live], the men do not wear their traditional clothes. What makes this area so traditionally rich is the fact that the men and the women still wear their traditional clothes'. The fact that all the villagers wore authentic indigenous clothes was for him a sign that they still maintained their traditional lifestyles.

The last stage on which indigenous life is performed during these organized visits to a local family gives an insight into the kitchen. The women are sitting on the ground, around a *comal*⁴⁵ on an open wood fire while they make tortillas by hand. Alonso explains that the Mayan kitchen is very healthy and that the indigenous people only recently got 'addicted to Coca Cola'⁴⁶. He stresses the fact that the prepared tortillas are safe to eat and asks everyone to put some money in the little basket on the table: 'the wood on which the women bake the tortillas is very expensive these days and the flour prices has also risen'.



Figure 5: tortillas, *hecho a mano*

The organized tours are 'monitored aesthetic that combine ideal cleanliness and just a hint of the 'exotic' to concoct the requisite combination of high standards and strangeness' (Edensor 2000:

⁴⁵ A flat pan that is placed above an open fire, used to make tortillas on.

⁴⁶ The inhabitants of San Juan Chamula are one of the largest Coca-Cola consumers of Mexico. which painfully clashes with the fact that the indigenous communities of Chiapas also have the highest rates of malnutrition.

329-30). Contact with others from outside the tourist enclave is in most of the occasions monitored and regulated. The guide secures the safety and cleanness within the enclavic space and constructs the performances from actors that enter the enclavic space, while he also constructs the ‘appropriate’ performances of the tourists within the bubble. The guide makes sure that all the tourists in his group stay together and that they make it back into the white minivan so he can drop them off safely again at the central square in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, at exactly the agreed time.

Reflection on constructed enclavic spaces

The previous chapter showed that the tour-guide of the organized tours has a strong influence on the enactments of tourists, places and locals. He monitors and controls the sights, activities, movements, interactions and emotions of his tourists. The tour-guide instructs the organized group what to say, he tells them where they can take pictures and secures the safety of the food and drinks that are consumed. He also controls the movements of the group, or individuals within the group, through the enforcement of fear and possible danger. This activates a process of self-controlling behaviour that is fed by a ‘desire for safety’, as Edensor explains (2008: 51). The organized tours offer a ‘hint of the exotic’ from a secure position. Nevertheless, the organized groups are not hermetically closed entities. Rather, these constructed spaces as ‘mobile porous tourist bubbles’ that are partly constructed by the enactments of their surroundings and by the performances from within the bubble. How tourist bubbles are constructed by the performances from within will be further elaborated on when the idea of the enactments of the ‘inward gaze’ will be introduced.

Conclusion on heterogeneous and enclavic spaces

In this chapter, the argument has been made that tourist places are not inherently ‘enclavic’ or ‘heterogeneous’ but that ‘enclavic’ spaces are constructed in the enactments of people and places. This has been shown by portraying the Santo Domingo market and San Juan Chamula first as a, what Edensor (2000) would call, ‘heterogeneous’ place. Subsequently, San Juan Chamula is again portrayed but from a ‘toured’ perspective. The tour-guide has shown to have a great influence in the spatio-temporality in which the images and impressions in the indigenous villages are constructed. He instructs where his group eats, and what they eat, he even selects the toilets that should be used. However, the tourists also have a controlling and regulating force as they instruct each other on how to behave in a foreign setting. This power has thus been expressed in a certain

inward gaze, in which there is a strong focus on the self and the other tourists in the group. Another example of this inward gaze of the tourist can be given by the fact that the tourists were not aware of the local gaze upon them in the martyrdom house, so much were they paying attention to the guide and to each other. This inward gaze is also practiced in settings in which there is no present tour-guide or the place is not 'officially' toured. The tourist practices of photography, such as the pictures that tourists take of themselves and their company in front of the Santo Domingo church, could somehow also be seen as constructing an inward gaze. Concluding, tourist spaces are hybrid spaces, which might both contain enclavic as heterogenous elements (Edensor 2008: 6). As the use of this dichotomy does not provide many insights in how tourist practices produce power relations, these issues will be further developed in chapter 7 where the concept of produced 'porous tourist bubbles' will be expanded.

The portraits

The following chapter will present three portraits on different actors, these actors are: the tourist, the guide and the indigenous local. These three portraits ought not to be considered as representing their ‘category’. It is not the intention to homogenize or essentialize guides, locals or tourists in fixed identities. Rather, the reflections that follow each portrait will stress how performances are very much contextually bounded to specific spaces and times. The portraits are mainly presented in this particular form in order to focus on tourist practices from a performative perspective. What does ‘the tour-guide’, do and how does he construct certain identities through his tourist enactments? This specific perspective focuses on the enactments of actors, arguing that identities are not preceding the performances but are constructed and produced in performances. This is the reason why the following three portraits are presented, in order to show how they are specifically constructed in particular contexts and in relation to other, rather than being fixed and static identities.

The tourists: Sharon and John

I meet Sharon and John on a foggy April morning. They are waiting at the wooden cross in front of the cathedral, like the Lonely Planet explained them to do. César, the guide from *Alex y Raul Tours*, talks with them shortly to arrange the price, 200 pesos for the tour to the indigenous villages, and asks them to wait for their departure at 9.30 am. Their accents give away that they must be from the south of the United States of America.

Sharon and John have known each other for more than 20 years. They used to be neighbours in Austin, Texas. Sharon still lives in Texas, where she works as a real-estate agent. John left The U.S.A. ten years ago and has been living in Yucatan, Mexico, since then. They both wear sunglasses and a cap, to protect their heads and eyes from the bright morning sun. John drinks water from a half litre bottle. Sharon wears khaki shorts and John a pair of old ripped jeans with a tucked in souvenir t-shirt from Oaxaca. She carries a shoulder bag with a little tube of hand sanitizer clipped on the zip. He likes to invite his friends from The United States to show them ‘his’ Mexico. He visited San Cristóbal five years ago with another friend and thinks that the city has changed over this period. ‘There are more tourists now and everything is more

expensive. But I cannot remember so much because we were mostly looking for bars', John laughs as he says this.

John went on a tour to the indigenous villages the previous time as well. The church of San Juan Chamula made a big impression on him. He remembers the pine needles on the floor and the lights from hundreds of candles. There was a procession going on, which was explained as containing both Christian elements and local beliefs. 'It is just different what they do in that church. They were cutting off chicken heads and stuff. It was pretty cool, I had never seen that before', he laughs and looks at Sharon who was covering her ears as she retorts: 'I asked him to not tell too much, I want to see it for myself'. John continues: 'we also went to the house of a local. This was really a special experience because you see how the indigenous live. They made some tortillas for us in the traditional way, kneading the dough by hand above an open fire. We went with a lady, a guide from San Cristóbal and she knows the people in the indigenous villages of course. I don't think you would be invited into the houses of local people if you would go by yourself'. John tells me that it was also definitely not recommended by his travel book to travel to the indigenous villages independently. Apparently, some years ago, some tourists went to Chamula by themselves and no one ever saw them again. 'Whether it is true or not, I don't know, but it was written in my travel guidebook. So you just have to be very careful there, it is different out there'.

Despite this story, or maybe because of it, many tourists go on tours to the indigenous villages. John and Sharon think that tourists just want to see a glimpse of the Indian life. 'Or what is left of the society and to get a part of it. I want to see something that is maybe not going to be there forever'. The city of San Cristóbal changed significantly in five years, so John expects the indigenous villages also to be changed. He suspects that the villages will be spoiled by influences from outside and that the indigenous people will 'lose' their traditions in the future. Two little indigenous girls stop in front of us and show the bracelets that they are selling. '*Comprame algo, por favor señora, cómpramelos! A diez, regalo, regalo*⁴⁷', they say with very sad and whiny voices. Sharon looks pitifully at the girls: 'How I wish that I can just buy something from all of them! But we are traveling with backpacks and we don't have any space'. Sharon really loves the Mexico that John has been showing her. They went to beautiful remote places where there were

⁴⁷ Translated from Spanish: 'Buy something from me, please madam, buy something from us! For ten, a present, a present'.

no *gringos*⁴⁸ at all and the locals sold the most amazing fabrics. Sharon was especially surprised by the fact that the men were weaving as well because she thought that this was purely a women's business. Although she wanted to buy these 'very authentic and traditionally made' fabrics, she could not buy anything here either.

What they especially enjoy during their holiday is listening to live music. 'As soon as we hear music, we just have to follow our ears'. Every night, they look for bars where there is a band performing. They share drinks with the locals while they enjoy the Spanish sounds without understanding the words. For them, music is one of the most beautiful ways to engage with a culture and to connect with local people. John expresses the difficulty to express in words what he feels in San Cristóbal, and Mexico in general. 'Everything is so beautiful. I don't know what it is, but it is something that you feel in this town. It is a feeling, the feeling I have when I walk around in this city. These emotions and feelings are difficult to express in words, they can only be felt inside'.

I meet Sharon and John after they come back from their tour to the indigenous villages. We drink some beers on a shady terrace while Sharon tells me that she felt a bit cheated. 'This was not a traditional village, all the houses were brand-new. San Juan Chamula is a fucking bank!' She explains that she always has a focus on real-estate, because of her job, and that she saw so many new houses in the indigenous village. 'With every step, I could point out a new house to John. It was an oxymoron for me. You expect to see traditional life and poverty, and we saw mansions!' Sharon's expectations were based on the stories that John had told her. Based on that, she had constructed an image in her head on what the indigenous villages would look like. Reflecting back on the tour, she thinks that she romanticized this image too much. She felt betrayed because the tours are promoted as a way to learn about the traditional lifestyle of the indigenous people. Sharon saw people living in big and new houses, which was an indication for her that the locals have money. The amount of welfare, as the mansions in Chamula seem to suggest was clashing with Sharon's expectations of a traditional indigenous village.

