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REDEFINING, CRAFTING, AND RE/PRESENTING CONTEMPORARY ETHNICITIES:

HONDURAN NATIONAL IDENTITY, 1994-2006

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of Social Sciences

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Cordelia A. Frewen

June 2012

Advisor: Dr. Christina F. Kreps

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ABSTRACT

Since the last quarter of the twentieth century, Fourth World populations, including those in Honduras, have been steadily gaining partial recognition of cultural rights; yet often official discourses of national identity continue to subsume cultural traditions of indigenous and Afro-descendant communities. Honduras's heterogeneous ethnic pluralism has historically been combined to promote a more cohesive national identity of a homogenized, mayanized, indo-Hispanic mestizaje. Exclusion and mis- or under-representation of indigenous groups is reinforced by popular imagination, particularly in the cultural heritage and tourism sectors. Firmly situated within regional Latin American and global trends, over the past two decades, official discourse on Honduran national identity has ostensibly shifted from hegemonic notions of mestizaje to one of ethnic diversity and multiculturalism.

This thesis is a multi-sited ethnography that examines the cultural politics of four institutions of power in Honduras. I explore how one state-sponsored project and three private museums contributed to the redefinition of ethnicity in Honduran national identity. I suggest that although these institutions seemingly project the new official discourse of multiculturalism, in fact they uphold antiquated notions of national identity and continue to depict reductionist, universalized, and exclusionary visions of ethnicity in Honduran national identity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this thesis was a long and difficult process – one that I probably could not have finished without the support of friends and family. Friends and colleagues in Honduras, too numerous to name here, taught me the many wonders, complexities, and frustrations of their country that I considered my home for nearly three years. These experiences shaped me and fundamentally changed me. A heartfelt thank you to Doña Teresita Campos y Don Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle who welcomed me into their home and lives during my fieldwork in Honduras in 2010. A ver cuando compartimos otra botella de mescal.

Thanks also to my committee members, Christina Kreps, Darío Euraque, Ermitte St. Jacques, and Sally Hamilton. Un agradecimiento especial para Darío Euraque, quien me ha exigido, desafiado y apoyado en diversos lugares y circunstancias. Más que nada, él creía en mí aún cuando yo no creía en mí misma. Un asesor y mentor verdadero. Sobre todo, gracias por las conversaciones.

Many friends and extended family in the U.S. put up with my comings and goings over the past few years. Thanks especially to Bill and Dot Rupert for humorously enduring my endless packing and unpacking, and for giving me almost enough space in the upstairs dressers.

Finally, and importantly, many thanks to my father, Peter Frewen, his partner, Jenie Smith, and my sister, Lydia Frewen Short, who have unconditionally supported me and nurtured me, even if they didn't always understand what I was doing. And to the memory of my mother. I miss you every day.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

AECI	<i>Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional</i> [Spanish Agency for International Cooperation]
AEHIIAH	<i>Archivo Etno-Histórico del Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia</i> [Ethno-Historic Archive of the Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History]
ASDI	<i>Agencia Sueca para el Desarrollo Internacional</i> [Swedish Agency for International Development]
CDIHH	<i>Centro Documental de Investigaciones Históricas de Honduras</i> [Honduran Documentary Center of Historical Investigations]
CEPREHON	<i>Centro de Estudios Precolombinos e Históricos de Honduras</i> [Center of Pre-Colombian and Historical Studies of Honduras]
COHCIT	<i>Consejo Hondureño de Ciencia y Tecnología</i> [Honduras Council on Science and Technology]
ENBA	<i>Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes</i> [National Academy of Fine Arts]
GOH	Government of Honduras
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IHAH	<i>Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia</i> [Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History]
IHCAP	<i>Instituto Hondureño de las Culturas Autóctonas y Populares</i> [Honduran Institute of Autochthonous and Popular Cultures]
IHT	<i>Instituto Hondureño de Turismo</i> [Honduran Institute of Tourism]
ILC	Interactive Learning Center
ILO	International Labour Organization
MAHSPS	<i>Museo de Antropología e Historia de San Pedro Sula</i> [Museum of Anthropology and History of San Pedro Sula]
MIN	<i>Museo para la Identidad Nacional</i> [Museum for National Identity]
OAS	Organization of American States

OEI	<i>Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos</i> [Organization of Iberoamerican States]
PAC	<i>Parque Arqueológico de Copán</i> [Copán Archaeological Park]
PROFUTURO	<i>Proyecto de Educación Ambiental Interactiva y de Promoción de la Ciencia</i> [Honduras Interactive Environmental Learning and Science Promotion Project]
PRONEEAH	<i>Programa Nacional de Educación para las Etnias Autóctonas de Honduras</i> [National Educational Program for Autochthonous Ethnicities of Honduras]
PROPAITH	<i>Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal, Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras</i> [Program for the Preservation and Promotion of Indigenous and Traditional Handicraft Production]
REDCAMUS	<i>Red Centroamericana de Museos</i> [Central American Network of Museums]
SCAD	<i>Secretaría de Cultura, Artes y Deportes</i> [Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Sports]
SECTIN	<i>Secretaría de Cultura, Turismo e Información</i> [Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Information]
SECTUR	<i>Secretaría de Cultura y Turismo</i> [Ministry of Culture and Tourism]
SEP	<i>Secretaría de Educación Pública</i> [Ministry of Public Education]
SETUR	<i>Secretaría de Turismo</i> [Ministry of Tourism]
SOPTRAVI	<i>Secretaría de Obras Públicas, Transportes y Viviendas</i> [Ministry of Public Works, Transport, and Housing]
UNAH	<i>Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras</i> [National Autonomous University of Honduras]

INTRODUCTION

Project Overview

This is an ethnography of the cultural politics of four institutions of state power in Honduras. Thus, it is necessarily a multi-sited ethnography that examines multiple domains of research. What began as an ethnographic examination of a particular state-sponsored cultural project soon prompted me to examine museum exhibits of national identity for a more comprehensive study on the institutionalized representation of national identity in contemporary Honduras.

In common with many countries in Latin America, Honduras is a heterogeneous, multicultural, pluriethnic, and plurilingual society. Historically, its citizenry is derived from indigenous, Spanish, and Afro-Caribbean roots, and, since the start of the 20th century, small but significant immigration from the Middle East and Asia (Amaya Banegas 1997, 2000; Chambers 2010; Euraque 1996b, 1996c, 2004a, 2009a; N. González 1992). Despite this diversity, historically, official state discourse on national identity overwhelmingly emphasized indo-Hispanic *mestizaje*, generally understood as the racial miscegenation of indigenous and Spanish ancestors. Since the colonial period (1520s-1820s), official policies endorsed indigenous acculturation to Spanish and *criollo*,¹ and later *mestizo*,² values and behaviors (Herranz 2001; Newson 1986). Murmurings of legal

¹ A person of Spanish (or Portuguese) ancestry born in the Americas.

² A person of racially mixed ancestry generally understood as from indigenous and European (peninsular) ancestry, though it may also include Afro-descendant ancestry.

recognition of the nation's ethnic diversity deepened in the late 1980s, but official recognition did not occur until 1994, and remains minimal.

In the mid-1990s, within a regional context, the Honduran state began to reformulate its nationalist discourse to be more inclusive of its ethnic pluralism by establishing various projects, programs, and institutions dedicated to indigenous and Afro-descendant issues. One such project was the *Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal, Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras* [Program for the Preservation and Promotion of Indigenous and Traditional Handicraft Production] (PROPAITH), a decade-long initiative that worked with seven of the nine indigenous and Afro-descendant groups, in addition to mestizo communities, throughout Honduras. PROPAITH was established in May 1995 by the *Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia* [Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History] (IHAH), a semi-autonomous state institution charged with protection, promotion, and research of the nation's cultural heritage and which functions under the purview of the *Secretaría de Cultura, Artes y Deportes* [Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Sports] (SCAD). Although PROPAITH's central focus prioritized generating employment through developing and marketing "traditional" indigenous artisanry, its duration and the amount of financial and personnel resources invested—from both state institutions as well as foreign agencies—establish PROPAITH as arguably one of the most important state projects that contributed to officializing a multicultural perspective of contemporary ethnic identity in Honduras. It was fundamental in consolidating the notion of *etnia* (or ethnic groups), as opposed to the use of race as a population classification, in official discourse during the last 15 years.

Indeed, PROPAITH is the benchmark project of the official reformulation of national identity in Honduras. Ostensibly successful in its goal as an economic aid to impoverished rural and indigenous communities, the project was also roundly praised for contributing to the contemporary collective memory of Honduras. Through the world of artisanry, it “open[ed] perspectives for understanding who we are as a nation and a people.”³ By generating and marketing products that embody *ethnic* elements of Honduran identity, PROPAITH institutionalized a new official discourse on national identity. Through its marketing component, PROPAITH was linked to another more traditional venue for exhibiting and promoting national identity—museums.

Three of Honduras’s main museums engage with themes of Honduran national identity and its ethnic composition in their exhibits. I explore these aspects in key sections of the permanent exhibitions of the *Museo de Antropología e Historia de San Pedro Sula* [Museum of Anthropology and History of San Pedro Sula] (MAHSPS), *Chiminike, Centro Interactivo de Enseñanza* [Chiminike, Interactive Learning Center], commonly known as the children’s museum or simply Chiminike, and the *Museo para la Identidad Nacional* [Museum for National Identity] (MIN). These state institutions of power—PROPAITH and the three museums—were established in the late 1990s and early 2000s, at the height of the reformulation of official discourse on national identity. Importantly, specialists (anthropologists, museologists, historians, and archaeologists) connected to PROPAITH often worked in the conceptualization and design of the

³ Alessandra Castegnaro de Foletti, [2003], “Viaje por el Universo Artesanal de Honduras,” pp. ii, author’s translation. Book with no publication information produced by PROPAITH and IHAH. The introductory pages to this book are not numbered; for the purposes of this thesis, I assigned numbers i, ii, iii, etc. for these pages.

museums and their exhibits, consolidating a particular, complicated, and often contradictory notion of national identity.

On the surface, PROPAITH seems to demonstrate a clear shift in official discourse about Honduran national identity. Likewise, the three museums seem to project a more inclusive understanding of Honduran national identity conveyed to the general public. On closer examination, however, I suggest that the underlying vision of PROPAITH and the museums rather uphold antiquated notions of national identity and ethnographic theorization and continue to depict reductionist and exclusionary visions of Honduran national identity.

PROPAITH and the museums examined in this study are typical examples of what James Clifford, borrowing from Mary Louise Pratt, terms contact zones, which are “sites of a historical negotiation, occasions for an ongoing contact” (Clifford 1997:192-194). Indeed, PROPAITH focused on “peripheral” indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, rather than the historically “central” populations of mestizo and criollo. This emphasis on ethnic communities reflects a shift in state discourse to an inclusive, multicultural society. Repositioning away from the dominant homogenized understanding of an indo-Hispanic national identity reflects broader regional and global trends that emerged in the 1990s. However, similar to the museums exhibitions, I argue that these state institutions and practices continue to be contact zones, where “dialogue and collaboration are foregrounded, but [where] the ultimate suppression of oppositional discourse is always effected” (Boast 2011:64). That is, while ostensibly incorporating a more inclusive, pluralistic rhetoric of national identity, these institutions continue to

present an older, essentialist, and hegemonic vision of a particular homogenized indo-Hispanic mestizo national population and identity.

By Way of an Introduction: Thoughts on Researcher Positionality and Identity

Honduras first impacted me in fifth grade, as part of the winning question of my school-wide Geography Bee. “Besides Honduras, name one other country that the Gulf of Honduras borders.” Somewhat hesitantly I responded, “Guatemala?” (See Appendix 1 for a map of Honduras.) Fifteen years later, I became acquainted with this country in a much more profound and lasting way. In late 2006, the newly appointed director of the IHAH, Dr. Darío Euraque—a mentor and former professor—invited me to work on a short-term project at the institute. From April through September 2007, I worked as an associate researcher on an ethno-photo-documentation project about contemporary visual representation of ancient Maya glyphs, architecture, and iconography throughout the country.⁴ After this contract ended, I remained in Honduras for two more years, working and volunteering on a range of projects related to the cultural heritage of the nation at the IHAH and non-governmental organizations.

Among these experiences, I volunteered in four distinct archaeological projects in different regions of the country; assisted with the planning process of a new Maya archaeology museum in Copán Ruinas, in the western highlands; conducted archival research at the newly established ethno-historic archive at the *Centro de Documentación e Investigación Histórica de Honduras* [Center of Historical Documentation and Research of Honduras] (CDIHH) in Tegucigalpa; assisted with the International

⁴ IHAH, 30 March 2007, “Contrato de Servicios Profesionales.” Document in possession of the author.

Symposium “Slavery, Citizenship, and Memory: Minor Ports in the Caribbean and the Atlantic” on the North Coast; participated in a week-long, multidisciplinary trip to remote, primarily indigenous villages in the eastern region of La Mosquitia; assisted in the transfer of ancient Maya artifacts to a new, permanent storage facility; conducted historical research on an archaeological site to be included in a new visitor’s center; and, coordinated the Cerro Palenque Project, which included developing and implementing a series of workshops about cultural patrimony for communities neighboring this archaeological site in the Sula Valley on the Caribbean coast of the country. Most of these projects were themselves conceived by the IHAH in rethinking the relationship between ethnic groups, national identity, and cultural heritage. These projects were implemented as part of a wider vision of Honduras’s central cultural heritage institutions—the SCAD and the IHAH— spearheaded by the Minister of Culture, Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle, and Darío Euraque as the IHAH’s director.

In late August 2009, I left Honduras and returned to the U.S. to begin graduate studies. I was scheduled to leave even before the military-civilian coup of 28 June 2009 forcibly removed President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales from his country and elected office. My final two months in Honduras were intensely affected by repercussions of the coup. The coup government forced the exile and dismissal of officials throughout the Zelaya administration; in the culture sector this included the Minister of Culture, Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle, the Director of the IHAH, Darío Euraque, and a number of other employees and colleagues at the IHAH and other state agencies (see Euraque 2010, especially Chapter 6).

For a number of reasons, I tried to keep my personal views about the coup out of public attention while in Honduras—not only immediately after the coup and when I returned to Honduras in late 2009 to carry out preliminary research about my thesis, but also more than a year after the coup, when I returned yet again in the autumn of 2010 for a museum internship at the MAHSPS and to carry out fieldwork for my proposed thesis. However, when I did participate in protests against the coup, I witnessed a dimension that was infrequently reported⁵ and one that also came to influence this thesis. Some sectors of the resistance clearly organized around their ethnicity and used traditional artistic expressions and symbols to voice their opposition to the coup.

Thus, ideas for this thesis emerged organically from my experiences living and working in Honduras, before and after the coup. Initial ideas changed significantly and were necessarily influenced by the complex and evolving repercussions of the coup, as well as my connections to ousted officials. Because of this, it became clear that my original proposal, which included elements of traditional ethnography and more innovative methods of collaborative anthropology and participatory museology (Kreps 1997, 2008), was not feasible. Since I was committed to writing my thesis about Honduras, I modified my specific topic and methodology to focus more on ethno-historic archival research and to work with private museums instead of public ones, which are managed by the IHAH.

⁵ For example, Emergency Committee against the Coup in Honduras, 11 February 2010, “Indigenous Organization COPINH: We march against the developers, planners, executors and inheritors of the Coup d'Etat,” <http://committeeagainsthondurascoup.blogspot.com/2010/02/indigenous-organization-copinh-we-march.html>, accessed 27 January 2012; La Revolución Vive, 19 November 2009, “Honduras: Llamamiento urgente a la solidaridad internacional,” <http://www.larevolucionvive.org.ve/spip.php?article787&lang=es>, accessed 27 January 2012.

Throughout the entire thesis process, and particularly the writing phase, I have struggled with the subject matter of my thesis. It would be easier, I reasoned, to write about an issue to which I am not so intimately connected. This is, quite probably, true. The coup, its immediate consequences, and lasting aftermath still feel raw, and continue to elicit emotional responses, now almost three years later and many thousands of miles away. I do not wish to dismiss the violence, censorship, illegal detentions, and states of siege that immediately dominated daily life throughout Honduras post-coup, and it has been difficult to accept that this thesis is not the appropriate forum in which to engage with these issues.⁶ Yet the process of writing this ethnography has been what Tyler calls “a meditative vehicle” (1986:140) that has helped me reflect on and begin to process my experiences in Honduras. This thesis is an effort to engage with a central aspect of the cultural heritage sector in which I was so intricately involved—a sector that is too often overlooked in Honduras, in both the public and academic spheres. It is my sincere hope that this thesis will contribute to an ongoing dialogue about national identity and ethnicity that, although it began in earnest nearly two decades ago, remains in its infancy. Recent efforts of a more sustained engagement by officials in the cultural heritage sector under President Zelaya’s administration were categorically abandoned and reversed following the coup.