Reflection on the tourist: Following the gringo trail or going off the beaten track

Through multiple embodied performances, tourists construct and consume tourism places in

⁴⁸ Used in Mexico and other Latin-American countries to refer to a non-Hispanic or Latino people, especially used for people from the United States of America.

various ways. Tourist performances are ‘distinguished according to various factors, including their competence, reflexivity, the extent to which they are directed and regulated, or participate in group or solo performances’ (Edensor 2000: 322). Although tourists enact performances in distinct corporeal ways, there is a certain degree of repetition in tourist performances. In my observations, (almost) every tourist took pictures of the façade of the church in San Juan Chamula. All the tourists that I spoke to went to the Santo Domingo market in San Cristóbal de Las Casas and bought souvenirs. (Almost) all the tourists whom I spoke to went to the indigenous villages; most of them went on an organized tour. The fact that many tourists go to the same sights and participate in the same activities creates these previously mentioned place ballets of people walking in similar patterns.

Tourists often expressed a certain compulsory ‘force’ in their itineraries, they talked about places that still *had* to be visited and activities that *needed* to be done. Every tourist had gathered information before their arrival in San Cristóbal de Las Casas. The sources of information that people used of were diverse, although every tourist that I interviewed stated to search information on the internet. The collected information represent places in a particular way and create certain expectations of the places and (the indigenous) people that the tourist will encounter. These ‘formal’ representations partly create the notions that tourists have of places that *must* be visited and things that *have* to be done. There is a certain repetitiousness in tourist performances, ‘[it] is at once a re-enactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation’ (Butler 1988: 526). Although they are performed by, and through, individual bodies they become stylized into tourist identities. As the performances are public practices, they are intrinsic markers of a tourist identity. One such tourist-identity marker would be the camera, which became clear to me when a Chamulan girl that was selling bracelets asked me where my camera was. Apparently, foreigners (which are tourists) are always accompanied by a camera when they visit her village. Or maybe even, a camera is always accompanied by a tourist.

Without a single exception, all the interviewed and observed foreigners that were visiting San Cristóbal de Las Casas carried a camera. Although the enactment of carrying a camera might be marking a tourist-identity (Yeh 2009), the ways in which people used their cameras were very diverse. The camera can be used as a tool for distinguishing from what self-proclaimed ‘travellers’ often referred to as ‘tourists’. A Czech ‘traveller’ described tourists as being occupied

with their cameras all the time while they stay on the '*gringo* trail'. A Swis 'traveller described tourists as people that: 'only have two weeks of holiday in which they squeeze as many highlights as possible. They just follow their guide, as they constantly snap pictures and stay in expensive hotels'. These two identities were often portrayed as in a binary opposition with each other and self-proclaimed 'travellers' constructed their own identity in relation to what they thought of themselves as being not, namely: a tourist (Eriksen 2001: 262). A Palestinian student, who has been traveling for almost two years, described his travelling as follows: 'I do not just go to the places where everyone goes to. I just come from a village that was really *off the beaten path*. I did not see a single *gringo*; it was so beautiful and real. I want to get to know these places, not just see them but really feel and understand the culture of these locals. So I stayed there for some days, to really connect with these people and feel the place'. He showed me the pictures that he took in the village: 'they were quite resistant to cameras so most of the pictures I had to make from a distance'. These different (self-) identity constructions of tourists and travellers show the multiplicity in tourism practices and the multiple embodied enactments that actors perform on different stages. But even though travellers and tourists might use the camera in distinct ways, it can be agreed to be a very important tourism practice.

The proximity of different bodies in a place is a condition of sociality, and 'bodily proximity is a condition of the type of sociality which has more durable effects on minds and memories' (Bærenholdt, Haldrup et al. 2004: 41). Sociality consists of multiple elements, such as the *atmosphere*, which is produced by the complexities of tourists, locals, traffic, shopping, etc. The atmosphere of San Cristóbal might be best captured by the Mexican Secretariat of Tourism which declared the city as a *pueblo Mágico*⁴⁹, 'a place with symbolism, legends, history, important events, day-to-day life, which offers visitors a magical experience⁵⁰'. Tourists often praised the city for its liveliness and dynamic street life. Also, *specific events and encounters* construct the sociality of a place. When I asked an elderly American couple what they liked about San Cristóbal, they responded by saying that the indigenous really add something magical to the city. Their encounters with the indigenous people were much appreciated and created what could be called the atmosphere. Lastly, the social interaction *within a travelling family or group* is the fourth order of sociality. This form of sociality was expressed by a tourist from Monterrey as

⁴⁹ Translated from Spanish: 'magic village'.

⁵⁰ Pueblos Mágicos: <http://www.sectur.gob.mx/pueblos-magicos/> (24-08-2015).

follows:

‘every year, we go somewhere with two families. We have this tradition for almost 10 years now. We were also in San Cristóbal five years ago and because we loved the city so much, we decided to come here again. This holiday is very important for us because these are the few days that we really have time for each other. We walk around a bit and eat and drink a lot. We are not really doing something special; we just enjoy each other’s company’.

These two families are revisiting tourists; they perform from a certain embodied mind-set of how this place is, (or was), and how it should be visited (ibid: 43). Revisiting a place is a way to assure oneself of the continuity of the place, or to account for the changes that occurred in a place. Revisiting places, or to visit new places, also excites memories from previous travels. I often heard tourists making comparisons with each other while they were gazing up the Santo Domingo church: ‘this really reminds me of the church in San Miguel, do you remember that place? We went there two years ago’. The ability to recollect shared memories together strengthens the tie between the tourists while they gaze upon new sights. Their memories stress the shared history while it emphasizes the continuity of their relationship, as the current sight that is gazed upon will be a newly collected memory that can be added to the previously collected memories.

John is also a returning tourist, who brings his friend Sharon along to show her ‘his Mexico’. John was very enthusiastic to show Sharon all the beautiful places that he had been to before, he especially remembered the encounters he had with the children in San Juan Chamula. John also had many memories of cold beers, good Mexican music and friendly people. In their trip, their main preoccupation was to reconstruct his memories by doing the same activities. John is not reviving the same experiences as five years ago; they are adding shared experiences as they produce new memories in dialogue with John’s ‘old memories’. This socializing aspect was found to be an important element of holidaying or traveling for many of the interviewed tourists, as the two Mexican families said: ‘we are mainly here to enjoy each other’s company’.

The importance of this socializing aspect in tourist practices will further be dealt with in the following section through the ‘lens of the camera’. It is argued that tourist photography is a

way in which feelings of togetherness between actors is performed and constructed.

Performing tourist photography

‘Once I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes: I constitute myself in the process of ‘posing’. I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image’ (Barthes 1981: 10)

‘To be a tourist, ‘is to be, almost by necessity, a photographer’ (Yeh 2009: 200). As the tourist performances are diverse and multiple, so are the pictures that tourists make along their ways. The tourist lens can be focused on a whole range of different objects. A Dutch tourist told me that he took over 1500 pictures during his two-week holiday. An Argentinian guy explained me that he made one picture in every place that he spent the night, in order to not forget where he had been. I met a group of elderly bird watchers from The US who were traveling with an organized group in Mexico and Guatemala. Not surprisingly, most of their pictures were of birds or of ‘empty’ trees, when they were just too late and the bird had flown off. A Chilean teacher from Sweden made hundreds of *selfies* during his holiday so he could show his students where he had been. A group of Dutch women said that they enjoyed taking pictures of the *Indian* children, ‘because they are so cute’. An Australian girl also liked to take pictures of the local people and took ‘sneaky pictures’ of them: pictures without permission of the photographed. Although she felt bad about this practice, she explained that she was too shy to ask people for their picture to be taken and that her Spanish was not good enough, But the most frequently observed photography practice was of tourists taking pictures of themselves and their travel companions.

The ‘family gaze’, as conceptualized by Larsen (2005), will be applied here to look at the role of sociality in tourist photography. Following Larsen (2004) and Yeh (2009), I argue that photographs can be seen as the embodiments and performances of sociality. The frozen images of a family or a couple on a piece of paper (or on a computer screen) might neglect the fact that a lengthy enacted and embodied performance was staged before the shutter closed. ‘The nature of tourist photography is seen as a complex ‘theatrical’ one of corporeal, expressive actors; scripts and choreographies; staged and enacted ‘imaginative geographies’ (Larsen 2005: 417). As my observations on the stairs in front of the Santo Domingo church have shown, the family carefully performs a certain choreography as they construct their stage and instruct each other. Bodies touch as people embrace each other, lips curl up in smiles and certain emotions are expressed in order to be captured by the camera. Bodies are posed as they are caught by the camera and their acting is done in front of a landscape that becomes their stage through these embodied

enactments.

The picture is produced through the corporeal and social performances of the involved actors, who produce their identity 'as a family' in the staged corporeal enactments of 'familyness'. This so-called 'family gaze' revolves around the production of social relations rather than around the consumption of sights (Bærenholdt, Haldrup et al. 2004: 70). This is not to say that the stage on which the 'family gaze' is performed is randomly selected. Although maybe not fully captured, the façade of the Santo Domingo church is clearly visible behind the people that pose in front of it. The family gaze is staged in front of an iconic symbol of the city, and this could be interpreted as a way in which tourists interact with the 'formal' representations by personalizing these images with an intimate touch.



Figure 7: 'Formal' representations of the Santo Domingo church on a postcard



Figure 6: 'Personalized' image of the Santo Domingo church

Following a Butlerian thinking, it can be stated that identities do not exist before they are enacted. Hence, for families to exist, they must perform 'family life' (Larsen 2005: 422). Tourism is described by Urry as a strategy to accumulate photos (Urry 2002: 128). Hence, tourism creates a spatiality to enact family life and the camera is the tool to create and produce these particular social relations. Places, such as the stairs in front of the Santo Domingo church, become stages for acting out and framing a tender family life in front of the camera. Tourist photography performances do not so much capture family life, but construct it in the enactment of the photo-taking activities. 'Photography and tourism, as the so called modern twins, can be understood as

major social practices through which people in the contemporary image-saturated world produce storied biographies and memories that make sense of their lives and social relationships' (Bærenholdt, Haldrup et al. 2004: 102).

Performing togetherness in tourist photography

'Photography is part of the theatre that modern people enact to produce their *desired* togetherness, wholeness, and intimacy' (Larsen 2005: 424). I want to take this statement one step further by arguing that this *desired togetherness* can become a corporeal reality through the enactment of these emotions in a group of former strangers that travel together. Carrying a camera shows your expectations to the group members, namely the desire to make photos of your experiences. This shared desire provides a group of unrelated individuals with a mean to break the personal and social boundaries and legitimizes the immediacy of body contact. Photography is not only a way to capture what the tourist sees; it is also an act to construct social relationships among tourists (Yeh 2009: 199). A non-human agency, the camera, alters group dynamics and the photographic act lessened the distance between former strangers in a travelling group. The photographic performances are capable to transform mutual sensed strangeness among group members, as felt during first encounters, into a developing familiarity.

Personally, I experienced this during a tour to the indigenous villages in which I was a stranger in a group of tourists that had been intensely travelling together for two weeks. I saw how my camera was a 'universal communicator' (Yeh 2009: 202) that gave me access to the group of former strangers. My camera, as an important marker of a shared 'tourist identity', was also used by the others to 'invite' me into the group. A process of reciprocal photography performances gave insights in the network of relations within the group and my position as a relative outsider. The relation between the photographed ('taker') and the photographer ('giver') can be balanced out through a direct exchange with the following common question: 'Can you take my picture? Then I will take yours'. This question directly restores the balance between the giver and the taker as being equals. I could also initiate the contact by offering people to make their picture, which they responded to by directly returning the favour. This direct exchange of photo-taking between me and other tourists in the group located me as a relative outsider of the group. Nevertheless, it was not only an exchange of cameras during the act of taking photos from each other; it was an act of intimacy in which we exchanged information about ourselves and learned about the other person. Besides, taking photos of others and asking others to take pictures

of me was a strategic act with which I gained access to the group.

This practice of direct reciprocal exchange differed from the reciprocal exchange between the group members that had become more intimate with each other over a period of two weeks, partly due to the photography exchange performances. They took photographs of each other and asked others to take their pictures without the expectation of the direct return of the favour. Some people in the group participated in these processes of shared photo-taking, where others did not. Yeh (2009), who was able to observe a group of student tourists over the entire length of a holiday for her research, concluded that the people that participated in picture-taking activities established closer relationships than the people who did not. From my observations I can state that photography practices enhance the intensity of contacts within a group of former strangers that travel together. The camera is used as a tool to facilitate *desired* feelings of togetherness, which are produced through the enactments of these same emotions in front of the camera.



Figure 8: Two tourists posing in Zinacanteco clothes

The pictures show two tourists of the group dressed up in traditional *zinacanteco* clothes. They act like a loving couple while the other group members take pictures of them. The entire group is bonding through the performance and participation in the same activity while they share emotions and laughter. The ‘couple’ connects with each other in a performance that only succeeds if they both enact their part in it. The staged act of being ‘like friends’, becomes an inherited emotion of ‘being friends’ through the performances of it. It somehow feels more natural to enact ‘togetherness’ if these corporeal performances, such as embracing and smiling together, are practiced first by staging them in front of the camera. The staged performances of a certain

‘group gaze’, facilitates the production of the desired feelings of togetherness in an organized group that consists of former strangers.

The photography practices of the ‘family gaze’ and the ‘group gaze’ have been discussed here, arguing that these enactments are processes through which the participants socialize and communicate with each other. This point will be further developed in the concluding section of this thesis when the concept of the ‘inward gaze’ will be introduced. The inward gaze is constructed in the above discussed ‘family gaze’ and ‘group gaze’ but also in the ‘*selfie gaze*’, which will be discussed later. It will be argued that these tourist performances produce tourist bubbles, which are imagined as enclavic spaces in where the tourists are behind ‘protective walls’ (Cohen 1972: 166-7). I will show how tourists, with the (photographic) focus on themselves and their company, construct these bubbles. The porosity of these tourist bubbles will also be stressed, by showing how these spaces are always produced through interaction with their surroundings.

The tour-guide: Raul

Raul is in his late fifties and he is always dressed in a properly ironed suit pants with a tucked in polo shirt. He is tall, especially by Chiapas standards. He carries a small comb in his chest pocket that he takes out every now and then to bring his beard and hair in place again. His belly slightly tumbles over his belt, which he tries to hide by occasionally sucking in his stomach. Every morning, he waits in front of the cathedral between 8.45 and 9.30 am. Raul arrives at the square when it is still cold from the night and the morning fog is slowly pulling up. He gets his shoes polished by the shoe-shine boy on the first bench on the corner, his head turns constantly from left to right in search for tourists. In the high season, the tourists will definitely arrive within the next 30 minutes. But in low season he might go home at 9.30 am to have a ‘*vacaciones por un día*’⁵¹.

Raul has been waiting like this every morning since 1995, when he and his business partner Alex started *Raul y Alex Tours*. ‘We were one of the first tour agencies and we have more experience in the indigenous villages than any of the other companies’, he often states. Around 9 o’clock, his employee César joins him. César only reaches Raul’s upper arm and the only thing they have in common is their facial hair. César joined the business two years after Raul established it 18 years ago, and he is the official English guide of the company. Together they wait while Raul constantly greets people he knows, most of them passing by every day at around

⁵¹ Translate from Spanish: ‘Holiday for a day’.

the same time. Some of them stop for a small chat and others come over to inform them of how the business is going that day. Most of these people work in the tourism industry; they have souvenir-shops, are restaurant- or hotel-owners or have a travel agency along one of the main pedestrian streets of the city.

‘Just come to the wooden cross at the square in front of the cathedral between 9.00 and 9.30 and look for Raul’, states the Lonely Planet under the section ‘organized tours in San Cristóbal de Las Casas. ‘The best advertisement you can have’, according to Raul. ‘Almost everyone that walks around on the square with a Lonely Planet in their hands is looking for me. I quickly have to approach them because there are some other agencies that try to snatch my tourists. These *cabrones*⁵² go over to the tourists and say that they are *Alex y Raul Tours!*’ Raul comes into action as soon as he sees ‘foreigners’: people who are not from San Cristóbal and ‘look like tourists’. He gives them his business card as proof and asks them to wait at the wooden cross if they want to go on a tour to the indigenous villages. At 9.30 exactly, Raul departs with the tourists to Chamula. If everyone in the group understands Spanish, Cesar is not needed and he stays behind. Raul drives a Volkswagen van that can take up to 13 persons; if there are more people Raul has to arrange a second van and driver.

There is a lot of competition between the travel agencies in San Cristóbal. Many of the agencies in town try to establish contacts with hotels and hostels. They give commissions to the hotel owners for providing them with clients⁵³. Different agencies in Real de Guadalupe also work together in the low-season to limit the costs by filling up the mini-vans with tourists together. The vans of the other tour agencies pass by the square in front of the cathedral on their way to the villages and Raul and Cesar always count how many tourists the others have for that day. ‘*Ruta Mala*⁵⁴ has six tourists today, but that is the guy from *Xanav* so they are working together today’. The logo on the side of the white mini-bus says *Ruta Maya* and Raul laughs and explains that they call them *Ruta Mala* because they are so bad. Raul says that he only wants to work with businesses that offer the best to their tourists and he is not willing to pay commissions to others for the work that he does:

⁵² In this context, it would be best translated with ‘asshole’.

⁵³ The hotels, ‘the middlemen’, often get 50 pesos per tourists. This is quite a lot if you consider that the tours are sold for 200 to 250 pesos.

⁵⁴ Translated from Spanish: ‘Bad road’.

'We have over 20 years of experience that tourists can rely on. I have been coming to Chamula for 45 years, there are not many guides who can say that! So we only partner up with booking agencies that want the best tours for their clients, because then they will end up with us!'

According to Raul, most of the guides know very little about the history, traditions and customs of San Juan Chamula:

'They give their groups a lot of free time because they have nothing more to tell after an hour. They finish giving their information too quick, which mostly consists of mentiras⁵⁵ anyway. I often hear guides explain the traditions of Chamula to their group and they just make up stories! Yesterday I heard a guide giving an explanation about these curtains in the church, saying that they make a Mayan triangle and that it is one of the most important symbols for the Mayans'.

I assumed that the Chamulas would know best about their own traditions and rituals, which would make them reliable guides, but Raul assures me that the locals don't know anything about their own history. 'There are two guys now from Chamula, Raulito and Alberto, who give tours in the church as well. But they always come to me to ask about the significance of the rituals and symbols that they use themselves! I know more about their history than they do! If you would ask someone in the church what they are doing they would just answer with: *'Son nuestras costumbres'*⁵⁶. Raul shows me the stone that is placed at the foot of the wooden cross in front of the church of Chamula:

'You see this rock? Some guides, Alberto and Raulito as well, say that this is an ancient Mayan clock. The length of the shade on the rock would tell people the time. I keep on telling these guys that it is bullshit! You know what people here do? They just stand straight and see where their own shadow falls on the

⁵⁵ Translated from Spanish: 'lies'.

⁵⁶ Translated from Spanish: 'that are our customs'.

ground. They don't need a rock to know what time it is! And about that rock there above the door, some guides show it to their groups and tell that they are exactly the same stones as were found in Palenque. They are all mentiras to make a nice story for the tourists, to give them the idea that they are walking around in a Mayan world'.

Raul has been giving tours in the indigenous villages for 20 years. All these years of experience and routine have given him a certain 'air of familiarity' with which he moves in the communities during his tours. He flirts openly with the young daughter of the indigenous family that is visited as part of the tour, while her mother is sitting next to them. He tells the boys who collect the entrance fee in front of the church that I won't have to pay as long as I am joining him. But especially the ease with which he walks around in the church, kicking back the pine needles and greeting the *mayordomes*⁵⁷ without lowering his voice, gives the impression that he might be one of the villagers, even though his appearance and behaviour is not comparable to that of the local men.