It would be disingenuous to not address my own “identity” as a central element of my positionality in a thesis that focuses on national identity and ethnic identities. In Honduras, when asked where I was from, I invariably responded “*Soy gringa.*” This was

⁶ Some forums that have been helpful range from Euraque’s memoir (2010) to blogs by anthropologists who have decades of experience working and living in Honduras, including <http://hondurascoup2009.blogspot.com/> and <http://hondurasculturepolitics.blogspot.com/>, both by bloggers whose user names are RAJ and RNS.

a conscious response—intended to manifest congeniality and camaraderie—that frequently elicited laughter and follow-up questions. I used this response in a slightly ironic way to “reclaim” the term from the pejorative connotation it frequently carries. More importantly, though, it sums up key elements of my identity quite succinctly: I am a white woman from the United States.

I was initially reluctant to address elements of self-identity in this thesis because I think that author positionality in post-colonial and post-modern ethnographies can be self-indulgent and distracting from the core content (Chiseri-Strater 1996:127). More importantly, I feared that stating my racial, ethnic, and gendered being would pose a danger of erasing my complexity, which goes far beyond being a white woman from the U.S. In addition, I thought that foregrounding my positionality—especially as a woman—might “devalue” my work as “tentative and self-doubting” (Chiseri-Strater 1996:127).

However, in the context of this thesis, it is important to recognize these elements of self-identity and positionality. Many of my experiences and access to knowledge and information in Honduras were precisely a function of how others saw me. As a gringa connected to the IHAH, my “age, gender, race, class, nationality, institutional affiliation, historical-personal circumstance[s], and intellectual predisposition” (Chiseri-Strater 1996:115; see also, Nederveen Pieterse 2006:170) all influenced perceptions of me by colleagues and acquaintances and thus shaped my interactions with them. As researcher and author, I am aware of these complexities and choose to disclose them—explicitly, deliberately—in this section instead of concealing them or revealing them little by little (Chiseri-Strater 1996). However, since this thesis is an examination of historical processes, I try to minimize, or at least balance, my “stance-position-location” (Chiseri-

Strater 1996:117) as ethnographer in the narrative voice that I adopt throughout the remainder of this ethnography.

Overview of Chapters

In Chapter One, I present the historical, conceptual, and methodological frameworks that ground this thesis. I also explore the literature, and absence thereof, on local discourses on Honduran national identity, cultural politics and national ethnic identity, and on the intersections of museums and nationalism.

Chapter Two presents the regional and national historical context that led to the change in official discourse about national identity in the mid-1990s. I provide an overview of demographics of indigenous groups in Honduras, then discuss three distinct, but interrelated discourses about Honduran national identity, mestizaje, mayanization, and multiculturalism. I then explore the institutionality of cultural politics in Honduras, specifically the SCAD, the IHAH, and the *Instituto Hondureño de Turismo* [Honduran Institute of Tourism] (IHT). Although no longer directly connected with the SCAD, the IHT is important because of its use of symbols of national identity and its marketing of PROPAITH products. The role of tourism has become central in the modern economy of Honduras; the IHT has become another state agency that promotes national culture within this context.

Chapter Three explores in depth the PROPAITH project—its objectives, financing, and organization. I then examine how this state-sponsored initiative promoted contradictory imagery and discourses on ethnic national identity. These elements are directly connected to the objectives and missions of the state agencies discussed in

Chapter Two and the missions and visions of the museums to be discussed in Chapter Four. There are legal relationships between the state agencies and museums established in binding agreements between the institutions.

Chapter Four discusses the three Honduran museums previously mentioned: the MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN. I explain why and how these museums fulfill an important role in the national ethnic imagination, and explore the broader literature on the interrelationship between museums, nationalism, and national identity. Finally, I offer an analysis of the exhibit and *guión museográfico* (a narrative or storyline of the exhibit) of all three museums in the context of representations of national identity as mestizaje, mayanized, and multicultural.

In the Conclusion, I present my analysis and findings and their significance to the fields of museum anthropology and Latin American studies. I end by exploring limitations to this study and presenting ideas for future research.

CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL, CONCEPTUAL, AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

The other, much less common mode of ethnographic research self-consciously embedded in a world-system [...] moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities in diffuse time-space. This mode defines for itself an object of study that cannot be accounted for ethnographically by remaining focused on a single site of intensive investigation. It develops instead a strategy or design of research that acknowledges macrotheoretical concepts and narratives of the world system, but does not rely on them [...] This mobile ethnography takes unexpected trajectories in tracing cultural formation across and within multiple sites of activities.

—George Marcus, 1995:96.

Introduction

On 1 July 2009, a mere three days after the violent coup d'état that removed Honduras's democratically-elected President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales from the country, the leaders from fourteen of the largest national indigenous and Afro-descendant organizations issued a joint statement condemning the coup and those involved. The final statement of this political position reads:

We will never abandon our historic struggle for a reform of the political constitution of our country to recognize the multicultural and multilingual state of Honduras; the particular rights of our peoples; [...] the recognition and legitimate defense of our territories and natural resources; the self-determination of our peoples; as diverse international treaties, conventions, and declaration establish, principally in Convention No. 169 of the ILO and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (CIMCA 2009, author's translation).

Of paramount significance is that, after six general policy statements explicitly denouncing the coup, this declaration concludes by speaking broadly of the indigenous struggle in Honduras and referencing the current Honduran Constitution that dates from 1982. This is important because it articulates the claims of ethnic social movements to the

very foundations of the Honduran state and derived legislation and institutional policies on matters of culture and national identity, all central concerns in this thesis.

That the leadership of fourteen different indigenous organizations signed the statement reflects the heterogeneous, pluricultural, multiracial, and plurilingual character of Honduran society. Yet it is also one with a complicated and contentious sense of national identity. In addition to the predominant indo-Hispanic mestizo population, there are nine officially recognized distinct indigenous and Afro-descendant groups; these comprise between 12 and 20 percent of the total population of Honduras, or more than one and a half million inhabitants (Palacios Barahona 2007:1-3). Despite this diversity, Honduran national identity historically has been universalized as indo-Hispanic mestizo. In the state's quest for an ethnically homogeneous nation (Barahona 2005:44), indigenous groups were overlooked and left outside of this imagined mestizo national identity. Yet, prior to the coup, as a key actor in the cultural heritage sector explains,

the culture of ethnic groups found itself in a reaffirmation of their identity in different aspects and their representativity before the state was gaining strength; that in one way or another [the state] had listened to them, they were reinforcing their local identities (Becerra 2009, author's translation).

What historical and cultural processes allowed for such a swift and unified response by today's ethnic communities throughout the country to this crisis of the state? On what basis could these groups advance their unified platform as a multicultural and plurilingual nation? Why does it matter, in a national ideological sense, that diverse ethnic groups expressed a unified platform of political inclusion *as ethnic groups* in the national eye? Answering to these and related questions form the essence of this thesis. In order to examine them effectively, it is necessary to begin with a critical event in the

history of Honduran ethnic mobilization. In the mid-1990s, the ethnic social movement in Honduras was in its infancy; but, in July 1994, situated within the broader regional context of increased ethnic mobilization, visibility, and agency, more than 4,000 people from six indigenous and Afro-descendant groups across the country took part in a pilgrimage that took them from their communities to Tegucigalpa, the country's capital. After walking more than seven days, leaders of the organized pilgrimage presented a list of 85 social, political, and economic demands to the newly elected president that challenged the government's position toward and commitment to the country's ethnic communities (Barahona 2007, 2009; Barahona and Rivas 2007; McCann 1994; Zúñiga 2007).

This phenomenon of new ethnic social movements proliferated in the 1980s and especially the 1990s on a global scale. In Latin America, deep historical roots of these movements originated in the conquest and subsequent colonial policies and processes aimed at elimination of indigenous populations or their assimilation and acculturation into the dominant Spanish, criollo, and mestizo culture. More immediate origins were based in the peasant and labor social movements that emerged in the post-industrial economy of the mid-20th century. Ethnic mobilizations in Latin America were consolidated in the mid-1990s, in response to the Columbus quincentenary (in 1992) and neoliberal, globalizing economic processes (particularly post-NAFTA in 1994). Many of these ethnic social movements emphasize social changes in identity and culture as opposed to more materialistic, economic changes. Many indigenous and Afro-descendant organizations promote a discourse that focuses on rights to citizenship (personhood), territory (natural resources and environment), and cultural autonomy (self-determination),

and they do so by linking them to an ethnicized identity (Hale 1997; Yasher 1998, 2004). The underlying primary objective of such ethnic social movements is ethnic recognition and redress on the part of the state, thereby challenging the historically dominant homogeneous notions of a mestizo national identity (Wade 1997).

This thesis explores how state discourse on national identity has and has not been rearticulated in response to demands of ethnic mobilizations in the particular setting of Honduras between 1994 and 2006. Since “institutions and policies profoundly shape identity politics” (Yasher 2004:282), it is necessary to explore the central institutions and policies in Honduras that have contributed to defining national identity in the national imagination. In subsequent chapters, I explore how four institutional processes—one state-sponsored project and three museums—contributed to redefining hegemonic notions of a homogenized national identity to incorporate a heterogeneous, ethnicized diversity into state narratives of national identity. Through these institutional processes, I analyze how effective this redefinition has been.

Literature Review: Contemporary Ethnic Social Mobilization

Extensive interdisciplinary scholarship with a regional focus on ethnic social movements in Latin America explores historical processes of emergence and analyzes theories that attempt to explain the recent surge of ethnicized identity politics (for example, Hale 1997; Jackson and Warren 2005; Peña 2005; Stavenhagen 1992; Tilly 1997; van Cott 2010; Yasher 1998, 2004). Within the broader Latin American literature on indigenous politics and mobilizations, scholarship on ethnic social movements in Central America (with the exception of Guatemala) is insufficient, and that of Honduras

in particular is “virtually ignored” (van Cott 2010:400). This neglect is due in part to “selection bias” by scholars who prefer to investigate countries with a large indigenous majority or countries whose indigenous movements have been dramatic or particularly successful (van Cott 2010:400). This has not been the case in Honduras, as historical marginalization and a lack of political, legal, and social investment have led to minimal gains for indigenous groups, as compared with other countries in Central America and Latin America (Jackson and Warren 2005:551; van Cott 2010:390).

Indigenous rights groups in Honduras have increasingly gained international exposure since the 2009 military-civilian coup because of their leading role and vocal participation in the broader resistance movement against the coup and subsequent political processes. However, though framed within the general demands of the resistance, the main objectives of indigenous organizations transcend and predate those of the resistance. Firmly situated within the historical and regional Latin American context of a longstanding “culture of resistance” (Stavenhagen 1992:424), indigenous groups in Honduras increasingly organized themselves into federations and associations in the late 1970s and 1980s (for a discussion on these ethnic organizations, see, for example, Centeno García 2004; Palacios Barahona 2007; Rivas 2000).

By the early to mid-1990s, global agencies increasingly recognized and promoted indigenous rights and encouraged dialogue and action regarding problems facing indigenous populations. In 1989, the ILO passed Convention No. 169, an international legally binding document that establishes and protects the rights of indigenous peoples. The Government of Honduras (GOH) ratified this convention in May 1994,¹ which

¹ Congreso Nacional, *Decreto No. 26-94*, 10 May 1994. Published in *La Gaceta*, 30 June 1994, pp. 37-43.

represented a fundamental first step toward dialogue and understanding between ethnic groups and the state. Additionally, the UN General Assembly declared 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples, recognizing the diversity and value of indigenous cultures and cultural heritage. Its principal objective was to “strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous communities in areas such as human rights, the environment, development, education, and health.”² This year was extended into a decade (1995-2004) to further strengthen advances made during the International Year.³ Simultaneously, anticipation of—and response to—the Columbus quincentenary provoked a “surge of political activity by indigenous peoples throughout the hemisphere” (Hale 1997:569; see also, Jackson and Warren 2005; van Cott 2010). By the mid-1990s, a pan-Maya cultural movement had emerged in neighboring Guatemala. And, on 1 January 1994, the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico marked the increased visibility of indigenous movements throughout Latin America.

Galvanized by such global advances and regional movements, indigenous groups in Honduras increased their demands on the government. In July 1994, this culminated in the first of a series of organized pilgrimages by ethnic groups throughout the country to Tegucigalpa to voice a series of demands to newly elected President Carlos Roberto Reina. They presented to him a list of 85 demands that encompassed social, political, economic, and cultural rights, unequivocally placing the indigenous problematic on the

² UN General Assembly, 20 December 1993, A/RES/48/133, 85th plenary meeting.

³ UN General Assembly, 23 December 1993, A/RES/49/214, 94th plenary meeting.

state agenda. This march also called attention to the recent assassinations and disappearances of indigenous leaders, which were generally linked to land conflicts.⁴

More than 4,000 individuals from six distinct ethnic groups across the country participated in this march, named the Pilgrimage for Life, Justice, and Liberty (McCann 1994; Zúniga 2004:38). These pilgrims remained in Tegucigalpa for a week, a visible presence gathered under the National Congress building; the total mobilization lasted for 15 days from when the march began. In addition to raising awareness about and generating solidarity with indigenous peoples from the general population, the march also served as a type of “improvised intercultural exchange” of cultural traditions *between* different ethnic groups that sometimes involved elements “of conflict and cultural shock” (Barahona and Rivas 2007b:123, author’s translation).

Though President Reina initially denied the existence of “indians” in Honduras,⁵ he established an emergency governmental commission to negotiate with the pilgrims. Minister of Culture, Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle, headed this commission, which also included the directors of the National Agrarian Institute (INA) and the Honduran Forestry Development Corporation (COHDEFOR) as well as 14 indigenous leaders. By the end of the negotiations, the commission approved 70 of these demands, most of which were solutions to immediate problems. Despite this seeming success, since these negotiations, “the principal strategy of the government has been [...] non-fulfillment of the agreements” (Barahona 2007:24, author’s translation). As a result, increasingly organized

⁴ Silvia González, Eva Martínez, and Clare Mumford, 1994, La marcha indígena, AEHIAH, box 273. Document in possession of author.

⁵ Using the pejorative term “indio,” he stated: “Here there aren’t any indians...and the conditions in which people live in [indigenous communities in the interior of the country] are similar to the conditions in which people live in marginalized communities in Tegucigalpa” (cited in Barahona 2009:249, author’s translation).

ethnic groups coordinated additional pilgrimages to Tegucigalpa. More than 20,000 people participated in the second march, called Pilgrimage for Peace, Development, and De-Militarization of Society, in October 1994. Six months later, 1,500 people participated in the third pilgrimage. The following year, in April 1996, a fourth pilgrimage did not present new demands, but rather called for the “government to clarify, and that we [indigenous communities] specify, a plan to operationalize the compromises” (Barahona and Rivas 2007:126, author’s translation) agreed upon in the negotiations resulting from the previous marches. The fifth pilgrimage, called Journey of Permanent Peaceful Active Resistance of Indigenous and Black Peoples, lasted from July-August 1997. This march differed from the previous ones because, despite its name, it marked an increased belligerence from indigenous leaders in response to state inaction to implement the agreements (Barahona 2009:253).

This series of pilgrimages marked a critical juncture in the emergence and organization of an indigenous or ethnic movement in Honduras. They

were a shock to the conscience of everyone. They broke the invisibility and silence of the ethnicities in their own country, challenging the notion that the Honduran population is homogeneous and demanding [that the nation] overcome racism and simplistic sentimental folklorism (McCann 1994).

Indeed, these pilgrimages created momentum for ethnic groups. State responses to these marches indicated a state commitment—at least a demagogic commitment—to attend to problems in indigenous communities and marked the beginning of an official redefinition of national identity to an inclusive, pluricultural, and multiethnic conceptualization. It is important to acknowledge that I use the terms “pluricultural,” “multiethnic,” and “plurilinguistic” throughout this thesis as a reflection of the official terminology and state

language used in Honduras that addresses these concerns. The first congressional legislation that recognized ethnic diversity in Honduras, passed in August 1994, was in the context of creating an intercultural bilingual education program called the *Programa Nacional de Educación para las Etnias Autóctonas de Honduras* (National Education Program for Autochthonous Ethnicities of Honduras) [PRONEEAH]. I do not use this terminology in the academic tradition of anthropological theory on ethnicity. That is, pluralism and pluriculturalism in this tradition is understood as “being composed of groups which were socially and culturally discrete [...] with no shared values” (Eriksen 2010:57). In this thesis, I do not consider pluralism and its iterations as “unit[s] of disparate parts” (Eriksen 2010:57), but rather choose to utilize the language used in Honduran legislation because I am fundamentally trying to carry out an ethnographic study of state institutions of power, in particular those charged with designing and implementing cultural policy on a national scale.⁶

At any rate, “the years of the Reina administration [1994-1998] represented an important rupture regarding the subject of ethno-racial politics and cultural institutionality” (Euraque 2010:64). The subsequent chapters in this thesis, focusing on a state-sponsored project and three museums, elaborate on the complicated interplay between state institutions of power and subaltern contestations of power in the cultural heritage sector and its articulations of national identity discourses.

⁶ I thank Prof. Ermitte St. Jacques for suggesting this important consideration and for pointing me to the work of Thomas H. Eriksen on ethnicity and nationalism .