Mexican tour guides need to be qualified, licenses are given by the tourism office of the government and the credentials have to be renewed every year by participating in workshops. But because San Juan Chamula is an autonomous region, they have other rules than Mexico and guides are never asked for their credentials. So many guides work without licences which results in what Raul calls 'all the *mentiras* that guides just invent for tourists'. 'You could ask ten different tour guides now and they will give you ten different stories'. Guides learn their 'reality' from different sources, which can be local people in the villages or books and other scholarly works. The guides who are based in San Cristóbal de Las Casas meet each other during workshops and meetings of the working unions. One of their objectives is to establish some coherence within the knowledge that is given to the tourists. This objective is precisely the element on which many clashes occur between the different guides. Cesar told me that Raul often has (verbal) fights with the other tour guides, especially when it comes to the relationship between Catholicism and Mayan beliefs in San Juan Chamula. Raul always says that the Juan Bautista church is completely catholic while many colleagues emphasize the importance of the Mayan signs in the church for the local people. Raul states that there is not a single material

⁵⁷ The religious authorities of San Juan Chamula

Mayan element inside the church, ‘and if there would be anything, it is placed there only for the tourists’. Raul also says that the indigenous people are not poor but that they only ‘act poor’ for the tourists to make more money. He does not make this statement during tours anymore, after he got into a heated argument with a tourist once. These, and other clashing viewpoints, led to the separation of a group of guides and the establishment of an ‘alternative’ working union.

César and Raul also differ greatly in how they talk, and think, about the indigenous people. César describes Raul as a ‘typical *mestizo* racist’⁵⁸, while César is half-indigenous himself. César always uses the formal form of *usted*⁵⁹ when he talks to (indigenous) people who are his senior, which is the customary practice in Mexico. Raul does not use *usted* when he addresses indigenous people that are older than him. I have heard Raul often using the word *indio*, when he talked with his *mestizo* friends in San Cristóbal de Las Casas. The use of *indio*, when referring to the indigenous people, is considered as offensive and derogating. Cesar told me that Raul often jokes by saying that: ‘*lo mejor Indio es un indio muerte. Un indio bajo el suelo es mejor*’. Which can be translated as: ‘the best *indio* is a dead *indio*. An *indio* under the ground is the best’. Cesar says that Raul can do his job as a tour-guide without problems because he knows how to separate the two worlds: the indigenous villages that he visits during the tours and the *mestizo* world in San Cristóbal de Las Casas where he can make such jokes. ‘In San Juan Chamula, Raul just explains the traditions and customs of the indigenous people without giving his personal opinion. I don’t think the indigenous know how he really thinks or talks about them when he leaves their villages’.

Reflection on the guide: social separator or cultural translator?

It can be stated that the tour guide has a significant impact on tourism practices and place- and identity constructions. In the analysis of the two tours, the same indigenous village of San Juan Chamula is constructed in two different ways as the gaze is performed in distinct ways. The experience of the tourist is ‘shaped by the temporal and spatial contingencies of the tour’, consequently: by the choices of the tour guide (Edensor 2008: 5). The guide constructs a certain history for the tourists, he tells his group where pictures can be taken and where fabrics can be bought, he shows particular places while he does not show other places, he points out certain elements and explains the significance of it. Salazar argues that tour guide interpretations ‘largely

⁵⁸ A *mestizo* is a person of mixed race, especially one having Spanish and American Indian parentage.

⁵⁹ Translated from Spanish: ‘you’(formal).

feed off wider imaginaries, [and] culturally shared and socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people's personal imaginings and are used as meaning-making devices, mediating how people act, cognise and value the world, and helping them to form identifications of Self and Other' (Salazar 2014: 112). The success or failure of a guide lies in the ability to 'read' the tourists in order to judge their motivations and to elicit certain attitudes (Cheong and Miller 2000: 384).



Figure 1: Guides with groups of tourists

In order to fulfil the role of a mediator successfully, guides have to understand the cultures of which the tourists come from just as much as they need to understand the culture that they show to the tourists (Cohen 1985: 15). Cesar and Alonso often used comparisons during their tour to explain the customs and traditions of the indigenous people. When a girl in the group asked Cesar why the Chamulas slaughtered chickens in the church, he asked if people in her country used animals for healing purposes. She thought for a second and answered no, to which he responded: 'What about autistic people? They go swimming with dolphin's right?' Cesar made cultural translations by using examples from the society of the tourist to explain the significance of local practices in the village. Raul gave a similar explanation when I asked him why Chamulas were not guiding tourists in their own village. 'The Chamulas don't understand tourists, they don't speak their language and they are not willing to learn it'. I think that Raul was both referring to English and the cultural language of the tourists. The local guys would not be able to make these particular intercultural translations because they don't have much knowledge of the cultures from which the tourists come from.

Rodrigo, a semi-retired guide from San Cristóbal de Las Casas, described his job as

‘mostly psychological’. He explains: ‘there are particular guides for particular tourists. Some tourists just want you to confirm their thoughts. So if you want to make them happy, you just tell them what they want to hear. Afterwards they would say that you were a very good and knowledgeable guide. If a tourist asks me multiple times if the people are very poor in the village, apparently the only expected answer would be yes’. The success or failure of the guide is partly based on this capability to ‘read the tourist’. Guide Hugo described this as follows: ‘I show tourists the Mayan presence in San Juan Chamula, because they like the Mayan history because it is something different. They have seen Palenque already, or they go there after their stay in San Cristóbal, so they like to see the connection between the Mayan temples and the living Mayas here in the villages’.

Many tourists come to Chamula ‘to see indigenous life and to learn more about the culture of the Mayan people’. For this reason, guides that are (partly) indigenous themselves are highly appreciated by the tourists. A South-African lady said: ‘our guide has indigenous ancestors, so there is Mayan blood running through his veins!’ When a tour leader handed her group over to the guide Cesar, she said to them: ‘he is really the best guide in town, he is half Mexican-half indigenous so he knows everything about his people: the indigenous’. The ethnic background seemed to be used by the guides as a legitimization of their position as mediator between the two worlds. Alonso, originally from Mexico City, gave examples from his youth during his tour and Cesar sometimes uses ‘we’ when he talks about the customs of the indigenous people. These performances can be interpreted as strategic enactments in which the guide tries to bring the lives of the indigenous people closer to the lives of the tourists via his personal narratives.

Guides can also ‘fail’ their role when they misinterpret the interests of the tourists. A Dutch group of tourists I encountered told me how their tour leader was constantly talking about the ‘archaeological Mayan stuff’ while most of them got a bit fed up with this subject after two weeks. Their shared annoyance, and the jokes that they could make about their guide and his ‘Mayan knowledge’, did create a strong connection within the group. This is another important role of the guide, especially of the tour leader, who travels around with a group of tourists for multiple days. Bee, an Australian tour leader, described herself as being the ‘glue of the group’, who saw her main task as keeping the group together as ‘one happy being’. As a guide, she fulfilled the role of being the facilitator that created sociality within the group (Cohen 1985: 12). The tourists and the guide construct a strong sense of connectivity among the group, enforced by

shared experiences and shared feelings of ‘not belonging’, as was the emotion that many tourists described to feel in San Juan Chamula. The guide partly constructs these feelings of connectiveness in his role as mediator by representing the group as ‘one culture’ in opposition to the ‘other’ culture.

The importance of the guide to enthuse his group was mainly expressed (and appreciated) by tourists as the ‘art to deliver’ a story. A German student said about his guide:

‘He is really good. He knows a lot but it is more the way he talks that makes it so beautiful. He really activates my imagination when he tells us stories. When we were in Palenque, I could really feel how it would be like in these ancient Mayan times, it was incredible’.

‘The art to narrate and perform seducing tourism tales’, gives the guide the ‘power’ to construct the place, the audience and the ‘props on stage’ in the frame of an organized tour (Salazar 2014). But, the performance of the guide is never stable, it might not correspond with the interpretation of the audience, or the narrative could be questioned due to the materiality in place. One common question that tourists ask is why the Chamulas drink Coca-Cola during their religious practices in the church. One of the guides explained it as a ‘Chamulan practice that can be traced back to the ancient Mayan traditions in where they were consuming a similar drink in order to burp so the spirits would leave their bodies’. Although I have heard many different explanations from different guides, tourists always seem to be satisfied with the response.

One of Rodrigo’s biggest frustrations with his job as a tour guide was exactly the fact that tourists saw him as a ‘funny storyteller’:

‘I don’t go to the villages to entertain tourists. I will not tell them nonsense to make the indigenous villages more interesting for them. Some tourists really think that everything has some sort of Mayan significance because that is what they have read or heard. One tourist asked me what the meaning was of the fur coats of the men that are either black or white. When I responded with the question if he ever saw a green or blue sheep he was offended’.

Rodrigo does not want to be seen as such and resists the possible expectations that tourists might have of a tour-guide with ‘cynical’ responses like this. He stressed his knowledge with the argument that he spoke the indigenous language and that he was not afraid to talk to his group in front of the locals, which other guides avoided to do:

‘I talk in front of everyone, because I know I speak the truth. How can you be a mediator if you don’t speak the local language? I am the only guide who speaks Tsotsil, so I know that what I say is truth. The other guides don’t want their tourists to have contact with the locals because they would then find out that their guides are telling them lies. I talk in front of everybody because I know that I don’t tell lies’.

Accusing colleagues of ‘not telling the truth’ was a recurring theme in the interviews with guides. Although I never heard tourists expressing their doubts about the knowledge of their guide, it seemed to be the foundation on which guides distinguished themselves from others. Guides often told how many years of experience they had and for how many years they had been coming to Chamula. Hector staged his knowledge by saying: ‘I was truly obsessed with the Mayan history, I knew everything! I could even tell you what time Pakal [the Mayan king of Palenque] took his baths’. Rodrigo distinguishes himself from ‘lying’ guides by proclaiming that he was the only Tsotsil-speaking guide in the entire region.