Conceptual Framework

Throughout this thesis, I employ a conceptual framework guided by a series of ideas and concepts that serve as “a skeletal structure of justification” (Eisenhart 1991:209) derived from the work of Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, George Marcus, and others to a lesser extent, including Darío Euraque and Marvin Barahona. My conceptual framework, then, “outline[s] the kinds of things that are of interest to study from various sources” (Eisenhart 1991:211). This kind of framework

is an argument that the concepts chosen for investigation or interpretation, and any anticipated relationships among them, will be appropriate and useful, given the research problem under investigation (Eisenhart 1991:209).

Such a conceptual framework is the most appropriate structure for exploring relevant ideas, as grounded in prior research and literature, to this multi-sited institutional ethnography. To this end, I present the key concepts that serve as my guides.

Local Discourses on National Identity

In his classic historicist work on modern nationalism, national consciousness, and national identity, Benedict Anderson provides the most relevant and useful definition of the nation that grounds this thesis: “in an anthropological spirit [as] an imagined political community [that is] imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (2006:6).

Anderson argues that imagined communities do not require a state to come into existence; rather, they are generated through a range of mechanisms. He maintains that this particular imagined community of the modern nation originates in the late 18th century and that the spread of the modern national imagined community, especially by the late 19th and early 20th century, is driven in large part by the state.

Anderson maintains that the criollo communities of the New World, including in the territory that is now Honduras, developed conceptions of nation-ness at the end of the 18th century, much earlier than most of Europe (2006:47-65). Origins of the imagined community in Spanish America derived from the unique population of criollo administrators, who, through common journeys or pilgrimages, developed a “consciousness of connectedness” (Anderson 2006:56) separate from their peninsular counterparts; this was consolidated with the emergence of print-capitalism, which emphasized the “particularistic-localism” (Anderson 2006:62) of the criollo administrative units.

While this thesis is primarily inspired by Anderson’s work on nationalism and national identity, it also dialogues with Eric Hobsbawm’s (1990) position of the dominant role of the state in creating the modern nation. Hobsbawm approaches nationalism from a top-down perspective, maintaining that modern nations are created by the unification of people into a political-economic state. He argues that the modern nation emerged from an essentially political concept, not out of reductionist criteria such as language, ethnicity, religion, or geography. A critical tension between these two theoretical approaches is that Anderson suggests that modern nationalism is a function of the rise of the modern state but that imagined political communities and nations existed before the phenomenon of modern nationalism and the modern state. Hobsbawm, on the other hand, argues that modern nations and nationalism are primarily a function of the rise of the modern state. Both agree that national identity changes over time; however, Hobsbawm maintains that such changes are generated by the state, while Anderson argues that subaltern groups (in this case, ethnic social movements) contest and question the state’s rendition of an

imagined community. Both of these positions are relevant at different periods in the history of Honduran national identity.

Hobsbawm's work on invented traditions (1983) as linked to the modern development of the nation and nationalism is also central to my discussion of the shift of state discourse on national identity to one of multiculturalism. To paraphrase Hobsbawm, the invented traditions developed and disseminated by state agencies in this study established and symbolized an ethnic social cohesion and collective identity while simultaneously legitimizing state institutions for national purposes (1983:9).

In the Honduran context, beginning in the early 20th century, the state had generated an imagined political community that, in ethnic terms, framed national identity in terms of a particular rendition of a mayanized indo-Hispanic mestizaje, which I discuss below. By the mid-1990s, the imagined community generated by the Honduran state came to be challenged by new ethnic social movements that rejected that homogenizing discourse of a mestizo nationalism, through the pilgrimages of the mid-1990s discussed earlier. This phenomenon occurred within the broader context of the convergence of new discourses on ethnic and national identity on an international level. Thus, the state institutions that I examine are engulfed in a complicated and contradictory interplay between a state that is transitioning from a mestizo-based imagined community—or national identity—to one that is multiethnic and pluricultural. To reiterate, I examine four state institutions (one state-sponsored project and three museums) that purport to represent this new vision of an imagined community that is now multicultural, and I analyze the extent to which that actually came to be the case.

In Honduras, the literature on the nation, nationalism, and national identity has developed only recently, within the past two decades, much inspired by the pilgrimages in the mid-1990s. Marvin Barahona and Dario Euraque, two of the most important contemporary Honduran historians, have published extensively on their country's national identity (Barahona 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2009; Barahona and Rivas 2007a; Euraque 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b, 2009c; Euraque, Gould, and Hale 2004). Barahona's seminal work, *Evolución histórica de la identidad nacional*, originally published in 1991, represents the first major analytical publication exploring this subject. Examining the colonial roots of Honduran national identity that echoes the broader tradition of Hobsbawm, he advances the commonly accepted, hegemonic interpretation of Honduran national identity as that of what Hale (2004:22) terms "mestizo nationalism," a concept discussed in more detail below. A basic premise in Barahona's work is that "Honduran identity is made up of a people who emerged from the miscegenation of indigenous, Hispanics, and black Afro-Caribbean" (Barahona 2002:14, author's translation), a process known as mestizaje. Thus, mestizos, as the resulting population segment, represented a racially homogenized group that embodied the amalgamation of religio-cultural elements of the three "racial" progenitorial groups (Barahona 2002:15, 277-278). Therefore, Barahona focuses primarily on mestizo national identity, especially in his earlier works.⁷ Many, if not most, other authors on Honduran national identity likewise emphasize this concept of hegemonic, particularly indo-Hispanic, mestizaje as the foundation of Honduran national

⁷ His 2004 chapter and 2009 book represent a shift toward a more inclusive, heterogeneous, pluriethnic representation of Honduran national identity.

identity (for example, Barahona 2002, 2005, 2007; Barahona and Rivas 2007a; Carías 2005).

As a central philosophical ideology in Latin America, a particular understanding of mestizaje was promoted in the early 20th century by José Vasconcelos, Mexican philosopher, politician, and one-time Minister of Education of Mexico (1921-1924). His concept of “the cosmic race” was an anti-imperialist response to European, U.S., and local criollo racism against the majority mestizo and indigenous population of Mexico (Vasconcelos 1997 [1925]:9). He maintained that in Latin America, a “fifth universal race” would emerge, a clear break with the prevailing elite ideology that called for racial purity. Made up of the ethnic and spiritual amalgamation of “the Black, the Indian, the Mongol, and the White” (Vasconcelos 1997 [1925]:9), this new race incorporated all the best elements of each race, thereby creating “the definitive race, the synthetical race, the integral race, made up of the genius and the blood of all peoples and, for that reason, more capable of true brotherhood and of a truly universal vision” (Vasconcelos 1997 [1925]:20). Situating Latin America (specifically Mexico) at the center of this evolution, Vasconcelos successfully incorporated mestizaje as part of official Mexican nationalist discourse that promoted a more inclusive ideology. Though frequently dismissed as a racist theory, Vasconcelos’s promotion of mestizaje as an ideal in (Mexican) national identity strongly influenced nation-states throughout Latin America, as they sought to consolidate their own nationalist and national identity narratives. This movement in Mexico specifically influenced Honduran mestizo nationalism as promoted by local intellectual elites in the late 1920s and 1930s (Euraque 1998a, 2004a:39-68).

In Honduras, Euraque (1994), drawing explicitly from Benedict Anderson, challenges both Vasconcelos's ideology of mestizaje as national identity and Barahona's basic premise of a mestizo nationalism, and advances a more inclusive, diverse, and nuanced understanding of Honduran national identity. Euraque primarily explores an ethnicized notion of national identity in modern Honduran history since the late 19th century. His earlier works on national identity focused on regional (imperialist, neo-liberal) socio-economic processes that influenced state discourse on a mestizo nationalism and national identity, thereby excluding an ethnicized conceptualization. His writings on the "mayanization" of indigenous groups and an indo-Hispanic understanding of national identity is a critical conceptual contribution in the literature about Honduran national identity (1998a, 1999, 2002, 2003b, 2004a), and one that I address in detail below. Many of Euraque's contributions explore the Afro-descendant component of Honduran mestizaje and the consolidation of an indo-Hispanic state narrative of national identity as a reaction against perceived "threat" of Afro-descendant groups (1996a, 1996b, 1998b, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b, 2009c). He has also written important contributions about Arab Palestinian and Jewish immigration to Honduras and the impact this influx had on nationality and national identity (1996b, 1996c, 1996d, 2004a, 2009a, 2009b). His more recent publications, specifically his memoir (2010) written about the 2009 coup and its devastating impact on cultural heritage and national identity, focuses on the institutional developments that emphasized a state policy of a mayanized, indo-Hispanic emphasis on national cultural heritage.

An important sub-discourse of mestizaje in the Honduran context is what Euraque has termed "mayanization" (1998a, 1999, 2002, 2004a). He argues that

by the second half of the 19th century, the Honduran state began to encourage the creation of an official national identity. This had as a goal, among other things, to educate the public through official discourse about the indigenous past and its role in the historical evolution of the country. This discourse presumes the inevitable collapse of the ‘remains’ of the indigenous civilizations, but also the salvage of the monumental ‘ruins’ that remained, inert, throughout the territory of the country. Therefore, the first approximation of the notion of ‘mayanization’ recognizes this process simply as an official emphasis on rescuing ruins as an ancestral legacy of ‘nationality’ constructing itself (Euraque 1998a:87, author’s translation).

This mayanization narrative was influenced by a variety of historical ideologies and occurrences and was ever consolidated throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. An early element of mayanization, promoted by early legislation protecting cultural heritage, simultaneously valorized the archaeological authority of monumental ruins and marginalized living indigenous cultures. In the early 20th century, it began to emphasize an indo-Hispanic understanding of mestizaje in reaction to what criollo elites viewed as the “threat of blackness” of established Afro-descendant populations and recent Afro-descendant immigrants who mainly worked on the banana plantations of the North Coast. Also from the early to mid-20th century, this increasingly dominant ideology incorporated the influences of U.S. archaeology, which generally accepted the Mexican ideology of mestizaje promoted in the 1920s.

Mayanization, then, exalts the ancient Maya civilization and excludes the diversity of indigenous groups (both ancient and living) by collapsing Honduras’s indigenous cultures into one generalized category of “the Maya,” thereby marginalizing and even erasing the influences and scope of the pluricultural historical and living indigenous groups in Honduras (Euraque 2004). This discourse of national identity as founded on the Maya and the subsequent state-sponsored mayanization has been ever

more consolidated in the mid- to late 20th and early 21st centuries, especially its promotion through tourism and in museum exhibits (see Euraque 1999, 2002, 2004).

In their momentous, but largely under-distributed, edited volume, *Memorias del Mestizaje: Cultura política en Centroamérica de 1920 al presente* (2004), editors Euraque, Gould, and Hale present a comparative analysis of cultural politics and policies in Central America from the 19th century until the present. The compiled articles explore the frequently assumed interpretative framework that nation-building processes developed in Central America in the 19th and 20th centuries. They refer to this framework as “national ideology of progress through mestizaje or, in a shorter way, ‘mestizo nationalism’” (Hale 2004:22, author’s translation). These authors have been central in examining what Gould (1998) terms “the myth of mestizaje” and have made other important recent contributions about mestizaje in Central America (Gould 1996, 2004; Hale 1996, 1996, 1997, 2004, 2008; Smith 1997, 2004; Warren 2001). This “myth” perpetuates Vasconcelos’s notion that a hybrid “cosmic race” or national culture, one that incorporates elements of indigenous, Spanish, and occasionally Afro-descendant traditions, will replace the indigenous cultures still living throughout Central America. Importantly, this volume also explores not only historical interpretations of state ideologies and policies that promoted a “mestizo nationalism,” but also explores the shift toward a redefinition of state ideology of national identity across Central America to one of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity.

Since the 1990s, countries throughout Latin America have begun to officially recognize the multicultural character of their societies, partly in response to the demands made on the states by the new ethnic social movements and partly in response to the

changing global discourse of indigenous rights and ethnic identity, by state institutions as well as transnational organizations. Such “policies of ‘multiculturalism’ [grant] cultural recognition and rights to ethnic groups historically marginalized within the nation” (M. Anderson 2009:8). The concept of multiculturalism is also referred to as a “new pluricultural mestizaje” (Euraque 2009c) in Honduras, but to avoid confusion with the prior understanding of mestizaje (predominantly an indo-Hispanic racial mixture), I refer to this newer ideology as multiculturalism. This process of multiculturalism was often a reaction to the hegemonic view of racial mixture generated by Latin American states in the post-colonial era through the discourse of mestizaje. Hale (2004:36) submits that although mestizaje has not been fully replaced, the shifting state discourse and policies emphasize “neoliberal multiculturalism.” Hale is critical of this redefinition toward a more inclusive national identity because he views it as another iteration of an “inclusivist ideology of exclusion” (2004:35) in the same vein as mestizaje. In this redefinition of official discourse toward multiculturalism, the state recognizes cultural plurality, and grants limited concessions to ethnic communities. In so doing, the state promotes an inclusivist, pluriethnic rhetoric, whose success is evidenced in the granting of superficial rights, but ultimately maintains a hegemonic stance toward ethnic communities. Fundamentally, Hale understands this “neoliberal multiculturalism” as a way in which the state can (and does) co-opt the ethnic social movements that are attempting to change their relationship with the state.

Other authors have made important recent contributions that explore the ethnicity of Afro-descendant populations in Honduras, specifically the Garifuna, English-speaking Bay Islanders, and West Indians, in state discourse and the national imagination (Amaya

Banegas 2005, 2008, 2011; Anderson 2008, 2009; Chambers 2010; N. González 1988). Some specifically focus on how Afro-descendant groups in Honduras are increasingly challenging the hegemonic indo-Hispanic mestizaje in state discourse and the national imagination (Anderson and England 2004; Brondo 2010). Other authors have also made important contributions about Arab, Palestinian, and Jewish immigration, examining its impact on regional and national notions of identity (Amaya Banegas 1997, 2000; N. González 1992; Pastor 2009).

Another critical body of literature exploring national identity in Latin America explores intersections of ethnicized diversity with cultural heritage from an archaeological perspective (Breglia 2006; Earle 2007; Habu, Fawcett, and Matsunaga 2008; Kane 2003; Kohl 1998; Meskell 2002; Mortensen and Hollowell 2009). This growing body of literature is intimately connected to the archaeological practice that has historically concentrated on the ancient, monumental Maya ruins of Copán, despite the fact that across the country exist “archaeological testimonies that prove a flourishing indigenous past and a region densely inhabited by populations, of whom, in many cases, we still do not have a precise identification” (Barahona and Rivas 2007a:88-89, author’s translation). This systematic omission of ethnic diversity in archaeological research has contributed to a suppression of historical ethnic diversity, upholding the notion of a uniform indigenous Maya past, thereby strengthening national discourse on a mayanized indo-Hispanic national identity. Recent studies explore the impact of the archaeological record on state constructions of national identity and contributions to an increasingly pluralistic understanding of indigenous history and thus, constructions of national identity (Joyce 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008; Lara Pinto 2006; Mortensen 2009; Rápalo Flores 2007).

The Maya emphasis of archaeological research is linked to the institutional structures of the Honduran state that are central to the arguments presented in the subsequent chapters: the IHAH, founded in 1952; the IHT, created in 1971; and, the SCAD, established in 1974. At the moment of their creation, these state institutions of power, in turn, were derived from constitutional principles that charged the Honduran state with protecting, conserving, and promoting national cultural heritage. The creation of the IHAH referenced the Constitution of 1936, which was the first to explicitly make the Honduran state responsible for the nation's "cultural treasures," at that time generally understood as monumental archaeological sites (Euraque [2011]). The creation of the IHT, on the other hand, derived from the constitution of 1965, which followed the traditions of the constitutions of 1936 and 1957. The creation of the SCAD in 1974 was a prelude to the broader principles inscribed in the current constitution, which dates from 1982, with respect to the state's responsibility to conserve, protect, and promote a more inclusive definition of national cultural heritage.

By the 1980s and 1990s, this constitutional jurisprudence of cultural heritage and subsequent creation of state agencies served as the basis for specific legislation that made the IHAH responsible for cultural heritage protection. The first *Ley para la protección del patrimonio cultural de la nación* [Law for the protection of the nation's cultural heritage] was passed in 1984.⁸ More relevant to the focus of this thesis is the updated *Ley para la protección del patrimonio cultural de la nación*, passed in 1997.⁹ Importantly, this revised law was passed after the indigenous and Afro-descendant pilgrimages in

⁸ Congreso Nacional, *Decreto No. 81-84*, 21 May 1994. Published in *La Gaceta*, 8 August 1984, pp. 1-4.

⁹ Congreso Nacional, *Decreto No. 220-97*, 27 December 1997. Published in *La Gaceta*, 21 February 1998, pp. 5-9.

1994 and, unlike its earlier iteration, is clearly connected to the growing interest and discourse on living cultures and their cultural expressions (including artisanry, language, religious celebrations, and more). This legislation, which is currently in force, incorporates a broader definition of what constitutes cultural heritage than its predecessor, including various elements of cultural expressions of living indigenous cultures. (See Appendix 2 for a detailed comparison of what constitutes cultural heritage as elaborated in both laws.) In July 2006, via lobbying by Minister of Culture Pastor Fasquelle and Dr. Euraque of the IHAH, the Honduran government ratified UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, three years after it was adopted in 2003. I arrived to begin my work with the IHAH in January 2007, only a few months after the Honduran state agencies most directly responsible for making the recently ratified 2003 Convention began designing and implementing national cultural policies derived from this important international document.

Drawing from the powers granted to the IHAH in its 1968 *Ley Orgánica*,¹⁰ Decree 220-97 explicitly grants the state (through the IHAH) the authority to authorize the creation and organization of museums—both public and private—that exhibit objects of national cultural heritage.¹¹ Thus, embedded in the administrative law of the IHAH and legislation of its jurisprudence, is the authority of the state to license all museums in the country and the responsibility to provide ongoing support to such institutions, hence

¹⁰ “Ley orgánica” is roughly translated to “fundamental law” or “law that forms the foundation of an agency or institution.” Congreso Nacional, *Decreto No. 118*, 16 October 1968. Published in *La Gaceta*, 24 December 1968, pp. 1-3.

¹¹ Congreso Nacional, *Decreto No. 118*, 16 October 1968, especially art. 6. Published in *La Gaceta*, 24 December 1968, pp. 1-3. Congreso Nacional, *Decreto No. 220-97*, 27 December 1997. Published in *La Gaceta*, 21 February 1998, pp. 5-9, especially art. 48.

establishing an explicit relationship between museums and national identity as an official state discourse.

The museum, maintains Benedict Anderson, is one of three state institutions of power that collectively “profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion—the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry” (2006:163-164). The museum, together with the census and map, were institutions that shaped the imagined political community of the nation. In the Honduran literature, these state institutions of power have rarely been addressed by scholars who examine questions of the nation, nationalism, and national identity.

Drawing on Anderson, I examine certain state institutions of power. In particular, I examine a public policy-making and economic development project (PROPAITH) and three museums (the MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN) with respect to cultural heritage and its relationship to national identity. My examination departs from the existing literature about contemporary Honduran national identity by presenting an analysis of four state institutions of power within the broader state institutionality of cultural heritage.

Within the Honduran context, Euraque and Barahona discuss census and census categories, which, throughout the colonial period, “became more visibly and exclusively racial [as] religious identity [...] gradually disappeared as a primary census classification” (B. Anderson 2006:164-165). Euraque (1994, 1996, 2003a, 2004a, 2009c) explores the range of ethnic and racial census categories in Honduran historiography since the late 19th century, how they concealed the nation’s profound diversity, how they promoted a homogenized understanding of an indo-Hispanic mestizo, and how they influenced the

transition from racialized categories of human classification to one of ethnicities.

Davidson (2011) provides a lengthy examination of ethnic demo-geographical construction in Honduras based on the 2001 national census.

Anderson maintains that “common experience [provided] a territorially specific imagined community” (2006:122). This is important for the Honduran construction of an ethnicized national identity because, since the mid-1980s, social scientists have presented maps demarcating the distribution of indigenous and Afro-descendant groups. Linda Newson’s 1986 map of colonial ethnic localization provides, in many regards, the basis for more contemporary ethnic maps. By 2000, PROPAITH published an ethnic artisan map (see Appendix 5), which was widely distributed particularly to areas of tourism.

In terms of most communication theories and common sense, a map is a scientific abstraction of reality. A map merely represents something which already exists objectively ‘there.’ In [this context], this relationship was reversed. A map anticipated spatial reality, not vice versa. In other words, a map was a model for, rather than a model of, what it purported to represent (Thongchai, cited in Anderson 2006:173).

Although the preceding quotation references imperialist era mapping techniques in Southeast Asia, it is directly relevant to PROPAITH’s ethnic artisan map. Employing “totalizing classification” techniques similar to those used in elaborating censuses (B. Anderson 2006:173), PROPAITH’s map demarcated ethnic “boundaries” or “borders” within the geography of the nation-state.

Finally, Anderson discusses the museum as an institution of power and the “museumizing imagination” (2006:178) as an interconnected process and practice of legitimizing the nation’s ancestry and “imagining of history and power” (2006:185). As Anderson (2006:180-181) discusses, these processes are directly linked to profoundly

politicized initiatives focused on monumental archaeology—Copán, in the Honduran context—which in turn were becoming more closely linked with tourism. Though Anderson illustrates his points with examples from imperialist Asia, in contemporary Honduras, similar processes were occurring within the neo-colonialist context. I address these issues in depth in Chapter Four.

Cultural Politics and Honduran Institutional Politics

In their edited volume about mestizaje in Central America, Euraque, Gould, and Hale (2004) promote a more nuanced conceptualization of the term “cultural politics” than what is commonly presented for this region. Hale maintains that this expression has become “ubiquitous” in recent English language history and social science literature, but has largely not extended into Latin American work (2004:19). He offers two succinct, interrelated understandings of the term, as it has been commonly utilized:

- 1) a substantial change in the focus of analysis, directed at the political repercussions of cultural difference in a given society;
- 2) a mode of analysis, which directs special attention to the way in which social actors are constituted through discursive practices (Hale 2004:20, author’s translation).

He then offers a third understanding, which “incorporates the emphasis on the narrative constitution of identities, but it also situates the analysis precisely in the sphere of the political process” (2004:21, author’s translation). This understanding focuses on the “political interactions [between the state and ethnic groups], and on the political results or consequences of these relationships” (Hale 2004:21, author’s translation).

Few serious publications exist about the institutional policies and practices in the cultural heritage sector in Honduras. The overwhelming consensus in relevant literature is that the cultural politics of the Honduran state have been disorganized, incoherent, full of

paradoxes, and have existed mostly on paper, not extending beyond legal rhetoric (Euraque 2010; M. Mejía 2004; Pastor Fasquelle [2011]; Quesada 1977). Pastor Fasquelle ([2011]) and Euraque (2004, 2010) examine the historical institutionality of cultural politics and processes since the liberal reform era and since the creation of the IHAH in 1952, respectively. Quesada (1977) presents an overview of cultural elements and processes since conquest and discusses institutional and organizational stakeholders of cultural heritage. Mario Hernán Mejía's compilation (2004) explores the modern juncture of cultural politics and national identity through a dozen contributions, which range from the conformation of Honduras as a nation-state to local initiatives in strengthening national identity.

Although the state has developed weak cultural policies, it has not developed a “specific policy toward indigenous peoples” (S. González 2007:78, author's translation; see also, Pastor Fasquelle 2007). Herranz (2001) examines the educational and linguistic policies implemented by the state since the colonial period; Ávalos (2009) discusses state policies toward archaeological cultural heritage; others (Alvarado Garcia 1958; Cruz 1983, 1984; [IHAH] 2007; S. González 2007) present an overview of legislation specifically directed to indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, calling for increased awareness and state commitment, but typically without extended discussions or analysis.

Intersections of Museums and Nationalism

As Anderson (2006:163-185) and others have demonstrated (Earle 2007; Boswell and Evans 1999; Kaplan 1996; McLean 1998; Schildkrout 1996; Steiner 1995; White 1997), museums have long been repositories of national heritage. Only recently have

museum professionals begun to question and examine the collections and the manner in which they are presented to interpret the past (Kaplan 1996:9). Within the past two and a half decades, there has been a substantial increase in the literature about nationalism and national identity. At the beginning of this development, Steiner (1995:6) contends “that the study of nationalism in the context of museums remains a largely untapped area of study.” Today, this is no longer the case, as the literature clearly demonstrates (see, for example, Boswell and Evans 1999; Kaplan 1999; Kreps 2003; McLean 1998; Risnicoff de Gorgas 1999; Schildkrout 1995; Steiner 1995; White 1997).

Museums, particularly national or ethnographic ones, are not neutral spaces. Rather, “museums, and the museumizing imagination, are both profoundly political” (B. Anderson 2006:178). Because of their colonial European roots, historically, Latin American museums systematically denied the pluriculturalism of the American continent in presentations of official history or national identity, resulting in a distorted image of the identity (or identities) of the nation-state (Risnicoff de Gorgas 1999:52-53). Especially in Latin America, where national identities are multicultural or consist of “the concurrence of identity populations” (Risnicoff de Gorgas 1999:54), museums occupy an empowered position of reinforcing presentations of a collective, national identity. Although private museums themselves do not *define* national identity, the presentation and interpretation of their collections certainly play a role in disseminating narratives and notions of national identity in the collective imagination (McLean 1998; Risnicoff de Gorgas 1999). For the past two and a half decades, the complex relationships between national identity and culture, on the one hand, and museum collections and displays, on the other, have become ever more central to museum disciplines. Recognizing the

pluricultural and multiethnic constructions of nation-states, a central question that needs to be considered when examining displays of national identity is: whose identity is being presented, promoted, and reinforced?

Museums have traditionally emphasized their artifact or cultural property collections. Since the 1970s, cultural property¹² has constituted “one of the basic elements of [...] national culture” and peoples’ identity (UNESCO 1970:135). Since acquisition of cultural property is a way of “appropriat[ing] identity” (Barkan 2002:17), cultural property that is appropriated by the state is imbued with historical collective significance and becomes a common focus and symbol of national identity. National identity, then, is a political construct. As repositories of artifacts accorded national, collective significance, museums and “the museumizing imagination are [also] both profoundly political” (B. Anderson 2006:178). However, in the latter part of the twentieth century, national identity was consistently understressed by globalization and its narratives, which led to a contradiction in the grand narratives of globalization and that of emergent national consciousness. Barkan (2002) summarizes, “[c]ultural nationalism versus universalism has become the major divisive issue in the politics of cultural patrimony” (2002:25). In the 1950s and 1960s, after the end of World War II, the political idea of “modernization theory” prevailed in Western nations. A central argument of this theory was “that democracy is impossible without modernization, and modernization requires the homogenization of political culture” (Hefner 2001:2).

¹² “The modern concept of ‘cultural property’ was coined by the Hague Convention of 1954 [...] and further enhanced in [the early 1970s] by UNESCO’s definition[s]” set forth in the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (136) and the 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Barkan 2002: 21-22).

Following the Cold War, the trend of grand narratives of global modernization was paralleled by the upswing of national consciousness (McLean 1998:244), and subsequently fell out of favor to focus on both local and national histories as critical domains in understanding and presenting identities (White 1997:4). Global developments since the Cold War (for example, increased immigration to and ethnic resurgence in Western nations [Hefner 2001:203]) have led to increased attention on “moral demands” (Barkan 2002:16) toward previously colonized and exploited nations and ethnic and cultural minority groups (Simpson 1996:7; Barkan 2002:25). Within the museum world, the emergence of this self-reflexive posture has resulted in increased attention on the cultural property of past victims and historically marginalized ethnic groups (Barkan 2002:25).

The systematic omission of minority and marginalized groups in nationalist discourses presented a more cohesive and homogenized notion of national identity than was actually the case. Because of this historic exclusion, current declarations of national identity often need to “address questions of minorities and ethnic groups” (Kaplan 1994:7). Historically, museums have contributed to this discourse on national identity by excluding or misrepresenting minority groups. For example, Schildkrout demonstrates that despite official discourse of Namibia as a “racial mosaic” (1995:70), museums are remiss to incorporate this interpretation into their collections and displays. As evidenced in museums and museum exhibits (though also subtly in national discourse), this ethnic diversity is overlooked and an homogenized image of “ethnic groups” is presented, thereby erasing the very notions of pluricultural and multiracial diversity that is being offered forth (Schildkrout 1995:68-70).

Now, however, there is an increased focus on historically marginalized groups in museum studies (Sandell 2002). Despite this recent shift, many studies of shared histories of national identity frequently “presume an inevitable, binary opposition between hegemonic state-sponsored memory and marginalized counter-memories” (White 1997:5), which continues to advance a simplistic understanding of national identity and local, indigenous, ethnic identities.

Honduran Museums

Very little critical literature exists about museums in Honduras. The most comprehensive contribution is Aguilar’s 1991 historical synthesis about the country’s museums, historical houses, and the *Parque Arqueológico de Copán* [Copán Archaeological Park] (PAC), which he considers a site museum (1991:36-42).¹³ He details the origins and history of 12 museums, some of which no longer exist—for example, the National Museum and the museum of mineralogy and zoology that used to be housed in the building that the MIN now occupies. Despite its important contributions, this book is outdated and does not include entries of the country’s newest museums, including the MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN. Importantly, this book was published by the IHAH and thus focuses on state museums, not privately funded ones. Other articles appear in the IHAH’s semi-annual publication, *Yaxkin*, that discuss museums throughout the country. One contribution, written in 1976 by a specialist from the Organization of the American States (OAS), proposes a nation-wide network of museums, organized into a hierarchy of different kinds of regional museums, as well as local and site museums (Lacouture 1976). Other articles reflect on the achievements of

¹³ See Silverman 2006 for a more in depth discussion about archaeological site museums, particularly in Latin America. The PAC, using Silverman’s understanding, is better defined as “site as museum.”

the IHAH's Museum Department, providing an historical overview of the department's accomplishments (Echigoyen 2002; López Nol 2002). In 1994, this department published the first—and so far only—booklet in a proposed series to disseminate “themes that are illustrative of the content of the country's museums” (López Nol 1994). Not unsurprisingly, this publication focused on themes displayed at the regional Maya archaeological museum of Copán.

The only other significant contribution about a Honduran museum centers on the Copán Sculpture Museum, which was inaugurated in 1996 (Fash 2011). Situated within the PAC, this expansive museum was the result of a collaborative effort between the GOH, the IHAH, the local NGO Asociación Copán, and a USAID funded project, and is a testament to the state's unwavering commitment to the PAC and promoting ancient Maya monumental heritage. Written by a central member of the development, design, and implementation team, this book presents the origins, historical trajectories, implementation, and permanent exhibits of the museum. While an important contribution about this particular project, it neither presents a critical analysis of the intersections of monumental archaeology, museum exhibition, and state discourses on national identity, nor does it contextualize the museum within a broader framework of other Honduran museums. Other literature mentions one or both of the main museums in Copán (the Copán Sculpture Museum and the Regional Museum of Maya Archaeology located on the town square), but typically within the broader context of the archaeology industry of Copán and the PAC (for example, Mortenson 2005, 2006).

Most other literature about museums in Honduras are newspaper articles that reach a local readership and potential museum audience (see, for example, Baide 2009;

La Prensa 2002; Rodríguez 2009a, 2009b; Saldañas 2008). They are generally non-analytical or critical, instead geared toward promoting the museums, their exhibits, and services. Some articles appear in English language weeklies that promote the newer and more “modern” museums of the MIN, Chiminike, and the Copán Sculpture Museum; these are particularly directed toward an international tourist audience, again with the purpose of promoting the museums (see, for example, Pepin 2006).

A diagnostic conducted in 2006 by the *Red Centroamericana de Museos* [Central American Network of Museums] (REDCAMUS) explores the supply and demand of five museums in Honduras, their exhibitions, and services (Pilar Herrero U.2006). Through basic survey questionnaires and visitor exit interviews, this diagnostic presents and interprets statistics about museum administration and functions, as well as visitor profiles and patterns of visitation for five museums in Honduras, including the MAHSPS. Despite some obvious interpretative weaknesses—as well as its limited scope—this diagnostic is unique in its focus and represents an important contribution about institutional elements and visitor reactions to museums in Honduras. A more inclusive study of this nature would be extremely beneficial in better understanding Honduran museums.

Multi-sited Ethnography

In examining these four state institutions of power, I employ George Marcus’s methodological approach toward a multi-sited ethnography that engages multiple domains of research in multiple time periods and geographical spaces. He explains that

multi-sited research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography (Marcus 1995:105).

This design strategy seeks to “examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space” that single-site locations cannot (Marcus 1995:96).

Marcus maintains that not all sites in a multi-sited approach should be treated by a uniform set of fieldwork practices, or by the same intensity.

Methodology

Since this is a multi-sited institutional ethnography that explores diverse field sites, including geographical spaces as well as conceptual entities and phenomena, my methodology reflects this theoretical framing by “following connections, associations, and putative relationships” (Marcus 1995:97). As I discussed in the Introduction, my positionality greatly affected this research process. My experiences working in the cultural heritage sector in Honduras influenced my original research proposal, which proposed a collaborative museological project with members of a particular ethnic community. Methodology in this original proposal incorporated elements that were simultaneously “more” and “less” traditional in ethnographic practice. More traditional in the sense that I would undertake ethnographic fieldwork in a particular indigenous community. More contemporary or experimental techniques included a collaborative, participatory project between members of this particular indigenous group and a regional museum to develop an exhibit that explored themes of ethnicity, national identity, and self-representation. I designed this to be a more grass-roots, bottom-up initiative that created opportunities for agency in this particular indigenous community, while challenging the more prominent state-sponsored, top-down designations of ethnic

participation in national identity. I also incorporated archival research into my methods, another non-traditional method of investigation, at least in ethnography.