According to Rodrigo, guides often separate their groups of tourists from locals, instead of mediating between them. This corresponds to how Cohen describes guides as ‘both integrating his party into the visited setting as well as insulating it from that setting. The guide does this by interposing himself between the party and the environment, thus making it [the setting] non-threatening to the tourist’. By placing himself in this position, ‘he comes to represent the party of the setting as well as the setting of the party’ (1985: 13). The fluidity with which the guide constructs a certain identity allows him to move back and forth along the continuum of performing the role of a social separator or a cultural translator. These opposing stances between which the tour-guide strategically mediates himself will be elaborated on later in the analyses on the constructions of tourist spaces and the relational power in tourist practices.

To conclude: the role of the guide has been shown as performed in multiple ways, ranging

from being the ‘glue of the group’, to ‘the mediator’, or the ‘trustworthy and knowledgeable’ person. Which particular tour-guide role is enacted could be seen as a strategic decision in relation to the audience. Rodrigo summarized this with the argument that there ‘are particular guides for particular tourists’. Nonetheless, the work of a tour-guide clearly demands more than ‘the superficial processing of a script or a memorized behavioural repertoire that might include smiling and friendly discourse’ (Salazar 2014: 120). It is a corporeal performance which is constantly constructed in different ways, in relation to an (critical) audience and embedded in particular settings. The performances of the tour-guide can have a two folded effect. First, by being the ‘glue of the group’, he creates group cohesion within the tourist bubble. Secondly, he positions himself as a mediator or translator between the group of tourists and the indigenous people. By doing so, he separates the two groups of people and enforces the constructed tourist bubble even further. The roles of a guide as either separating or mediating between different groups will be further discussed in the concluding chapter.

The indigenous local: Domingo from San Juan Chamula

The first time I arrived in Chamula, Domingo came to me as soon as I entered the square in front of the church. He is eight years old and has big, expressive, brown eyes and long eyelashes. As one of the tour-guides described him later to me, ‘he has a cute-factor and is very much aware of it’. He was not trying to sell me anything because he had nothing to sell. With a very sad voice, he said: *‘no tengo dinero pero quiero comprar mis tortillas. Tengo mucho hambre y no he comido nada hoy. Dos pesos, por mis tortillas. Tengo hambre’*⁶⁰. When I didn’t give him anything, he quickly continued to the next tourists behind me. I sat down in the shade of the kiosk with my notebook to write down my observations and I saw that he was the only child begging on the square. All the other children, an average of 10 to 15 children⁶¹, were carrying baskets with souvenirs to sell to the tourists. Domingo seemed to be the only one who had nothing to sell.

When I arrived in Chamula again some days later, Domingo quickly came over to me with big, sad puppy-eyes. When he recognized me, he dropped his expression and asked me if I came

⁶⁰ Translated from Spanish: ‘I don’t have money but I want to buy tortillas. I am very hungry and I haven’t eaten anything today. Two pesos (\$0,12), for my tortillas. I am hungry’.

⁶¹ The children all go to school, which is next to the church square on where the children are selling to the tourists. One child told me that the teachers come to get them if they are working on the square when they should actually be in school. The teachers would punish them for skipping classes. So there are very few children at the square during school time. But most of the older girls, around 13 years old, don’t go to school anymore and are vending on the square.

back to write in my notebook again, like the previous time. He even remarked that I was wearing another t-shirt, '*pero los zapatos y playera son los mismos*'⁶². From that time on, we always talked with each other when I was in San Juan Chamula. He told me that he was in love with Rosa but that she lived on the other side of the mountain so they could only see each other at school. He told me that he had four brothers and sisters and his father was taking care of them. He told me how his father came home one night and they heard him falling down the stairs. They found him in his own blood and the neighbour brought him to the hospital. Domingo showed me how big the scar was by putting his fingers 20 centimetres apart from each other. I heard from the other children on the square that Domingo's mother passed away two years ago and that his father was a '*pinche alcoholico*'⁶³.

Domingo's best friend has a bicycle. His friend sells bracelets to the tourists at the square and Domingo tries to ride the bicycle as much as possible. Sometimes they are fighting over the bike. Domingo often solves these fights with his friend by buying some food for them to share. Domingo also shares food with his brothers and sisters but only if he has a 'good day' and makes some money. Domingo looks out for his best friend and protects his younger sisters. While the older guys are teasing him, he teases the children who are younger than him. One time, the other children were making fun of him after his father shaved his head completely. One of the girls was saying that his head was so small because he has no brain. He responded some minutes later by telling me, in front of the whole group, that the girl, who just made the joke about him, weighed at least 50 kilos because of the big pimple she had on her face. The girl walked away and the whole group laughed about Domingo's joke.

The children on the square spend a lot of time in each other's company. When there are tourists to sell something to, they compete with each other. They envy each other when they see that someone made a good sell or received a present from a tourist. Many children ask for presents if the tourists do not buy something from them or refuse to give them money. Domingo, who has nothing to sell and only asks for money, often gets presents from tourists. It seems like tourists feel less discomfort in giving presents than in giving money. Domingo has a nice collection of pencils, coins from other countries and (cheap) trinkets. I frequently saw him eating stuff that was definitely not from Chiapas, like melted German chocolate and colourful jelly

⁶² Translated from Spanish: 'but the shoes and the pants are the same'.

⁶³ Translate from Spanish: 'Lousy/worthless alcoholic'.

beans.

The children snatch each other's tourists away by interfering during price negotiations and demand a share of the money if they feel like they helped to achieve a purchase. When there are tourists, it seems that they are hindering each other in selling souvenirs. But as soon as the tourists leave, they place their baskets with souvenirs at the foot of the cross in the middle of the square and laugh, play, tease and enjoy together. They share their boredom when it is quiet and they make fun of the tourists when they are around. And because I was around quite often, they enjoyed making fun of me. The children teach each other the English or French words they heard from tourists and the children all cluster together when someone has a phone that plays music.

Domingo seems to determine where the tourist comes from before he chooses his manner of approaching. When the tourists are Mexican, he often approaches the men and seeks attention by poking their arms. Sometimes the tourist takes a coin out of his pocket without interrupting his pace. If the tourist tries to ignore Domingo, he walks with the tourist while continuing to ask for money. If a group of foreign tourists enters the square, the tour guide often walks in front of the tourists. Domingo tends to select someone who walks on the side of the group and prefers approaching the women. I have seen several women who clutch onto their handbags when Domingo approaches. They place their hands on the clasps of their shoulder bags or move their bags from their backs to their chests so they can protect them better. Domingo always uses the same words that are also understandable for people that speak little Spanish. He uses the words '*tortillas*', '*hungry*' and '*pesos*' and illustrates this with gestures and expressions such as rubbing his tummy and moving his hand towards his mouth.

Domingo often waits for tourists to leave the church, and approaches them again if they did not give him anything before they entered the church. They recognize him and often respond to him in a more friendly way, by stroking his head or by smiling at him. According to my observations, he has more success with the tourists after they had visited the church if they recognized him from before. When I asked Domingo about his strategies he just laughed at me and asked me why I wanted to know this. He told me that he often gets presents because he looks at what people carry with them and asks for it as a present, 'but only if it is something small that they do not really need'. He excuses himself again with his 'cute smile' and runs off; new tourists just entered the square.

Domingo knows most of the tour guides from San Cristóbal de Las Casas that come to

San Juan Chamula every day. In high season, the guides might even visit the communities twice a day. One of them is Alonso, a young guy who is originally from Mexico City and has been working for Ortisa Tours for six years. Alonso gathers his group inside the church for an informative talk before he gives the tourists half an hour of free time to wander around the market and the square. Domingo often joins Alonso and his group inside the church, they clap each other's hand as a way of greeting and Alonso asks how Domingo is doing. Alonso puts his arms around Domingo's bony shoulders while the tourists listen to his explanations and Domingo tries to get eye-contact with the group. The tourists leave the church independently for their half an hour of free time and Domingo uses this time to approach the tourists from Alonso's group to ask them for some pesos. According to my observations, he is quite successful with these particular tourists.

César, the guide who has been working for *Alex y Raul Tours* since 1997, guides in English. His groups always consists of foreigners, mostly tourists from Europe. The first message that César gives to his group when they leave the minivan in San Juan Chamula is to not give money to the children. According to him, begging has a bad influence on the local children and it makes them dependent on tourist money. 'Tourists might not see the influence of giving money to the children because they only come here once, but I have seen changes in their behaviour over a period of nearly 18 years', César explains. According to César, buying souvenirs from the young vendors is not harmful because this teaches them the value of money and helps the community financially. This 'policy' excludes Domingo from making some money from the groups that are brought along by César because he has nothing to sell. I think this explains why I have never seen Domingo approaching César and his groups. César is not the only one with years of experience, Domingo must have learned by now that the tourists who come with César will not give him anything.

Reflection on the indigenous local: '*hecho a mano*'

The 'indigenous local' reflected here are the vendors and beggars in San Juan Chamula and San Cristóbal de Las Casas, and the indigenous people that have stands at the Santo Domingo market. As shown in the above portrait, the begging- and vending performances directed at tourists, are multi-sensual and embodied enactments. An old lady at the Santo Domingo market often cried when she showed tourists the Chamula-dolls that she was selling. '*Hecho a mano*', she said while she wiped the tears of her wrinkled cheeks as she explained that she had no money for food.