However, during fieldwork in Honduras, things changed—a not unusual occurrence in anthropological research. My fieldwork time was cut in half, which meant that I needed to dramatically alter my focus. Though I had been following my proposed timeline, in the first months I primarily dedicated myself to archival research and an internship at the MAHSPS. The second half of my fieldwork was to take place in an indigenous community, employing more common techniques of participant-observation, oral histories, as well as workshops and focus groups leading to the development of a collaborative museum exhibit. The change in my research schedule meant that I was unable to carry out this second part of my research. And since financial and time constraints prohibited me from returning to Honduras to try to continue with my original plan of action, I needed to redefine my focus.

Because I had already concluded my fieldwork, I needed, therefore, to develop research questions that I could explore using the documentation I had already gathered and the research I had already conducted. During the process of revising and organizing my research, I realized that much of it centered on institutional processes and relationships within the cultural heritage sector (a secondary focus in my original proposal). I refocused my attention to these institutional processes and this thesis—reflecting this general research process—is an institutional ethnography that explores how varied institutional processes contributed to the redefinition of ethnicity in Honduran national identity. It would be disingenuous to imply that this was an ideal progression in

developing this thesis; however, it worked well. I discuss the limitations of this study, including those of the research process, in the Conclusion.

Archival Research

I began my research at the ethno-historic archive of the IHAH, located in the CDIHH in the *Antigua Casa Presidencial* in downtown Tegucigalpa. My purpose here was to gather historical information about the PROPAITH project as well as other state-sponsored initiatives, investigations, and ethnographic work that challenge older (pre-1994) notions of national identity, and ones that engaged with a more inclusive presentation of ethnic identity. I also focused on documentation of the institutional relationship that the IHAH shared with museums throughout the country, specifically the MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN. The ethno-historic archive was established recently, under Euraque's administration of the IHAH. Although in 1987 the IHAH included a Central Archive in its organizational structure, efforts at organizing and administering such a project fell woefully short. By the time Euraque arrived at the IHAH in mid-2006, the space where institutional documentation accumulated was known as the "dead archive" (Canizales Vijil 2007:189). With a clear commitment to the IHAH's history unit, ignored in previous administrations, in December 2006, Euraque formulated a project to revalorize this extensive documentation, which has become "a strong stimulus for interdisciplinary scientific research" (Canizales Vijil 2007:190). Conducting research in this institutional archive was central to my thesis because it includes extensive documentation on institutional structures, projects, and relationships of the IHAH. Additionally, it represented an exciting opportunity because it is still a greatly under-utilized resource in Honduran social science research (Canizales Vijil 2007).

Participant-Observation

In addition to my fieldwork and archival research in Honduras, I carried out a two month internship at the MAHSPS. In this context, I engaged with the characteristically ethnographic method of participant-observation. I helped install and de-install temporary exhibits; took part in the occasional staff meeting; and ate lunch with my colleagues on a daily basis. Although I enjoyed a good working relationship with the director of the museum, Doña María Teresa de María Campos Castelló de Pastor, and her staff prior to my internship, because of collaborative activities with the IHAH from 2007-2009, during the internship I was able to get to know them on different levels—some on a more personal level and all within the context of their daily tasks (as opposed to unusual or infrequent events with the IHAH). I came to have a much better understanding of the complexities and difficulties of the museum's daily operation. My conversations with the director were augmented with conversations with staff, who frequently provided a different perspective. Observing behaviors and actions, I came to understand that these sometimes contradicted rhetoric. By the end of my internship, I came to have a clear understanding of the institutional structure of this particular museum.

Museum Visits and Exhibit Analyses

I gathered much information through multiple visits to the MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN. In these visits, I explored the exhibit content in detail, documenting as much as possible. In my analysis, I also used information gathered from museum visits to all three museums during 2007-2009, when I was working on particular projects for the IHAH. In my discussions of these museum exhibits, presented in Chapter Four and the Conclusion, I engage in multiple kinds of analysis, namely textual analysis and content

analysis. A textual analysis “uses qualitative procedures [for] analyzing the contents of documents [...] to assess the significance of particular ideas or meanings” (Jupp 2006:297). Particularly for the MAHSPS exhibit, I analyze all exhibit labels (which range from five to more than one thousand words) focusing on the inclusion and exclusion of particular ethno-cultural groups, discussions of cultural activities, and the emphasis on connections to a mayanized Mesoamerican culture area. For all three museums, I also engage in content analysis, which examines broader elements of the exhibits, including content in visual imagery and the spatial distribution of a particular topic, for an overall interpretation of the displays. (See Appendix 10 for my criteria of museum analyses.)

In my discussions for all four institutions of power, including PROPAITH, the overarching approach is of discourse analysis, which is a “detailed exploration of political, personal, media [and] academic ‘talk’ and ‘writing’ about a subject” (Jupp 2006:74). Through my analyses about state discourse of ethnicity in national identity, I explore how “knowledges are organized, carried, and reproduced in particular ways and through particular institutions” (Jupp 2006:74).

Informal Interviews

During my internship at the MAHSPS, I enjoyed many extended, informal conversations with the museum’s director, Doña Teresa, and her husband, former two-time Minister of Culture, Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle (1994-1998 and 2006-2009). These conversations ranged in content, but frequently returned to issues facing the MAHSPS and more general topics about the cultural heritage sector. In addition to being pleasant conversations with actors intimately engaged with the cultural politics of the region and nation, these conversations provided valuable information about institutional structures

and processes that were contextualized within a historical framework. I also enjoyed brief, informal conversations with the director of the MIN, in which we discussed the proposed renovation project of the final room of the permanent exhibit to be more inclusive of ethnic diversity.

In hindsight, returning home after my fieldwork, I realized that I had gathered significant valuable information about the four central institutions in this thesis during my work with the IHAH from 2007-2009. During that time, in the context of my work with the IHAH, I enjoyed many conversations and interactions with a variety of stakeholders in the cultural heritage sector, including actors—both central and peripheral—in developing and implementing cultural policies in Honduras. Some of these actors were closely involved in the four particular institutions this thesis examines.

Explanation of Timeframe: 1994-2006

The dozen years between 1994 and 2006 represent a critical juncture in official institutional processes directly related to cultural heritage that contributed to a redefinition of ethnicity in state discourse about Honduran national identity. The indigenous pilgrimages of 1994 represent that first major, visible step toward challenging the state and asserting an active political conscience, and the beginnings of an official shift toward considering the indigenous problematic and redefining notions of national identity to be ethnically inclusive. The cultural institutions that I examine came into being in this timeframe. The MAHSPS was inaugurated on 25 January 1994, Chiminike on 1 November 2003, and the MIN on 10 January 2006. In addition, the IHAH launched the PROPATITH project in May 1995, which lasted until June 2006. Of course, the events and processes that developed within this timeframe are products of complex, deep socio-

cultural and historical processes that have occurred since conquest. Therefore, it is imperative to address some of these historical processes, before 1994, to better understand modern occurrences and processes. I aim to do this in Chapter Two.

A key factor in determining the end-date for this timeframe was the fact that the Minister of Culture, Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle, and the director of the IHAH, Darío Euraque, appointed in 2006 under the recently elected Zelaya administration, radically shifted the priorities and political cultural agendas of these two institutions. Motivated in part from the successes under his previous term as Minister of Culture under the Reina administration (1994-1998), Pastor Fasquelle endeavored to implement a new institutional agenda in the cultural sector—one that “de-Copanized” the vision of the IHAH since its founding in 1952 (Pastor Fasquelle [2011]:19; Euraque 2012:92). A foremost critic of the institutional mayanization of the state, Euraque shared this general vision.

Efforts to diversify archaeological research to regions outside of Copán, as well as an increased emphasis on historical research, marked a radical shift in the IHAH’s agenda toward promoting a more comprehensive ethno-historical understanding. Regional and local initiatives advanced participatory projects and collaboration with diverse populations. I took part in many of these initiatives and coordinated a series of workshops designed to educate and raise awareness about national and localized cultural heritage; these workshops strengthened ties between various stakeholders and served as a forum in which to exchange and develop ideas geared to protecting and promoting sites of cultural heritage as well as developing a sense of ownership in local populations who had been systematically overlooked or ignored. In order to implement the IHAH’s new agenda,

extensive restructuring occurred within the institute. Indeed, as Euraque reflects, “on an ideological level, overcoming the mayanization of Honduras became one of the most important challenges that the IHAH would face between 2006-2009” (2010:28, author’s translation). This administration marked a critical shift in institutional policies in the culture sector. The coup of 2009 had devastating effects on this novel agenda, and quickly and forcefully ended these initiatives.

For various reasons I decided against examining the achievements and contributions of this administration. For one thing, the mid- to long-term effects of the coup on these projects were still unfolding—and continue to unfold.¹⁴ In addition, I no longer enjoyed access to the institutions in the sense that I did when working for the IHAH between 2007-2009. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I was too close to the goals and visions of Pastor Fasquelle and Euraque’s administrations; not only did I doubt my ability to present a balanced analysis, but I could not, morally and ethically, implicitly support the coup administration by trying to work with it. However, future research on the cultural politics from 2006 until the present is necessary. Such research would encompass the widespread achievements of the 2006-2009 administration in promoting a more inclusive, diverse redefinition of national identity in Honduras, as well as the

¹⁴ See for example, El Heraldo, 23 November, 2011, “Fajardo admite que solo llega a trabajar dos días,” <http://archivo.elheraldo.hn/Ediciones/2011/11/24/Noticias/Fajardo-admite-que-solo-llega-a-trabajar-dos-dias>; El Heraldo, 1 December 2011, “Notifican informe de corrupción en Cultura,” <http://www.elheraldo.hn/Secciones-Principales/Pais/Notifican-informe-de-corrupcion-en-Cultura>; El Heraldo, 1 December 2011, “Payasadas y abusos en Secretaría de Cultura,” <http://www.elheraldo.hn/Secciones-Principales/Pais/Payasadas-y-abusos-en-Secretaria-de-Cultura>; El Heraldo, 13 December 2011, “Presidente suspende a Bernard y a Godofredo de la Secretaría de Cultura y Deportes,” <http://www.elheraldo.hn/Secciones-Principales/Pais/Presidente-suspende-a-Bernard-y-a-Godofredo-de-la-Secretaria-de-Cultura-y-Deportes>; El Heraldo, 17 January 2012, “Nombran a nuevo ministro de Cultura,” <http://www.elheraldo.hn/Secciones-Principales/Pais/Nombran-a-nuevo-ministro-de-Cultura>. All accessed 27 January 2012. Invitation received by email on 17 April 2011 to attend “Conversatorio: la problemática del sitio arqueológico de Copán, Patrimonio cultural de la Humanidad,” 18 April 2012, UNAH.

devastating effects that the coup had on this agenda and specific projects. Euraque's memoir (2010) provides a crucial first analysis of these issues.

Conclusion

In the mid-1990s, within the regional and global context of increased ethnic social movements, indigenous and Afro-descendant groups in Honduras descended on the country's capital in a series of organized pilgrimages to demand government action on economic, political, social, and cultural rights. Emerging from the regional historical context, from conquest to the more immediate roots in peasant and labor movements, these pilgrimages marked the consolidation of ethnic social movements in the country. The eventual openness of the new government under President Reina (1994-1998) to these demands coincided with global trends of increased political empowerment of indigenous groups. In fact, the strong political organization of the nation's ethnic minority groups in the face of the 2009 coup d'état against Honduras's democratically elected president, clearly indicates the progress in development and organization of (and between) indigenous and Afro-descendant communities.

Reina's administration marked a significant cleavage from prior state positions toward ethnic minority groups, particularly in the cultural heritage sector. The emergency government commission created to respond to the pilgrimages was headed by the Minister of Culture, Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle. During the course of Reina's administration, the government established various state agencies, institutions, and projects and passed important legislation that engaged with the country's indigenous and Afro-descendant populations.

However, the following statement from Pastor Fasquelle clearly synthesizes the historical policies of state cultural heritage institutions toward Honduras's ethnic minorities:

In Honduras there has not been, historically speaking, a clear consciousness of the modern state [...] with respect to the need to recognize, locate, identify, and respond, in an organized and institutional manner, to the diverse ethnic minority groups in the country [...] There does not exist in the Honduran state an administrative authority that implements a defined politics toward ethnic groups. [...] Ethnic groups have been marginalized [in the state apparatus], because before, only the SCAD and the IHAH paid attention to them, with some explicit functions that are directly related to indigenous culture. They have been legally in charge of overseeing and protecting, supposedly, that cultural dimension of ethnic groups (Pastor Fasquelle 2007:12, author's translation).

It is therefore critical to examine state institutions that are, and have been, legally responsible for cultural heritage of indigenous and Afro-descendant groups. The following chapter focuses on this institutional history, examining the roles of the SCAD, IHAH, and IHT, always cognizant of the conceptual framework derived from the work of Anderson, Hobsbawm, Marcus, Euraque, and others.

CHAPTER 2: NATIONAL DISCOURSES AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONALITY IN HONDURAS

Honduras has had cultural politics, but one that lacks an administration that presents it as a coherent and harmonic whole, since it is scattered in various instruments and legal systems, the fruit of multiple decisions made at different levels, in different eras, and with different objectives.

—Alba Alonso de Quesada, 1977:66, author’s translation.

Cultural policies do not exist in Honduras, nor do museum guidelines. Knowledge is not institutionalized.

—María del Pilar Herrero U. 2006:6, author’s translation.

Introduction

Unlike its U.S. counterpart, modern Honduran Constitutions, including the current one that dates from 1982, regularly defined cultural heritage as a relevant state matter.

Though the government position on “cultural politics” or “identity politics” is fragmented, incoherent, and even contradictory, understanding the historical dimension of the state’s role in the contemporary relationship between society, culture, and identity is necessary in order to appreciate the influence of PROPAITH, MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN in the cultural and ethnic repositioning of Honduran national identity beginning in the mid-1990s.

The first pursuit of post-colonial, state sponsored Honduran “cultural authenticity” began in the 1820s and 1830s among elite actors in the newly formed nation (Quesada 1977:22). After the independence period, policies implemented during the Liberal Reform era (1876-1920) lay “the foundations of cultural institutionalality” (Pastor Fasquelle [2011]:1). Characterized by the consolidation and modernization of the nation-state, government efforts for political and cultural unification were implemented

particularly through the institutionalization of secular public education, including early discourses about the role of museums in national life (Chambers 2010:21-22; Herranz 2001:189, 201; Quesada 1977:21-22). In fact, official educational policies were intimately linked to national cultural politics in Honduras until 1975, when the IHAH separated from the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* [Ministry of Public Education] (SEP). Post-WWI, foreign political, economic, and military interventions—particularly the influence of transnational companies and the emergence of the U.S. as a regional economic power—led to an “acute crisis of conscious” (Pastor Fasquelle [2011]:4) in the 1920s, and a revived sense of Honduran nationalism in response to the foreign influences on traditional culture (Quesada 1977:30; Chambers 2010:6). In particular, in the late 1920s and 1930s this context was deeply influenced by the ethnographic and national cultural politics of discourses on mestizaje and national identity promoted following the Mexican Revolution, including the role that a Ministry of Education should play in that process.

Honduras’s 1936 Constitution, written under the dictatorship of General Tiburcio Carías Andino (1933-1948), primarily as a means of legally legitimizing his mandate, was the first that explicitly defined “cultural treasure,” precursor of cultural heritage. Defined primarily as archaeological ruins and objects of “ancient populations,” the 1936 Constitution called for the preservation of this “cultural treasure” as an official national mandate.¹ This directive has been amplified in the subsequent Constitutions (1957, 1965, and 1982), calling for the conservation, protection, promotion, dissemination, and education of national culture, cultural values, and cultural heritage (Euraque [2011]).

¹ Honduran Constitution, 1936, title 8, art. 157 (Euraque [2011]).

Between the late 1960s and 1980s, the GOH signed heritage and cultural preservation conventions with UNESCO and other transnational agencies that linked the expanding national commitment to cultural heritage to international mandates, norms, and protocols.² The current constitution (1982) is the first to recognize “native cultures” as part of this cultural heritage: “The state will preserve and stimulate native cultures as genuine expressions of national folklore, popular art, and artisanry.”³ Although it recognizes “native” cultural heritage, the Honduran Constitution does not expressly recognize the nation’s ethnic plurality, as other Latin American countries recently have (Jackson and Warren 2005:551; van Cott 2010:390)

Early legislation in Honduras concerned with cultural heritage overwhelmingly emphasized Copán, the Maya site of monumental archaeology in the extreme western region of the country—a legacy that marks contemporary cultural heritage politics. The first piece of national legislation that dealt directly with what is now considered ethnic “cultural heritage” dates to 1845, and calls to protect the “monuments of antiquity that exist in Copán.”⁴ A subsequent accord in 1874 placed the archaeological site under the direct protection of the GOH. The earliest attempts to create a national museum similarly emphasized the role of Copán in national cultural heritage legislation. A presidential

² For example, ICOMOS 1966, Venice Charter; UNESCO, 1972, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, ratified in Honduras on 18 September 1978; UN, 1966, *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights*, ratified in Honduras on 18 June 1980; UNESCO, 1970, *UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*, ratified by Honduras on 19 March 1979; UN, 1976, *Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological, Historical, and Artistic Heritage of the American Nations*, ratified by Honduras on 7 March 1983. See OEI 2004:25-28.

³ Honduran Constitution, decreto no. 131, 11 January 1982, ch. 8, art. 173.

⁴ Cámara de los Representantes del Estado de Honduras, *Acuerdo No. 4*, 28 January 1845, cited in Borbolla and Rivas 1953:27

decree from 1889 mandated the creation of a national museum in Copán⁵ and not, for example, in the capital city of Tegucigalpa or the colonial capital of Comayagua in the center of the country. Although this legislation recognized that other monumental sites existed across the country, it established that those archaeological structures were to be transferred to Copán to be included in the national museum there. After approximately a century and a half of different legislative initiatives focused on protecting and conserving Copán, these efforts culminated in the inscription of the site into UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1980⁶ and as a national monument in 1982.⁷

The transition to state modernization and expansion following the Carias dictatorship (1933-1948) established the IHAH, recognized as the first “public cultural institution” (Pastor Fasquelle [2011]:8, author's translation) and which continues to be a central actor in cultural politics. A dependency of the SEP until 1969, the IHAH was directly linked to state institutionality of education as well as tourism, a legacy which continues to influence its endeavors today. Understanding the historical interrelations between cultural heritage, education, and tourism is critical to understanding the widespread influence that PROPAITH, the MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN maintain today.

Six months after the IHAH was established, the first iteration of the Honduran Institute of Tourism (IHT) was founded on 27 January 1953, originally a dependency of

⁵ Presidente de la República, *Acuerdo por el cual se dispone la fundación de un Museo Nacional en Copán*, 24 July 1889, cited in Borbolla and Rivas 1953:28-30.

⁶ UNESCO, 29 September 1980, *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, CC-80/CONF.016/10. <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/repcom80.htm#129>, accessed 1 March 2012.

⁷ Presidente de la República, 24 June 1982, *Acuerdo No. 185*. Document in possession of author.

the Ministry of Foreign Relations.⁸ The second version, established in February 1962, directly linked the *Instituto de Fomento del Turismo* [Institute of Tourism Promotion] to the IHAH, calling for a delegate from the IHAH to form part of the IHT's board of directors.⁹ This designation was reciprocated in the IHAH's 1968 *Ley Orgánica*, cementing the direct institutional relationship between cultural heritage and tourism.

Almost 25 years after the IHAH was established, the military government in power created the *Secretaría de Cultura, Turismo e Información* [Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Information] (SECTIN) in 1975.¹⁰ Recognizing the state's duty to "preserve and disseminate cultural values," this Ministry was charged with "fostering and promoting civic, moral, cultural, and historic values that contribute to the formation of the Honduran [...] nationality."¹¹ Over the next two decades, this ministry was significantly restructured four times—becoming the *Secretaría de Cultura y Turismo* [Ministry of Culture and Tourism] (SECTUR) in 1978¹²; the *Secretaría de Cultura* [Ministry of Culture] in 1993 (OEI 2004:10); and the *Secretaría de Cultura y Artes* [Ministry of Culture and Arts] in 1994.¹³ Currently designated the *Secretaría de Cultura, Artes y Deportes* [Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Sports] (SCAD),¹⁴ it separated from tourism in 1993 when the *Secretaría de Turismo* [Ministry of Tourism] (SETUR) was

⁸ *Decreto No. 034-1953*, 27 January 1953. Document in possession of author.

⁹ Congreso Nacional, *Decreto No. 43*, 28 February 1962, art. 8. Published in *La Gaceta*, 7 March 1962.

¹⁰ Jefe de Estado en Consejo de Ministros, *Decreto No. 234*, 23 June 1975. Document in possession of author; *Revista Extra*, April 1971, "El Ministerio de Culturam" No. 169, Tegucigalpa, pp. 3. Document in possession of author. Citing the 1965 Constitution, this document calls for the establishment of a Ministry of Culture separate from the SEP four years prior to its actual creation.

¹¹ Jefe de Estado en Consejo de Ministros, *Decreto No. 234*, 23 June 1975, art. 1c. Document in possession of author.

¹² Junta Militar de Gobierno en Consejo de Ministros, *Decreto 665*, 16 August. Published in *La Gaceta*, 18 August 1978.

¹³ Presidente de la República, *Acuerdo No. 397*, 21 September 1994. Published in *La Gaceta* 29 July 1995, p. 24.

¹⁴ Congreso Nacional, *Decreto No. 218-96*, 16 December 1996. Published in *La Gaceta*, 30 December 1996.

established.¹⁵ Although the IHAH has been a legally autonomous institution since 1969, it falls under the purview of the SCAD; similarly, the autonomous IHT is under the purview of SETUR. These changes signaled a major shift for “cultural heritage” as a responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Also, cultural heritage institutions and policies became increasingly linked to how they connected their missions and mandates to tourism within state policies, which increasingly became strategies of economic development tied to global tourism.

A basic understanding of the evolution of cultural institutionalism in Honduras is imperative in understanding the role that museums and state initiatives on cultural heritage have played in state discourse and the cultural imagination today. This chapter begins with an overview of ethnic diversity in Honduras. Building on the conceptual framework outlined in the Introduction, it then explores two interrelated discourses of modern national identity championed by the Honduras government—mestizaje and mayanization. Contextualizing the Honduran case within a broader regional framework, it examines the emergence of modern ethnic social movements that challenge these hegemonic discourses. It returns to state discourse of national identity by exploring an emerging third discourse of multiculturalism. Finally, it provides a more detailed examination of the central state agencies charged with cultural policies in Honduras—the IHAH, SCAD, and the IHT—and discusses how PROPAITH’s mission is articulated with these state agencies and its effect on the dynamics of ethnicity in national identity.

¹⁵ See also, Presidente Constitucional de la República en Consejo de Ministros, *Decreto Ejecutivo PCM-008-97*, 2 June 1997, section 11, “Secretaría de Cultura, Artes y Deportes,” art. 77-78, pp.23. Published in *La Gaceta*, 7 June 1997. Also Presidente Constitucional de la República en Consejo de Ministros, *Decreto Ejecutivo PCM-002-2001*, 22 March 2001, section 11-A, “Secretaría de Turismo,” art. 79-A, 79-B, pp. 3. Published in *La Gaceta*, 23 April 2001.

Historical Context

Demographics of indigenous groups

Similar to many Latin American countries, Honduras is a heterogeneous, pluriethnic society. Historically, its inhabitants descend from indigenous, Spanish, and Afro-Caribbean roots and, more recently, small but significant communities of immigrants from the Middle East and Asia (Amaya Banegas 1997, 2000; Chambers 2010; Euraque 1996b, 1999, 2009a; N. González 1992). Former Minister of Culture, Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle, maintains that “Honduras is the country with the most cultural diversity in Central America” ([2007]:1, author’s translation). Social scientists generally accept that the territory that comprises the modern boundaries of Honduras was an area of cultural convergence between many indigenous groups before and during conquest. Generally employing Paul Kirchhoff’s (2009 [1943]) original geographical delimitation of the cultural region of Mesoamerica, social scientists examining Honduras frequently provide an overview of the indigenous groups that inhabit the cultural areas of Mesoamerica and the Intermediate Area, though historically, they often downplayed or ignored the fact that Honduras—particularly the Sula Valley—was a cultural bridge between the two regions (Barahona 2002, 2009; Rivas 2000; cf. Joyce 1991).

Ethnohistorians and demographers estimate that at the time of conquest, approximately 1.4 million people, consisting of eight major cultural-linguistic indigenous groups, inhabited what is now Honduras (Newson 1986:20-91). Today, Honduras has nine distinct indigenous and Afro-descendant groups that total more than 1.5 million people (Palacios Barahona 2007:5; van Cott 2010:386) or between 12 and 20 percent of a

total national population of approximately eight million inhabitants.¹⁶ Eight of these groups are officially recognized by the Honduran state; the status of the Nahua community has been pending since 1996 (Palacios Barahona 2007:31; Centeno García 2003). Those of Mesoamerican origin include the Maya-Chortí, Lenca, and Nahua; non-Mesoamerican or circum-Caribbean groups include the Tawahka, Pech (or Paya) and Tolupan (also called Jicaque, Xicaque, or Tol); Afro-descendant groups include the Garífuna and English-speaking Bay Islanders; and the Miskito, a “contact” or hybrid culture was formed by indigenous New World, African, and European ancestry after conquest (Newson 1986; Herranz 2001; Palacios Barahona 2007:3, 5-7).

Similar to many other countries, estimates of the indigenous population in Honduras vary. In the absence of an official census, the following table provides three important interpretations. The first two columns (“Number of Communities” and “Population”) are based on recent data supplied by each of these ethnic groups (Palacios Barahona 2007), which can be understood as the best assessment of self-definition and identity. The final column in the table provides a range of population estimates from a variety of sources, demonstrating the variability of numbers with which state agencies and international NGOs work:

¹⁶ INE, n.d., “Resumen de la proyección de población de Honduras: Población total 2001 a 2015,” *Proyecciones de Población*, <http://www.ine.gob.hn/drupal/node/205>, accessed 10 February 2012.

TABLE 1. CURRENT POPULATION ESTIMATES OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN HONDURAS

Ethnic Groups	Number of Communities	Population	Range of accepted population estimates
English-speaking Bay Islanders	46	80,000	12,370-80,000
Garífuna	47	300,000	46,448-300,000
Lenca	2500	720,000	100,000-720,000
Maya Chortí	52	10,600	3,500-34,453
Miskito	420	76,000	29,000-76,000
Nahua	18	19,800	19,800
Pech	10 tribes	3,800	2,586-4,138
Tawahka	7	1,500	700-2,649
Tolupan	30 tribes	18,000	9,617-25,000
Total	2,128	1,529,400	204,221-1,262,040

Sources: Numbers from the first and second columns (“Number of Communities” and “Population”) are from Palacios Barahona 2007:5; however, the total he provides for the “Population” column (1,529,400) does not equal the population numbers provided for each ethnic group. This total is 1,229,700. However, this larger number (1,529,400) could include individuals who self-identify as a particular ethnic without providing the name. Since he provides no explanation for this discrepancy, I maintain that it is important to point out, but to also include his total number. Numbers from the final column are derived from Davidson 2011:21; M. Anderson 2008; Barahona and Rivas 2007a; Chiminike, exhibit text “Población de los Grupos Étnicos en Honduras”; OEI 2004; Sichra 2009; and, World Bank, 25 May 1999, Project Appraisal Document, Report Number 18452-HO. All documents in possession of author.

Mestizaje as National Identity

Despite this diversity, historically, official state discourse on national identity overwhelmingly emphasized mestizaje, generally understood as racial mixing of indigenous and Spanish ancestors, though in the Honduran context it is occasionally understood to incorporate elements of Afro-descendant populations. This understanding of mestizaje conflates ethnic distinctions and homogenizes the idealized, typically indo-Hispanic mestizo. This was not a unique position in the region. In fact, all Central American countries promulgated versions of mestizaje during their respective processes of national formation. In their seminal volume *Memorias del mestizaje* (2004), Euraque,

Gould, and Hale call this interpretative framework “the national ideology of progress through mestizaje” or, more succinctly, “mestizo nationalism” (2004:22).

In Honduras, state discourse of national identity as indo-Hispanic mestizaje began in the post-Independence era (1821-1876), intensified during the Reform period (1876-1920), and was consolidated during the dictatorship of General Tiburcio Carías Andino (1933-1948). However, similar to the rest of the region, this process had begun even earlier during the conquest and subsequent colonialization process, including the Catholic evangelization of the native populations. Historical linguist Herranz (2001) defines three distinct periods of linguistic politics during the colonial period in the territory of modern Honduras. These linguistic politics are representative of the larger cultural politics of the Spanish Crown toward indigenous groups. In the first period, from 1502-1569, the Catholic monarchy proclaimed the “castellanización” or Spanishization of recently conquered territories (Herranz 2001:31-54). Engendered from the Crown’s experience after conquering the Kingdom of Granada, it simultaneously called for Castilian Spanish as the official language and for Catholic evangelization. These two elements were innately linked, creating a policy “impregnated with a profound nationalism” for the Spanish Crown (Herranz 2001:33, author’s translation).

The second period (1570-1769) established a plurilinguistic policy in the territory of modern Honduras (Herranz 2001:55-127). This change in policy was, like its predecessor, fundamentally linked with the process of evangelization of indigenous groups. In 1570, the Crown recognized Nahuatl as the language of evangelization, becoming the lingua franca for religious orders in the region. However, since the territory contained “a mosaic of indigenous languages” and cultures (Herranz 2001:48; see also,

Newson 1986:235-252), this policy had a homogenizing effect on distinct ethnic and linguistic groups. Although some indigenous individuals learned Nahuatl for purposes of trade, it was not the mother tongue of most. In 1596, the Crown modified its linguistic policy,

creating an ambivalence. Spanish remained as the official language of Spanish and elite indigenous. Native languages, for christianization of indigenous and daily use of the religious order, especially mestizos, and the Indian population. Spanish was the language of hispanization and indigenous languages of Christianization (Herranz 2001:73, author's translation).

The third and final period of colonial linguistic politics (1770-1820) not only restored a policy of Spanish monolingualism but “advocated the extinction of all indigenous languages” (Herranz 2001:31, author's translation; see also, pages 127-155). A number of reasons led to this return, including the fact that at this time “the diversity of existing languages was like the Tower of Babel” (Herranz 2001:130, author's translation). Another central factor is that when this monolingual policy was restored, approximately 53-60 percent of the adult population was classified as mestizo, 35-40 percent as indigenous, and 5.7-6.1 percent as Spanish or criollo (Newson 1986:325; Herranz 2001:147).

Following Independence, as alluded to when discussing the work of Benedict Anderson, the criollo elite minority throughout Latin America developed self-serving nationalistic policies modeled after European political ideologies that not only excluded indigenous peoples, but were designed to promote their disappearance or integration into the predominant mestizo society (Stavenghagen 1992:424; Barahona 2002:53-64; Herranz 2001:157-203). In Honduras, this assimilation “provoked an absence of protective laws

for [indigenous] lands, languages, and cultures” (Herranz 2001:159). From the late 18th century through Independence, mestizos became the most important racial group, replacing the criollo elite as the new force in economic and social spaces (Barahona 2002:66; Herranz 2001:157-177; Stavenhagen 1992). By the beginning of the Liberal Reform Period (1876-1920), mestizos in Honduras and throughout Latin America were “identified with the national mainstream [and were] the driving force of economic, social, [and] political progress” (Stavenhagen 1992:427-428).

The Reform Era in Honduras emphasized the consolidation and modernization of the young nation-state, implementing a variety of economic, political, and educational policies, as well as infrastructure development. It orchestrated the centralization of state power and projected the national economy into the world market through cash crops and a renewed interest in mining (Barahona 2005:31-32; Carías 2005:203-205). Central to my discussion of cultural politics, the government advanced a positivist educational ideology and expanded and regulated secular public education. Additionally, it established the state’s first cultural institutions—the National Museum, National Archive, National Library, National Theater, and the General Direction of Statistics, which was responsible for census services (Barahona 2005:29; Carías 2005:199-202; Herranz 2001:189-194). It advanced a national notion of civicism by promoting national unity and incorporating images of the country’s forefathers and national heroes into the “new collective imagination” (Pastor Fasquelle [2011]:2; see also, Carías 2005:201).

Throughout Latin America, modernist intellectuals “began to adopt notions of a homogeneous culture in which a true nation was defined by a common language, culture, and national identity” (Chambers 2010:34). In Honduras, the reform governments

advanced the policy of “hondureization” (Herranz 2001:17, 188-203) or “nationalist ethnology” (Barahona 2005:42-44) through attempts to nationalize the eastern region known as La Mosquitia. These efforts sought to incorporate indigenous and Afro-descendant groups into the dominant “national culture” of the Honduran mestizo, and were centered on an educational and evangelical “civilization” project of indigenous groups in the eastern region of La Mosquitia. This is the traditional territory of five ethno-linguistic groups (Tawahka, Pech, Tolupan, Miskito, and Garífuna), who were considered “savage tribes” or “barbaric indians” in Honduran legislation, as opposed to the “pacified” or “subdued” Maya-Chortí and Lenca in the center, west, and south of the country who were rapidly being assimilated into mestizo culture (Barahona 2005:42-44, 2007; Herranz 2001:159-176, 219-225; Newson 1986).