Domingo first observed the tourist, judged their nationality and based his begging-performance on his experience with tourists. He asked money for tortillas, although I have never seen him actually buying tortillas after a tourist gave him some money. Tortillas and hand-made woollen dolls produce a particular image of the indigenous people that tourists might be interested in, the image of 'traditional and authentic' people. Salazar states that there are three myths that often occur in tourism in developing countries, namely that of 'the unchanged, the unrestrained and the uncivilised' (Salazar 2014: 112). When the vending girls in their traditional Chamula skirt approach tourists, they use sad and crying voices as they present their basket by saying: 'Chamula women in traditional clothes, made from natural wool'. They change their appearance, put a sad look on their faces and stare at the tourist with big watery eyes. The girls do not only sell the objects in their baskets, they strategically construct an authentic story that is more 'sellable', where the 'indigenous traditional girl' is the main advertisement of her own products. Her discourse creates the image of unchanged people, who still make art and crafts by hand instead of with machines. Tourists, especially those with an interest in visiting the indigenous villages, 'cherish the locals as symbols of authenticity'. Often, you see groups of women and children on the stairs in front of the churches, braiding bracelets and belts. The vendors are aware of the fact that they correspond to a particular 'authentic gaze' upon them and that their images are 'consumed' through the cameras and eyes of the tourists. The women and children use this cherished image strategically in how they promote their items as being 'handmade, from Chamula and very authentic'.

Joking about tourists is another form of veiled resistance that is often practiced by the children of the vendors with stands on the Santo Domingo market. Most of the (young) children only went to school in the morning so they spend their afternoon helping their families on the market square and playing with the other children. After some days, a group of young boys started to notice my presence on the market. They were curious about my intentions on the market and wanted to know what I was doing with the notes that I scribbled down in my booklet. We started to exchange words, I taught them English words and I received Tsotsil translations for it. I wrote them all down and learned them, in order to use them when I was communicating with vendors for my research. Every time I came to the market, the boys surrounded me and started to 'test' me. As I was doing my utmost in pronouncing the words properly, the boys were laughing. I realized only after several times, when I read my list of words to three elder sisters, that the boys

taught me *groserias*⁶⁴ instead of the actual meaning of the words. What I interpreted as laughing about my bad pronunciation was actually laughing about the inappropriate words that I said out loud while all the local people passed by and could hear me. The boys had the advantage of their own language, which they used in order to make fun of me.

The vendors mostly walked around on the streets of San Cristóbal de Las Casas in small groups of three or four girls or women. The women often obstruct tourists by blocking their paths, lifting their arms up to present the souvenirs that they sell. Some tourists expressed to be bothered by the persuasive vending methods of the indigenous women. An Australian tourist stated that: ‘these vendors will destroy the ambiance of the beautiful city with their annoying behaviour. I know they are poor and need money, but this is very disturbing. It is really one after the other that approaches you!’ When a tourist expresses an interest in buying something, the group of vendors surrounds the tourist and while they name prices in Spanish, the women discuss in Tsotsil how they can ‘upsell’ by offering more items while lowering the prices slightly.

A French tourist described a group of vendors as ‘ants attracted by honey’, when she walked away with her hands full of souvenirs. She said that she felt uncomfortable when she was negotiating the price with the girls because: ‘they did not let me go. Every time I wanted to pay and leave, they tried to sell me more’. The selling performances of the local vendors are strategic performances which are constructed based on their gaze upon tourists.



Figure 9: vendor - tourist interaction

The tourist gaze can be complemented with the local gaze, which makes tourists and locals caught in a process of mutual gazing. Where the tourist gaze is primarily constructed by the media and ‘formal’ representations, the local gaze might be closer to reality as it is based

⁶⁴ Translated from Spanish: ‘swearwords’.

upon previous and numerous encounters with tourists (Maoz 2006: 229). I saw how Domingo strategically used these insights in how he approached tourists in different ways. When I asked him one time why he did not go over to a group of tourists that entered the square in front of the church, he responded: 'I know that they will not give anything'. The 'local gaze' is mainly based on knowledge, which makes the locals in a stronger position to 'sell the tourists back the image that is part of the gaze upon them' (ibid: 232). Domingo corporeally constructs his begging performance according to his judgement of a particular tourist in order to benefit from the tourist activities. He acquainted himself with the knowledge of how to approach tourists, what to say and what to do in order to profit from tourist practices.

In conclusion, most of the enactments of locals in relation to tourists could be seen as strategically performed. The knowledge that the locals have gathered from tourists over an extensive period of time, provides them with the skills to sell them back a particular image (Maoz 2006: 225). The frequency with which vendors used the phrase: '*hecho a mano*', provides a good example of such local strategies. The enactments of the (indigenous) locals will be further elaborated on in the upcoming final chapter on the constructions of tourist bubbles and the relational power between tourists, locals and tour-guides in the production of these spaces. It will be argued that the performances of the (indigenous) local co-construct the tourist bubbles.

Conclusion

Producing porous tourist bubbles

So far, this thesis has been a journey through thickly described places and portraits of different people. This journey will reach its final destination in this chapter with multiple answers to the main research question: *how are power relations produced in tourism practices at the Santo Domingo market in San Cristóbal de Las Casas and in San Juan Chamula, Mexico?* In the previous chapters, the two sub-research questions on how places and people are constructed in tourism practices, have been answered. Thick descriptions of the two research places, the Santo Domingo market and San Juan Chamula, were presented, followed by three portraits of ‘the local’, ‘the tourist’ and ‘the tour-guide’. They showed how identities are constructed in series of corporeal performances, which are relationally enacted. The multiplicity in which actors and places enact produces different realities, which have shown to be very much temporal and spatial bounded.

The main interest has been in the enactments and performances of people and places, as power in tourism is perceived as relationally enacted. This means that power is conceptualized from a Foucauldian perspective which sees power as ‘being everywhere’, it is a certain fluid and unstable strength that is expressed in relations and flows in multiple directions (Cheong and Miller 2000: 374-5). Hence, power is practiced: it is produced in interactions and enactments between people and places.

In this concluding chapter, the data on places and people that has been presented in order to answer the sub-research questions will be merged here in order to show how tourism practices produce porous tourist bubbles. By focusing on how tourists bubbles are produced, the objective to analyse the ways in which power relations are produced in tourism practices in San Juan Chamula and at the Santo Doming market in San Cristóbal de Las Casas is pursued. Since these tourist bubbles are considered to be performed spaces, so are the practiced relations between places and people that produce these bubbles. Furthermore, the identities of people, as being ‘a local’, ‘a tour-guide’, or ‘a tourist’, are constructed in the production of these tourist bubble. In a circular way of reasoning, it can be argued that while the performances of actors construct these

spaces, the performances in relation to the tourist bubble simultaneously construct their identities. This conclusion will show how tourist bubbles and the different identities are produced in two different ways. Namely, through the performances of inward gazes and in the ways in which people enact certain paternalistic relations with others.

Tourist bubbles are spaces that are produced in the multiple and diverse performances of people and places. How they are produced in multiple ways will be shown here by analysing two different tourist practices. First, tourists produce enclavic spaces in their enactments of the inward gaze. This inward gaze is practiced in tourist photography and focusses on the ‘self’ and the ‘other selves’, which are the companions of the ‘self’ within the constructed bubble. The ‘group gaze’, the ‘selfie gaze’ and the ‘family gaze’ are referred to as the constructors of an inward gaze which produces the tourist bubble. Secondly, the tourist bubbles are presented as produced through how different actors enact paternalistic relations. Shown is how the tour-guide mediates between the role of being a social separator and a cultural translator in his guiding performances. By positioning himself between the group of tourists and the locals that are visited on an organized tour, he produces certain tourist bubbles.

‘Power is omnipresent in tourism’ (Cheong and Miller 2000: 372), ‘it works in many directions and at many levels’ (ibid: 386). The following examples will show how this makes the performed tourist bubbles fragile entities. They need to be enacted constantly in order to be maintained: ‘the bubble needs a lot of work⁶⁵’. They are porous entities due to the fact that they are spatial- and temporal specific and contextually bounded. Furthermore, tourist bubbles are fragile because of the relationality in which they are constructed. Different actors depend on the willingness of others to participate in their enactments in order to produce these tourist bubbles. Nonetheless, my final conclusion will resonate with the statement of Cheong and Miller that although power is omnipresent in tourism, the performances of tour-guides have a substantial influence on the relations and practices of other people and places (2000).

The inward gaze

‘Uno es ninguno⁶⁶’ – Mexican tourist, while taking selfies.

The ‘family gaze’ and the ‘group gaze’ have previously been mentioned as processes of sociality

⁶⁵ Quoted from Hamzah Muzaini (13/11/2015).

⁶⁶ Translated from Spanish: ‘one is none’.

in tourist photography practices. Tourist photography performances were described as ‘part of the theatre that people enact to produce their *desired* togetherness’ (Larsen 2005: 424). The tourists in organized groups were bonding in a shared performance of the ‘group gaze’, in which their camera lenses were mainly pointed at themselves and at the ‘other selves’ within the group. The ‘selfie gaze’ will be added to this list of inward gazes, in order to show how these photography practices produce tourist bubbles.

A selfie is a self-portrait photograph typically taken with a digital camera or camera phone held in the hand of the photo-taker or supported by a selfie stick. The popularity of the selfie presented itself to me while I was doing my observations at the stairs of the Santo Domingo church. On average, four out of ten people were performing a ‘selfie gaze’. It was impossible to define a ‘stereotypical selfie-maker’: I have seen groups of nuns making selfies, next to a little boy who had difficulties with holding the big smartphone in his small hands. Although selfies are enacted in many different ways by a great variety of people, the practice is part and parcel of the contemporary tourism practices and landscapes.

For the self to exist, ‘the self’ must be performed. The performance of the ‘selfie gaze’ does not so much mirror realities, it rather constructs new ones. All the elements of the selfie-enactment: the posing, the choreographing of the body and taking the photo, are literally in the hands of the performer. Tourist photography is intricately bound up with self-presentation and monitoring bodies, with ‘strategic impression management’ (Larsen 2006: 250). The self is in full control of the presentation of the self and the ‘other selves’ in the production of selfies. ‘Performativity is not only endemic to human being-in-the-world but [it is] fundamental to the process of constructing a human reality’ (Larsen 2005: 422). The selfie gives full control to the self to construct these realities and these impressions are constructed in multiple and very creative ways.