Nationalist intellectuals began to promote a discourse about a unified national identity in an effort to legitimize the young nation-state within a regional and international setting (Barahona 2005:35; Chambers 2010:34). These efforts were centered on historical-cultural elements that inevitably if subtly introduced first race and later ethnicity into national identity. The goal of this nationalist project was to “write [Honduras’s] national history and gather the traditions to provide elements that distinguish the nation from others” (Barahona 2005:36, author’s translation). The newly formed cultural institutions of the National Archive, National Library, National Theater, and others were central conduits for this ideology, as were two newly established state publications, which published historical documents and information about archaeology, ethnology, and traditional or popular expressions of “national folklore” as evidence of the

particularities of the Honduran nation.¹⁷ The particular role that archaeology—specifically that of the Maya in Copán—has played in the national imagination is discussed in the following section.

Although officials and intellectuals of the reform era (1870s-1920s) attempted to develop a discourse of national identity, their position was ultimately incoherent. Projecting a unified national image, but one simultaneously founded on historical-cultural (ethnic) particularities, and a policy of acculturation and assimilation of indigenous groups into the dominant mestizo culture, the liberal elite only began to articulate central tenets of what would later develop into a mestizo nationalist ideology.

Such an ideology of national identity, particularly with ethnic overtones, remained inconsistent on the eve of World War I (Euraque 1998:159). In the late 19th century and early 20th century, an enclave economy emerged on the north coast that was overwhelmingly dominated by the banana exporting industry. This was a result of liberal concessions granted to foreign—particularly U.S.—businesses in an effort to stimulate economic growth during the reform period. Foreign-owned companies owned large banana plantations along the Caribbean, drastically changing the ethnic composition of the north coast population, which also coincided with the onset of contemporary immigration from the Middle East and Asia to the region (N. González 1992:61-80). Although the workforce of the banana industry did not “possess cultural unity” (Euraque 1998b:151), Afro-descendant West Indian migrants and Honduran Garífuna constituted a large percentage of the labor pool. The influx of this black labor force triggered a number of responses from the Honduran elite, who viewed it in racialized terms and who

¹⁷ These publications were the *Revista del Archivo y la Biblioteca Nacionales*, established in 1904, and the *Revista de la Sociedad Hondureña de Geografía e Historia* (Barahona 2005:37).

perceived it as a threat to mestizo national unity. This is similar to how the GOH and nationalist intellectuals in the colonial period and Reform Era viewed plurilingualism of minority cultures as “an attack or a weakness of the so-called ‘national unity’” (Herranz 2001:160, author’s translation).

In the 1920s, liberal and conservative elites introduced legislation that attempted to deport black and Asian immigrants and to prohibit their immigration into the country. Such efforts culminated in immigration laws in 1929 and 1934 that controlled and prohibited the immigration of particular “races” (Euraque 1998b, 2003b; Chambers 2010). Thus, Honduran elites “attempted to reassert their dominance, at least in the ideological sphere, by asserting a national unity based on a homogeneous Honduran mestizo race and excluding [...] the Garífuna population” (Euraque 1998b:152).

These anti-immigration efforts coincided with a successful legislative effort (1926) to name the national currency after Lempira, the Lenca leader who died resisting Spanish conquerors in the 1530s. In short, the Honduran elite imagined him as a symbol of standardized indianness, officializing his image as a national symbol on the state’s currency. This legislation consolidated the homogenized *indo*-Hispanic element of mestizaje and also served to exclude Afro contributions to mestizaje in state discourse (Euraque 1996a, 1999, 2004a:71-87; Joyce 2003, 2008).

Recent examples illustrate how state officials maintain this indo-Hispanic mestizo ideology (which is also conserved by the general public), despite an official shift in national identity ideology. For example, in a meeting with English-speaking Bay Islanders in 1996, the Minister of Culture asserted, “We don’t know where you came from... We don’t know who you are... You have no history” (cited in Stonich 2000:27).

Indeed, throughout Central America, “Afro-descendant cultures have generally been erased [...] from nationalist mestizo ideologies” (Hale 2004:41, author’s translation). However, within the historiography of Honduran national identity, scholars have increasingly explored the intersections between blackness and the rise of a nationalist mestizo discourse (see, for example, Amaya Banegas 2005, 2011; M. Anderson 2008; Anderson and England 2004; Barahona 2004; Brondo 2010; Chambers 2010; Euraque 1998b, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b, 2009c). Yet within the popular imagination in Honduras and throughout the rest of Central America, this understanding generally remains limited to an indo-Hispanic mestizaje.

In the 20th and 21st centuries, Honduran official narratives of national identity as mestizaje have been echoed by popular culture through nationalist intellectuals and institutionalized by a variety of means, including in museums and museum exhibitions as informal learning centers. This discourse of mestizaje promoted a homogenization of the nation’s cultural plurality, disregarding the history and current context of Honduras’ diverse inhabitants. Though officially this is gradually being replaced with a policy of multiculturalism, which I discuss below, the general public and private cultural institutions, particularly Honduras’s most important museums, continue to project a “nationalist mestizo ideology.”

As previously mentioned, this nationalist indo-Hispanic mestizo ideology was consolidated during the Carías dictatorship (1933-1949). Simultaneously, a related discourse was emerging within the elite sector about the “indo” element in an indo-Hispanic or even indo-Afro-Hispanic mestizaje that homogenized the indigenous element, similar to the broader homogenizing effect of mestizaje. This sub-discourse is

what historian Darío Euraque has dubbed “mayanization” (Euraque 1998a, 1999, 2002, 2004a).

Mayanization as National Identity

As mentioned above, the role of archaeology—particularly that of Copán—and its institutional history with U.S. universities (for example, Harvard, Tulane, University of Pennsylvania), has played a central role in developing official policies of cultural heritage shortly after independence. In 1845, a decade after the “re-discovery” of the ancient Maya ruins of Copán in the extreme west of the country, Honduran Congress passed the first law regarding the protection of cultural heritage. This specifically called to “conserve monuments of antiquity that exist in the Copán Valley,” placing them under government protection.¹⁸ This law accomplished two central matters, both of which have profoundly influenced the cultural heritage sector to the present day. First, it essentially defined the antecedent of cultural heritage as monumental architecture, a legacy that has marked the importance of the PROPAITH project a century and a half later. This set the stage for “an official emphasis on rescuing ruins as an ancestral legacy of a ‘nationality’ to be constructed [that is, imagined]” (Euraque 2002:77, author’s translation). Second, it placed emphasis on archaeological ruins in a particular location, the Copán Valley, beginning official efforts to establish national identity “in a mythified Copán” (Pastor Fasquelle 2004:106, author’s translation) and Mayan heritage.

However, it was not until 1898, at the height of the Liberal Reform era, that such legislation specifically introduced a racial or ethnic element of these ruins. The 1898 decree that called for the establishment of a National Museum in Copan considered

¹⁸Cámara de los Representantes del Estado de Honduras, *Acuerdo No. 4*, 28 January 1845, cited in Borbolla and Rivas 1953:27.

archaeological objects throughout the country as “extremely valuable for the study of the origin of the primitive race that inhabited the country.”¹⁹ This shift to a racialized notion of identity fundamentally altered nationalist identity discourses and foregrounded the eventual official ideology of mestizo nationalism. Although at that point, “nationalist discourse was not specifically based on the recognition of the past of ancient indigenous civilizations” (Barahona 2005:39, author’s translation), the quickly growing importance of Copán marked the emergence of a racial and ethnic overtone to identity discourse.

From the 1890s until the 1930s, the GOH introduced initiatives linked with international institutions—in particular the Harvard Peabody Museum and the Carnegie Institute—to conserve, preserve, and research the archaeological zone of Copán. These “official efforts to secure international cooperation in examining [ancestral] ruins” (Euraque 2002:77, author’s translation) is another element of the mayanization discourse. Not only is ancient Maya heritage emphasized on a local scale, the notion is also exported to international audiences. Indeed, by the end of the 19th century, the state “sought to appropriate the glittering past of the Maya civilization” (Barahona 2005:39). These efforts coincided with the official policy of “hondurenization” (Herranz 2001:17, 188-203) or “nationalist ethnology” (Barahona 2005:42-44), discussed above, that sought to “civilize” the “savage indians” in La Mosquitia through education and evangelization, thereby assimilating them into the dominant mestizo nationalism.

The Carías dictatorship (1933-1948) increased state support and promotion of the Maya ruins of Copán, consolidating their integration into an official discourse of national identity. The Carías regime sought to popularize and urbanize Maya iconography.

¹⁹ Presidente, *Decreto No. 198, por el cual se funda el Museo Nacional de Honduras*, 15 March 1898, cited in Borbolla and Rivas 1953:33, author’s translation.

Institutionally, Carías officially endorsed the newly created *Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes* [National Academy of Fine Arts] (ENBA) and supported its founder and first director, renowned artist Arturo López Rodezno, who contributed to the official discourse of mayanization by “appropriating and recontextualizing” Maya motifs in his work of paintings and murals (Larach 2010:52). In addition, the Carías administration funded the construction of La Concordia Park in downtown Tegucigalpa, now mere blocks from both the IHAH’s central offices and the MIN. Inaugurated in 1939, this park features replicas of Maya monuments from across Mesoamerica, including Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras, particularly Copán (Euraque 1999:168). It served as a popular area of leisure and also as an important educational tool, as local schools visited it “to learn about the Maya culture” (Becerra 2004:79, author’s translation). In addition, in 1939, the Regional Museum of Maya Archaeology was inaugurated in Copán. Originally slated as the National Museum in 1889, this regional museum was the second museum established in Honduras, seven years after the national museum, further demonstrating the government’s commitment to institutionalizing ancient Maya heritage in cultural institutions.

A central figure in the history of mayanization in Honduras is Federico Lunardi, Italian papal nuncio in Honduras from 1939-1948—during the Carías dictatorship—and amateur anthropologist. Though evidence suggests that he and General Carías had a contentious relationship (Euraque 2002:89), Lunardi’s hypothesis helped the state consolidate a narrative of Honduras as Maya. Throughout his mandate in Honduras, Lunardi travelled the country, documenting indigenous groups, particularly in western Honduras, through ethnographic fieldnotes and photographs. Through his research, he

unwaveringly proposed and defended his hypothesis that Honduras was Maya—that living indigenous cultures and archaeological ruins were legacies of the ancient Maya inhabitants of the region. Although archaeological and linguistic evidence showed otherwise, and contemporaneous scholars rejected this theory, his argument has persisted through nationalist intellectuals and the general public.

Euraque posits that Lunardi promoted his hypothesis in an effort to convince state authorities to pay more attention to indigenous groups throughout Honduras, particularly the Lenca in western Honduras (Euraque 1999:167, 2004a). In so doing, however, he negated the legacy of living indigenous groups, denying their heterogeneity, and thereby their history and identity. Although Lunardi's efforts were not connected to state initiatives, his hypothesis impacted the nationalist intellectuals and general public, even though it was rejected by scholars in various associated disciplines. His theory presented an "imagined community" based on a collapsed racialized historical unity that has persisted in the national imagination until present day.

State efforts emphasizing ancient monumental Maya archaeology and Copán culminated in the First International Conference of Caribbean Archaeologists in August 1946, at which Lunardi and prominent U.S. archaeologists were invited speakers. The principal theme of this ten-day event was "The Mayas of Honduras and their Relations to the Countries of the Caribbean" and included a visit to the Copán ruins, no small undertaking in that era.²⁰ Thus, during the Carías administration (1933-1948), the state

²⁰ See, "Momentos Históricos e Inolvidables" in *La Epoca*, 8 August 1946, p. 1; "La Sesión de Clausura de la Conferencia de Arqueólogos" in *La Epoca*, 12 September 1946, p. 1; "De la Reciente Conferencia Internacional de Arqueólogos" in *La Epoca*, 13 September 1946, p. 1. All documents in possession of author. See also, *American Anthropologist*, 1946, 1947; *Boletín bibliográfico de antropología americana*, 1946.

strengthened its financial and ideological support of the Maya as sole ancestral inhabitants of the country, reclaiming the ancient Maya (through the Copán Ruins) as an integral aspect in projecting a national unity. This was partially a response to the influx of black and Middle Eastern immigration on the north coast, as well as to U.S. imperialism of the banana companies and archaeology.

Mayanization, then, exalts the ancient Maya civilization and excludes the diversity of indigenous groups (both ancient and living) by collapsing Honduras's indigenous cultural diversity into one generalized category of "the Maya." This erases the history and traditions of indigenous groups in Honduras and excludes them from the national imagination. This discourse of national identity as founded on the Maya and the subsequent state-sponsored mayanization has been ever more consolidated in the mid- to late 20th and early 21st centuries (see Euraque 1999, 2002, 2004a).

From Mayanized Mestizaje to Multiculturalism

In Honduras, these deep-rooted interrelated discourses of mestizaje and mayanization began to shift in the mid-1990s, in response to increased demands on the government by different indigenous groups. This resulted in a reformulation of the nation's collective identity, now imagined as multicultural (Barahona 2005; Euraque 2004; Hale 2004). In July 1994, these demands were made visible and impossible to ignore, when more than 4,000 members of diverse indigenous and Afro-descendant organizations made the first in a series of pilgrimages to Tegucigalpa to demand economic, social, political, and cultural rights from the central government. These demonstrations, coupled with an openness in the new government toward these demands, led to a thorough general reflection not only of state policies, but also more generally

about Honduran mestizaje and ethnic minority populations (Euraque 2004a:11). This shift in state discourse to one of multiculturalism was beginning to occur regionally, the result of the emerging ethnic social movements that made indigenous communities and their demands more visible than ever (Hale 2004).

Regional Ethnic Movements: Challenging Hegemonic Mestizo Nationalism

Scholars across disciplines consider that the modern pan-indigenous movements in Latin America that arose coherently in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s are immediately rooted in the peasant mobilizations of the 1960s and 1970s (Jackson and Warren 2005; Stavenhagen 1992; Stocks 2005; van Cott 2010; Yasher 1998, 2005). Yet their overwhelming emphasis on indigeneity and ethnicity reflect a move away from such state policies as the assimilation and invisibilization of indigenous peoples, or class-based peasant (self-) identification that dominated that era (Jackson and Warren 2005:551; Peña 2005:719; Stavenhagen 1992; van Cott 2010:386).

Though the objectives of these ethnic socio-political organizations were broad and varied in scope, their characteristic “politicized indigenous identification” (Jackson and Warren 2005:551) challenged the prevailing state discourses of mestizaje. In the Western hemisphere, this process had begun during the conquest and subsequent colonization process, including that of the Catholic evangelization of native populations and religious syncretism of indigenous and Catholic beliefs. During the colonial period, Honduras “became identified with [...] the cultural mestizaje of [...] indigenous, Spanish, and African” (Carías 2005:327). By the end of the 18th century, mestizos far outnumbered the Spanish or criollo populace, and also exceeded the indigenous population, which warfare and disease had decimated (Barahona 2002:65; Newson 1986:325; Stavenhagen 1992).

Since the emergence of indigenous movements in the 1980s and especially the 1990s, an increased focus on subaltern, historically marginalized groups has arisen in nationalist discourse. Despite this recent shift, many recent studies of shared histories of national identity frequently “presume an inevitable, binary opposition between hegemonic state-sponsored memory and marginalized counter-memories” (White 1997:5), which continues to advance a simplistic, essentialist understanding of national identity and local, indigenous, ethnic identities. Thus, while promoting a kind of macro-ethnic diversity in national discourse (i.e. the reintegration of indigenous people into the national imagination alongside the majority mestizo), micro-ethnic diversity is overlooked and an homogenized image of “ethnic groups” is presented, thereby erasing the very notions of pluricultural and multiracial diversity that is being offered forth (Schildkrout 1995:68-70; Chambers 2010).

Recent literature on the emergence of ethnic socio-political movements and a resurgence of ethnogenesis firmly situates Honduras within the regional historical and social context. In Honduras, pro-labor reforms in the early 1950s led to the general labor strike of 1954 (Barahona 2005:166-171; Carías 2005:266-269). After 69 days on strike, the strike was resolved, and the GOH recognized the emergence of labor unions and soon thereafter, student and teacher organizations. In the 1970s, “peasant organizations” emerged into the social, political, and cultural scene (Quesada 1977:32). From the 1970s to the early 1990s, through the formation of federations and coalitions, each of Honduras’s indigenous groups “sought legal recognition of the state, thus becoming actors of their own development through political representation of their peoples” (Palacios Barahona 2007:31, author’s translation). And with the exception of the Nahua

group, whose legal status has been pending since 1996, all indigenous groups in Honduras have attained some kind of legal recognition (Centeno García 2003; Palacios Barahona 2007:31). However, such recognition of individual indigenous federations has not yet resulted in national legislation or a constitutional reform that would expressly recognize this plurality, as has occurred in at least eleven Latin American countries since the early 1990s (e.g., Guatemala, Nicaragua, Brazil, Colombia, Bolivia, Mexico, Paraguay, Ecuador, Argentina, Peru, Venezuela) (Jackson and Warren 2005:551; van Cott 2010:390).

Such constitutional reforms resulted, in part, from the increased political demands of indigenous groups that led to a regional shift regarding indigenous visibility in the mid-1990s. In Honduras, the administration of President Reina (1994-1998) represented a significant transformation from prior state positions, thereby transcending the largely rhetorical recognition of indigenous rights. This state shift to multiculturalism was integrated into state institutionality. At the state level, this shift to multiculturalism was carried out through various programs and through the establishment of state organizations charged with indigenous affairs.