Figure 10: Tourists taking selfies in front of the Santo Domingo church

The posing of bodies and the expressions of different emotions: the entire corporeal enactments that people staged in order to perform ‘selfie gazes’. Selfies were often more creative and time-consuming performances than the other tourist photography performances that I observed. I have seen girls spending over 15 minutes performing ‘selfie gazes’, posing and portraying themselves in multiple ways: one photo with sunglasses, one ‘pretty face-picture’, a photo ‘acting as if you are unaware of the picture being taken’, a ‘happy-shot’ and an ‘acting crazy-picture’. The materiality of the landscape is incorporated into the performances; tourists are leaning on the side ramp of the stairs or climbing on a wall. A young man with a selfie stick takes multiple photos; he changes his shirt and puts his cap in different positions on his head. He comes back half an hour later, apparently not satisfied with the previous selfies, to resume his photography performance.



Figure 111: Pictures taken of the selfie-gaze of tourists



Figure 122: Selfies taken by tourists in front of the Santo Domingo church

The Mexican couple in the above figures was performing the ‘selfie gaze’ for more than two minutes. During this entire performance, the couple did not notice that I was taking pictures of them. They took eleven pictures in total and they sent me their two favourite pictures, which are presented in figure 11. My aim was to capture their performances around the moments that they actually took photos. I was seated on the stairs at three meters distance, and made low-angle shots of them (figure 12). The photos that they gave me are taken from a neutral- and a high-angle. Due to the chosen angle, both pictures do not capture the facade of the Santo Domingo church completely. They focused on themselves rather than on the materiality of the place.

The above observations on tourism photo-taking practices show how tourists produce temporal tourist bubbles. The inward gaze is practiced in the pictures that tourists take in which the self and the ‘other self’ are the central point of focus. The strong focus on the self turns a blind eye on the practices and materialities of the surroundings. The Mexican couple in figure 11 expressed very little interest in getting the façade of the church properly in the picture. Not to say that the facade of the Santo Domingo church in the background become irrelevant in the selfie-gaze. Rather, it serves as the background decor on which the couple choses to present itself. The couple did not notice that I was taking pictures of them because they were too much wrapped up in their own performances. The tourist bubble is constructed in the enactment of a very selective gaze which includes solely the self and the ‘other self’ while it purposely excludes other actors that are present in the place. While tourists produce tourist bubbles in the performances of

different gazes, they construct their identity ‘as a tourist’ in the same performances that construct the spaces in which they perform.

Tourists construct their own bubbles and tourist-identity in the enactment of photography and their enactments in places influence the performances of others and the ways in which places are constructed. But produced tourist bubbles are not hermetically closed entities, they are influenced by the place and the people in the place as well. The below presented pictures show the fragility of tourist bubbles. The vendor offers souvenirs at the same moment that a family is photographed. By doing so, he ‘pops’ the temporally constructed bubble. The posing bodies stop posing as the performance of the ‘family gaze’ is disturbed.



Figure 13: Performing the 'group gaze'



Figure 14: 'Group gaze' disturbed by local vendor

The interference of the vendor stresses the fact that the tourist bubble is a temporal and fluid entity. It also emphasizes the ways in which identities are relationally constructed. Being inside or outside the bubble, and the associated performances of these positions, differentiate ‘a tourist’ from ‘a local’.

To conclude: observations during organized tours to the indigenous villages and on the Santo Domingo market have shown that the performance of the ‘inward gaze’ is a central tourist practice in these places. The majority of the photographs that tourists took focused on the self or other actors within the group, the ‘other selves’, rather than on the indigenous people in the visited villages or on the materialities, such as the facade of the Santo Domingo church. Tourists seem to be more occupied with gazing upon the self and the ‘other selves’, which is argued to construct these tourist bubbles.

Paternalist relations: 'Don't stare at them like they are monkeys'

In the previous part, the argument has been made that tourists produce porous tourist bubbles in the performances of the inward gaze. The focus in this part of the conclusion will be on the role of the tour-guide in the production of these spaces. The tour-guide monitors the movements, the impressions and the spatio-temporalities of the organized groups to and within the indigenous villages. He produces a tourist bubble by manoeuvring the group through selected spaces and by showing particular sights, while other places and sights are (carefully) excluded from the tour. The tourists experience a 'hint of the exotic' (Edensor 2000: 329) while the guide safeguards the well-being of the group and secures the cleanness by instructing the group which bathrooms they should use and what they should eat.

The tour-guide has previously been mentioned as being both a cultural translator and a social separator. This discussion will be further elaborated here in order to show how the tour-guide produces tourist bubbles during organized tours. The performances of the tour-guide in relation to the indigenous people and the tourists will be focused on through the lens of paternalism. Argued is that tour-guides act as gatekeepers between their groups of tourists and the indigenous local people. The guide has a great amount of influence in constructing tourist bubbles and he has the ability to exert control over the interaction between the locals and the visiting tourists. Argued is that the tour-guide, from his position as the gate-keeper, has a great amount of power in the inclusion of indigenous people into the tourist-bubble, while he also possesses the capabilities to exclude people from it. However, the enclavic spaces are porous and fragile and the guide is not in full control over the constructed tourist bubbles. The guide depends on the willingness of the locals to participate in his performance, and in the recognition of the tourists for his position as tour-guide.

The fieldwork observations and interviews gave insight in the prominent position that the guide occupies in the construction of tourist bubbles and tourist relations. The guide, as both a cultural translator and as a social separator, will be examined here by using the concept of paternalism in order to see how both of these roles are performed. Paternalism, described as the 'phenomenon of discrimination without the expression of hostility' (Novo 2003: 265), is how the ambivalent relation between the guide and the indigenous vendor could be described. Their relation is marked by the performances of (mutual) power. But this relation is not hostile, as will be illustrated with the following example from my fieldnotes:

It is nine in the morning and I am on my way to Raul and Cesar to wait with them for the tourists that want to go on a tour to the indigenous villages. On the central plaza, there is a big group of foreign tourists listening to a guide. I have seen this more often. Many organized travel groups have similar itineraries; they start with a city tour through San Cristóbal before they leave to the indigenous villages. The guide looks Mexican and the tourists could be North Italians or Germans. The vendors approach the group of tourists and try to get their attention by showing them their souvenirs. The tour guide invites one vendor into to group by pushing her forward into the circle of tourists. It seems like he ‘uses her as a prop’ in his story to explain certain elements of the lives of the indigenous people. The indigenous woman stands next to the guide, barely reaching his upper arm while he places his hand on her shoulder. He gives some basic information about the ‘Mayans’: their language, distinct cultural practices and religion. He asks the vendor questions in Spanish, which he translates to his group in Italian. He asks how much money she makes by selling her arts crafts to tourists, how much children she has and how much a kilo of corn flour costs. He takes her bundle of bracelets out of her hands and shows them to the group. He tells them how much work it is for the women to make them and how much they cost in euros. He concludes by stating that the women make barely enough money to sustain their family and that their living conditions are harsh: ‘You see, she has to sell 5 bracelets in order to buy a kilo of cornflour! And she needs at least two kilos every day because she has so many children!’



Figure 15: The guide as cultural translator or/and social separator

As the above described situation shows, the guide literally translates ‘the local’ to ‘the tourist’. While the guide places his hands on her shoulders, as if he has to protect the vulnerable women next to him, he speaks on behalf of her. The guide asks the woman questions in Spanish, which he translates into Italian to his group of tourists.

The guide is the mediator who places himself in the position to explain her indigenous life to the tourists. But the guide not only translates the life of the indigenous people, he also interprets their lives. Instead of giving her space to give her own opinion about her life, he draws his own conclusions about her life. He takes over her capacity to speak and to represent herself and draws his personal conclusion by stating that the life of the indigenous woman is tough. Novo states that this form of paternalism resembles a ‘colonial understanding of Indians as being legal minors who ought to be represented by *mestizo* advocates (Novo 2003: 262-3). The guide socially separates the two groups by positioning himself as a barrier in the middle. He disturbs the possible direct relation between the voice of the local and the ears of the tourist by claiming a central position as translator in the middle. The guide both integrates his party into the visited (or created) setting as well as insulates it from that setting’ (Cohen 1985: 13). The guide is both a social separator and a cultural translator.

Martinez Novo states that open hostility towards the indigenous people would probably not be accepted in Mexican contemporary society (2003: 265), not by Mexicans nor by (foreign) tourists. Raul once got into a heated argument with a tourist after he stated that ‘Chamulas just act like they are poor to make money from the tourists’. After this argument with the tourist, he never again expressed his personal opinion about the Chamulas during the tours. During the tours in the indigenous villages, his interaction with the Chamulas is always friendly; he greets everyone, gives amical pats on shoulders and flirts with the youngest daughter of the indigenous family that is visited during the tour. His behaviour could be seen as a ‘strategic performance’; Raul knows very well that his success as a ‘good and knowledgeable tour-guide’ depends for a big part on the cooperation of the visited indigenous people during the tours. Besides, many tourists reflected on the performances of their tour-guides after the tours by referring to the interaction between the guide and the local people. Tourists judged the performances of their guide by how he treated the indigenous people. They often used the word ‘respectful’ in their arguments: ‘the guide treated the Indians very good, he was really respectful and told us not to stare at them as if they were monkeys’, said a Dutch couple after returning from their tour with

Alex y Raul Tours. The statement of these tourists resonates with the above given definition of paternalism. Affection, instead of hostility, is expressed towards ones that are subordinated.

Tourists themselves often expressed similar emotions of affection towards the indigenous people, which also might explain their expectation of guides to treat the indigenous in a similar way. The indigenous women and children that vend on the street were often referred to as ‘cute’ but also as ‘helpless’. Many tourists expressed that they felt an obligation to help the vendors by buying their (cheap) souvenirs. A German tourist said:

‘I would love to buy just something of all of them because I want to help all these poor people, they are so sad. Especially these little kids are too cute to resist if they come and ask for a peso to buy their tortillas. I have given away so much money already!’

One woman asked me: ‘You must be broke by now, if you are here already for some months, surrounded by all these little beggars that you just can’t resist!’ She expected me, or morally obligated me as a fellow foreigner, to act the same like she did. The tourists that visit San Cristóbal and San Juan Chamula might feel the obligation to help the poor, and the poor that they encounter with are mostly the indigenous vendors on the street.

As the begging-performances of Domingo showed, the indigenous vendors are actively constructing images of themselves in their interaction with tourists and guides. These embodied enactments correspond with the declared impressions that the tourists have of the indigenous people as being ‘cute’ but also ‘helpless and poor’. Domingo often rubbed his belly while he stared at a tourist with big, sad, brown eyes: *‘tengo mucho hambre, por favour. Quiero tortillas’*⁶⁷. These enactments could be seen as ways in which the local gaze is strategically enacted by selling tourists back the images that are part of the gaze upon them (Maoz: 232). The vendor that sold bracelets should not merely be seen as a ‘prop’ in the story of the guide, she actively created her own opportunities to make some profit out of the presence of the tourists by putting herself in a relationship with the tour-guide. After the guide finished his story, a considerable amount of tourists approached her for bracelets. Although they just heard that she sells four bracelets for 10 pesos, many of the tourists paid more than that. An older man with a

⁶⁷ Translation from Spanish: ‘I am hungry, please. I want tortillas’.

sunburned face took a coin out of his pocket and handed it over to the little daughter of the vendor. He squeezed her cheek and said to his wife: 'Look at this little cute one, adorable right?' The tourist expressed feelings of affection towards the indigenous people and would probably expect his guide to perceive the indigenous in a similar way.

Some of the tourists waved at the mother and daughter before they followed their guide to the next sight. When the group was out of sight, the little girl handed the coins over to her mother. I followed the mother and daughter as they walked to a hotel two blocks down the main square. After they had wondered around in front of the entrance for some minutes, a group of tourists stepped outside. The girl greeted the guide that walked in front of the group, and he greeted back as if they knew each other. It appeared to me as if the mother and daughter were actively trying to look for 'patriarchs'. By constructing these relations with tour-guides, the vendors might bring themselves in a position from where they can benefit from the presence of tourists.

The tour-guide is in the powerful position of maintaining the boundaries of the tourist bubble by preventing the vendors from having direct interaction with the tourists. The guide determines during a tour what the tourists will see, which buildings will be entered and which stories will be told or translated. He is the director of the stages on which the mobile tourist bubble is produced. Nevertheless, the tour-guide does rely on the indigenous people as it is his task to give the tourists an 'indigenous experience'. So the guide functions as the 'gatekeeper' of the tourist bubble while to vendors try to gain access to the tourists inside the bubble by establishing a certain relationship with him. How vendors are actively constructing tourism relations became clear in an interview with a Dutch tourist. He told me that he and his group were meeting with Rosa that evening. Rosa, he told me, is an indigenous vendor who is originally from San Juan Chamula but lives in San Cristóbal. Their guide introduced her to the group that morning; they had known each other since he came to San Cristóbal for the first time as a guide. With this statement, the guide indirectly articulates his experience as guide, which is based on the long relation that he has with a local indigenous woman. Rosa had shown her art craft to the group, pencils decorated with colourful strings that formed the word Chiapas. The whole group had ordered a pencil and Rosa would come to their hotel that night to give them to the tourists and to receive her money. The Dutch tourist said:

'I don't really need a pen of course, although they are really nice and she made them all by herself! It is more an act to help her. Because I think that we should help them if we are here, these people are really poor. It's such a small amount of money for us but our guide told us that it really helps her a lot'.

Again, this quote clearly corresponds with the way in which Martinez Novo describes paternalism as the expression of emotions of affection towards the subordinated. The tourist describes Rosa as 'really poor', and feels the obligation to help her. Rosa, however, is not a passive subordinate in this tourist relation. The relation that she initially established with the tour-guide has to be maintained through the repetitious performances in front of the tourists in which 'she sells back the gaze upon her' (Maoz 2006: 232).

The example of Rosa shows how affectionate paternalistic relations are constructed between the local, the guide and the tourist. The tour-guide could be considered as the constructor of the tourist bubble who socially separates the tourists from the locals by placing himself in between them as a cultural translator. He determines who is temporally welcomed into the bubble but also decides when one should leave the 'tourist-designated area' again. However, the success of his performance as a tour-guide depends on the relations that he performs with the indigenous local people, as this is one of the factors that he is judged on by his tourists. Both the tour-guide and the local have an interest in enacting a specific relationship with each other. The tour-guide provides Rosa access to his constructed tourist-bubble, this 'insideness' gives her the opportunity to make some money from selling souvenirs. While Rosa gives the tour-guide the ability to offer his group an 'authentic experience', which is how the Dutch tourist described the event. The tour-guides and the indigenous local people rely on each other's willingness to participate in the other's performance, and they are partly in charge of the success or failure of the other's enactment. This shows the relationality in which power is performed by different actors in relation to different places.

Arriving at the final part of this conclusion, it can be stated that power in tourism practices is enacted through the multiple and fluid relations between people and places, which are 'never completely stable' (Cheong and Miller 2000: 375). Power is seen as a relationship which is produced in the performances of the inward gaze and in the ways in which paternalistic relations

are enacted. In these enactments, 'the (indigenous) local', 'the tour-guide' and 'the tourist' are produced, who in turn produce these porous tourist bubbles.

Bibliography

Ateljevic, I. and S. Doorne (2005). "Dialectics of authentication: Performing 'exotic otherness' in a backpacker enclave of Dali, China." Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change 3(1): 1-17.

Bærenholdt, J. O., et al. (2004). Performing tourist places, Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Barthes, R. (1981). Camera lucida: Reflections on photography, Macmillan.

Butler, J. (1988). "Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory." Theatre journal: 519-531.

Cheong, S.-M. and M. L. Miller (2000). "Power and tourism: A Foucauldian observation." Annals of Tourism Research 27(2): 371-390.

Cohen, E. (1972). "Toward a sociology of international tourism." Social research: 164-182.

Cohen, E. (1985). "The tourist guide: The origins, structure and dynamics of a role." Annals of Tourism Research 12(1): 5-29.

Comaroff, J. L. and J. Comaroff (2009). Ethnicity, Inc, University of Chicago Press.

Cresswell, T. (2009). "What is Place?" Elsevier: 1-9.

Cresswell, T. (2014). Place: An Introduction, Wiley.

Crouch, D. (2003). "Spacing, performing, and becoming: tangles in the mundane." Environment and Planning A 35(11): 1945-1960.

Edensor, T. (2000). "Staging tourism: Tourists as performers." Annals of Tourism Research 27(2): 322-344.

Edensor, T. (2008). Tourists at the Taj: Performance and meaning at a symbolic site, Routledge.

Eriksen, T. H. (2001). Small places, large issues: an introduction to social and cultural anthropology, Pluto Press.

Geertz, C. (2002). "Deep play: Notes on the Balinese cockfight." The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays: 80-98.

Haldrup, M. and J. Larsen (2009). Tourism, Performance and the Everyday: Consuming the Orient, Taylor & Francis.

Hitchcock, M. (1999). "Tourism and ethnicity: situational perspectives." The International Journal of Tourism Research 1(1): 17.

- Hyde, K. F. and K. Olesen (2011). "Packing for touristic performances." Annals of Tourism Research **38**(3): 900-919.
- Larsen, J. (2004). "Performing tourist photography."
- Larsen, J. (2005). "Families seen sightseeing performativity of tourist photography." Space and Culture **8**(4): 416-434.
- Larsen, J. (2006). "Geographies of Tourist Photography."
- Maoz, D. (2006). "The mutual gaze." Annals of Tourism Research **33**(1): 221-239.
- Merriman, P. and P. T. Cresswell (2012). Geographies of Mobilities: Practices, Spaces, Subjects, Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Morrison, T. (1988). Beloved: A Novel, Plume.
- Murray, G. (2007). "Constructing paradise: the impacts of big tourism in the Mexican coastal zone." Coastal Management **35**(2-3): 339-355.
- Novo, C. M. (2003). "The 'culture' of exclusion: representations of indigenous women Street vendors in Tijuana, Mexico." Bulletin of Latin American Research **22**(3): 249-268.
- Noy, C. (2008). "Pages as stages: A performance approach to visitor books." Annals of Tourism Research **35**(2): 509-528.
- Nys, T. "Waarom vrijheid van meningsuiting? ." Filosofie & Praktijk **31**(3).
- Rakić, T. and D. Chambers (2012). "Rethinking the consumption of places." Annals of Tourism Research **39**(3): 1612-1633.
- Salazar, N. B. (2014). "Seduction: Learning the trade of tourist enticement." Tourism and the power of otherness: Seductions of difference, Channel View, Bristol: 110-124.
- Scarles, C. (2009). "Becoming tourist: Renegotiating the visual in the tourist experience." Environment and Planning D-Society & Space **27**(3): 465-488.
- Seamon, D. (1979). A geography of the lifeworld: Movement, rest and encounter, Croom Helm.
- Truong, V. D., et al. (2014). "Tourism and poverty alleviation: perceptions and experiences of poor people in Sapa, Vietnam." Journal of Sustainable Tourism **22**(7): 1071-1089.
- Tucker, H. (2007). "Performing a young people's package tour of New Zealand: Negotiating appropriate performances of place." Tourism Geographies **9**(2): 139-159.
- Urry, J. (2002). The Tourist Gaze, SAGE Publications.

Van den Berghe, P. L. (1994). The Quest for the Other: Ethnic Tourism in San Cristóbal, Mexico, University of Washington Press.

Yeh, J. H.-y. (2009). "The embodiment of sociability through the tourist camera." The framed world, tourism, tourists and photography: 199-216.