In April 1994, two months before the indigenous pilgrimages mentioned above, the new government officially recognized the legal status of the *Confederación Nacional de Pueblos Autóctonos de Honduras* [National Confederation of Autochthonous Peoples of Honduras] (CONPAH) (Palacios Barahona 2007:31), an umbrella organization for indigenous groups throughout the country. In August 1994, less than a month after the first pilgrimage, President Reina signed a Presidential Decree that created an intercultural bilingual education program, called the *Programa Nacional de Educación para las*

Etnias Autóctonas de Honduras (National Education Program for Autochthonous Ethnicities of Honduras) [PRONEEAH]. Significantly, this decree explicitly recognizes Honduras as “a pluricultural and multiethnic country of a plurilinguistic character” (Herrantz 2001:529-530, author’s translation). Also, importantly, the September 1994 restructuring of the SCAD (which changed its name from the *Secretaría de Cultura* to the *Secretaría de Cultura y Artes*) established a broader mandate to “coordinate relationships with ethnic groups that conserve their own culture, and investigate, defend, and disseminate autochthonous and popular traditions, art, and culture.”²¹ Additionally, it created the *Instituto Hondureño de las Culturas Autóctonas y Populares* [Honduran Institute of Autochthonous and Popular Cultures] (IHCAP) as one of four new agencies dependent upon the SCAD, although it has since ceased to exist (Euraque 2009:5, 2010:329). To understand the significance of these newly established state agencies, it is necessary to explore the historical institutionality of cultural heritage in contemporary Honduras. In the following section, I examine the institutional histories and mandates of three central state agencies concerned with cultural heritage: the IHAH, SCAD, and IHT.

Institutionality of Cultural Heritage in Honduras

The official institutionalization of culture in Honduras resides in two state agencies: the SCAD and the IHAH. The IHT also plays a central role in the promotion of cultural heritage. Interestingly and significantly, the first ethnic group promoted by the IHT as a tourist attraction was the Garífuna, a blackness excluded from the national identity promoted by the state in the 19th and most of the 20th century (Euraque

²¹ Presidente de la República, *Acuerdo No. 397*, 21 September 1994, art. 3, no. 4. Published in *La Gaceta*, 29 July 1995.

2004a:165-264). This move in the early 1970s by the IHT would then serve to promote indigenous and Afro-descendant cultures as international tourist attractions, and not just as sources of national identity. This was an important precedent for the mission of PROPAITH and museums as tourist destinations. In the following sections, I explore the historical developments that have shaped each state agency.

Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia

Since its creation in 1952, the IHAH has been the state entity charged with protection, investigation, and conservation of Honduran cultural heritage. An autonomous institution under the purview of the SCAD, it employs nearly 150 staff in its central office in Tegucigalpa and in regional offices and parks across the country. The first precursor to the IHAH was the *Instituto Nacional de Arqueología e Historia* [National Institute of Archaeology and History] (INAH),²² established in Accord No. 251 on 2 September 1947 (OEI 2004:21). This institute was founded as a result of one of thirty recommendations of the First International Conference of Caribbean Archaeologists, held in Tegucigalpa, Comayagua, Yojoa, San Pedro Sula, and Copán Ruinas from 1-11 August 1946.²³ A dependency of the SEP, the purpose of the INAH was effectively the same as that of the IHAH, with the following objectives enumerated in the conference recommendations:

- a) Exploration of archaeological zones in Honduras; b) Security, conservation, and restoration of historical, artistic, and archaeological monuments of the country; c) Scientific, artistic, anthropological, and

²² To differentiate between the institute founded in 1947 and that founded in 1952, I refer to the former as the INAH and the latter as the IHAH, even though its acronym was INAH until 1968.

²³ See “Momentos Históricos e Inolvidables” in *La Epoca*, 8 August 1946, p. 1; “La Sesión de Clausura de la Conferencia de Arqueólogos” in *La Epoca*, 12 September 1946, p. 1; “De la Reciente Conferencia Internacional de Arqueólogos” in *La Epoca*, 13 September 1946, p. 1. All documents in possession of author. See also, *American Anthropologist*, 1946, 1947; *Boletín bibliográfico de antropología americana*, 1946; Núñez Chinchilla 2002 [1953]:33; OEI 2004: 16.

ethnological investigations of the national indigenous populations; and d) Publication of the data obtained in the previous work (Boletín bibliográfico de antropología americana 1946:27, author's translation).

It is important to note that the INAH never functioned, in part because of the inability to name a qualified director; this institution existed solely on paper and only briefly appears in the historical record.²⁴

In the wider context of transition to relative political democracy, and state expansion and modernization after the Carías dictatorship (Herranz 2001:225; Lagos Reyes 2002:2; Posas and del Cid 1983:128), under the presidency of Juan Manuel Galvez, the GOH created the IHAH on 22 July 1952.²⁵ Anthropologist Jesús Núñez Chinchilla was named its first director, a position he held until his death on 3 January 1973. Originally called the *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* [National Institute of Anthropology and History], it was undoubtedly modeled after the National Institute of Anthropology and History in Mexico, which was founded in 1939. Núñez Chinchilla studied and worked in Mexico from 1946-1951, obtaining his degree in archaeology from the National School of Anthropology and History in Mexico City a year before assuming directorship of the IHAH. For a few months in 1962-1963, he took a leave of absence from the IHAH, returning to Mexico City to carry out post graduate studies in Museum Exhibit and Organization (Ávalos 2001:112; [Ávalos] 2002:9; Carrillo Azpeitia 1973 [2002]:116; Núñez Chinchilla 1963/1965:41).

²⁴ Darío A. Euraque, 7 Feb 2012, personal communication; see also, Martínez Ordóñez 2011.

²⁵ Presidente de la República, *Acuerdo No. 245, creando el Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia de Honduras*, 22 July 1952, cited in Borbolla and Rivas 1953:42

The 1936 constitution, in force at the time of the IHAH's creation, defined what constituted cultural heritage or "the cultural treasure of the nation,"²⁶ primarily understood as archaeological ruins and objects (Núñez Chinchilla 2002 [1953]:33; Euraque [2011]). The Code of Public Education called for an appropriate state organism to be charged with the conservation, restoration, and investigation of archaeological monuments and "typical populations" as well as the organization of museums.²⁷ This second piece of legislation is important because the IHAH was under the purview of the SEP from its foundation until 1969.²⁸ In practice, though, it did not achieve institutional autonomy until 1975, when the first Ministry of Culture was established.

The primary objective of the newly created IHAH was to "protect and safeguard archaeological, colonial, and historic monuments of the country, at the same time it should research, organize museums, improve the existing ones, etc." (Núñez Chinchilla 1969:3). This was to be achieved through five sections within the Institute: archaeology, ethnology, museography, colonial art and history, and tourism.²⁹ However, a year after its foundation, Director Núñez Chinchilla lamented the ineffectiveness of these sections because of lack of specialized personnel; indeed, for many years he was the only staff member with any technical training and took charge of all sections, especially the first four, as much as possible (Núñez Chinchilla 1952/1953:166; Ávalos 2001:112). Under Núñez Chinchilla's direction from 1952-1972, the IHAH was "totally centered on and

²⁶ Honduran Constitution, 1936, title 9, ch. 1, art. 157, cited in Euraque [2011].

²⁷ Código de Educación Pública, 1947, ch. 31, art. 249. Document in possession of author.

²⁸ In 1956, the IHAH became directly dependent on the SEP, as stipulated in its first *Ley Orgánica*. On 23 January 1964, the IHAH became a dependency on the recently created *Dirección General de Servicios Culturales y Educación Artística* [General Direction of Culturas Services and Artistic Education] (DGSCEA), remaining within the SEP. See Ávalos 2002:112; Núñez Chinchilla 1963/1965:45.

²⁹ Presidente de la República, *Acuerdo No. 245, creando el Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia de Honduras*, 22 July 1952, cited in Borbolla and Rivas 1953:42; Ávalos 2002:112.

even personalized to him, as much in the administrative [aspects] as in the professional (anthropological, historical, museographical, etc.)” (Ávalos 2001:121). Originally, the IHAH was comprised of a director, secretary, and janitor. Little by little, IHAH staff increased, reaching 33 employees by 1973 and nearly 150 today (Ávalos 2002:114; Euraque 2010).

During a period of administrative and scientific growth within the IHAH, Congress approved the IHAH’s new *Ley Orgánica* on 16 October 1968, completely changing its administrative system (Alvarado Garcia 1969:68-69). Perhaps most importantly, this defined the IHAH as an autonomous institution with a decentralized independent administration and legal status.³⁰ This also legally changed the name to the *Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia* [Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History]. However, in 1971, Núñez Chinchilla reported that “despite being in effect, [the new *Ley Orgánica*] has not been fully applied, due to inconveniences of a national character” (Núñez Chinchilla 1970/1971:40, author’s translation). A year later, he lamented that the IHAH still was not, de facto, an autonomous institution (Ávalos 2001:113).

Autonomy was finally fully granted in 1975 when the IHAH was placed under the purview of the newly formed SECTIN. Although some scholars maintain that the IHAH began to function more effectively after the *Ley Orgánica* went into force on 1 January 1969, others assert that the IHAH’s productivity did not truly begin until 1975 (see Ávalos 2002:113, 115). This was due, in large part, to the small—and shrinking—budget, lack of specialized personnel, lack of institutional autonomy, and insufficient government

³⁰ Congreso Nacional, *Decreto No. 118*, 16 October 1968, art 1. Published in *La Gaceta*, 24 December 1968, pp. 1.

interest (Ávalos 2001:113-121; Núñez Chinchilla 1963/1965:48). Additionally, from 1952-1977, the IHAH moved its offices five times, until former First Lady Laura Vigil de Lozano, in 1975, donated her mansion known as Villa Roy. An administrative building was built on the land below Villa Roy, and the IHAH moved to its current building in 1977 (Padilla de Ayestes 2002:20-21; Ponce Vásquez 2002:23).

Throughout his tenure, Núñez Chinchilla recognized that the IHAH's priority, and where it directed the most time and resources, had been the Maya Ruins of Copán (Alvarado Garcia 1969:70; Ávalos 2001:116; Núñez Chinchilla 1958/1959:65, 1963/1965:44-51, 1970/1971:40). In a report from 1956/1957, he manifested that he, as Director, made monthly visits to the archaeological zone. In this same report, he asserted that a trip by car from Tegucigalpa (where the IHAH's main offices are located) to Copán took about 16 hours (1956/1957:75). Given the duration of such a trip, it is likely that he flew there on a small airplane, touching down on a small landing strip that cut through part of the archaeological zone. In an era before highway infrastructure to the ruins was adequately maintained,³¹ this was quite an undertaking and a testament to the IHAH's financial and ideological commitment to Copán. It is telling that Núñez Chinchilla was killed in a car accident while traveling to Copán in January 1973 (Ponce Vasquez 2002:22-23).

The IHAH's new *Ley Orgánica* specified that the IHAH would "contribute to the construction of the necessary infrastructure installations for the development of cultural

³¹ According to other reports, this occurred between 1962-1963. See Núñez Chinchilla, 1963/1965:44; 1956/1957:76; Posas and del Cid, 1983:131-132.

tourism in archaeological, anthropological, and historical sites.”³² Since its creation in 1952, the IHAH was intimately connected to tourism and policies regarding tourism as well as cultural heritage as part of its broad mission. Despite this legislative power, this connection to cultural tourism promotion remained largely on paper. Although one of the original sections or departments of the IHAH was tourism, Director Núñez Chinchilla largely dedicated his efforts to the other four sections of archaeology, ethnology, museography, and colonial art and history (Ávalos 2001:112).

The local tourism that the IHAH *did* promote, however, predominantly advanced the ancient Maya ruins in Copán and served as state institutional endorsement and promotion of mayanization. From 1962-1968, the IHAH sponsored a series of guided visits or “cultural excursions” to the Copán Ruins, so that Hondurans could learn about and experience the archaeological zone in situ. Beginning in 1965, these excursions were called the Program of Directed Cultural Excursions (Ávalos 2001:117; Núñez Chinchilla 1963/1965:46, 50). In addition, Núñez Chinchilla frequently accompanied foreign dignitaries and other guests to the ruins (1952/1953:168, 1963/1965:44). Throughout his tenure as IHAH director, Núñez Chinchilla frequently gave talks about Maya archaeology in schools throughout Honduras, at anthropology conferences throughout the region, and by governmental invitation in the U.S. and Europe (Ávalos 2001:120). These actions actively transmitted an institutionalized notion of mayanization within the highest institution charged with the protection and dissemination of Honduran cultural heritage on both a national and international level. In addition, even before the IHAH was formally established, state actors engaged with issues of cultural heritage and

³² Congreso Nacional, *Decreto No. 118*, 16 October 1968, art. 6i, author’s translation. Published in *La Gaceta*, 24 December 1968.

archaeology promoted tourism to Copán. Indeed, it was during the First International Conference of Caribbean Archaeologists in August 1946, part of which was held at Copán, where the idea of a state institute of archaeology, anthropology, and history was recommended (*American Anthropologist* 1946, 1947; *Boletín bibliográfico de antropología americana* 1946).

In addition, the budget of the IHAH, since its foundation in 1952, has been deeply linked to Copán and tourism to the PAC. Copán immediately became the primary source of the IHAH's operational budget, and particularly when tourism to the site began to increase in the 1960s and 1970s. In 2007, for example, approximately 66 percent of the IHAH's total budget originated in revenue from the PAC.³³ Thus the connections between cultural heritage and tourism are deeply linked. Greater institutional inaction regarding tourism matters occurred in part because the IHAH was originally under the purview of the SEP, and because there was no state institution of power responsible for tourism until the creation of the IHT in 1971.

Instituto Hondureño de Turismo

Six months after the IHAH was established, the first iteration of the Honduran Institute of Tourism (IHT) was founded on 27 January 1953, originally a dependency of the Ministry of Foreign Relations.³⁴ The second version, established in February 1962, directly linked the *Instituto de Fomento del Turismo* [Institute of Tourism Promotion] to the IHAH, calling for a delegate from the IHAH to form part of the IHT's board of

³³ Darío Euraque, 2007, *El Papel de los Ingresos del Parque en Copán y los Objetivos del IHAH: ante Solicitud de Alcalde de Copán, IHAH*. Document in possession of author. See also, Euraque 2007, 2010:80 *Decreto No. 034-1953*, 27 January 1953. Document in possession of author.

directors.³⁵ This designation was reciprocated in the IHAH's 1968 Ley Orgánica, cementing the direct institutional relationship between cultural heritage and tourism.

The second version of the IHT was originally under the purview of the Ministry of the Presidency. In 1971, the Minister of the Presidency was Guillermo López Rodezno, twin brother of Arturo, who was the founder and first director of the ENBA in the 1940s. Arturo López Rodezno was a key actor in the culture sector who helped consolidate a state narrative of mayanization. His artwork and murals reappropriated iconography from Copán and elsewhere in the Mayan world, creating popularized art as the emblematic cultural dimension of an indigenous Maya identity.

Guillermo López Rodezno's background in economic development financing encouraged a shared vision of economic development with the state government while serving as Minister of the Presidency. Under his administration, he consolidated the connection between tourism and culture. By 1971, the IHT finally had a director, one who shared the state vision of planning connected to development. The first director of the IHT was Jacobo Goldstein, who was well connected to the Banco Atlántida—as was Guillermo López Rodezno—which was the most important collector of Maya archaeological artifacts in Tegucigalpa. To a certain extent, Banco Atlántida was the institution that funded Arturo López Rodezno's artwork (Larach 2010:43-65). Thus, the emerging vision of the IHT is not simply a localized vision, but one directly connected to the emerging international dimensions of global finance. Banco Atlántida was owned by Standard Fruit Co., one of the leading banana exporting companies in Honduras, and played a key role in modern Honduran capitalism (Euraque 1996:81-84; 2010:59-63).

³⁵ Congreso Nacional, *Decreto No. 43*, 28 February 1962, art. 8. Published in *La Gaceta*, 7 March 1962.

By 1975, the IHT became integrated into the newly established SECTIN. This occurred within the broader context of the ascent of tourism on a global scale. Honduras emphasized the connection between tourism to monumental archaeology in the cultural heritage sector, which the state considered to be a form of informal education about nation-hood; such efforts overwhelmingly focused on development in or near Copán, as had those of the IHAH since its founding in 1952. Thus, the state promoted tourism in ethnic terms, but a limited vision of ethnicity as the legacy of Cópán, thereby promoting the dual nationalist discourses of a hegemonic indo-Hispanic mestizo identity and a homogenized mayanized cultural identity. The GOH at this point in time recognized a homogenized discourse of indo-Hispanic mestizaje, even claiming that it could not support exclusionary policies around race, since mestizos made up the overwhelmingly predominant socioeconomic sector within the state, and a negligent number of cultural minorities existed within the territory.

Secretaría de Cultura, Artes y Deportes

Originally a more diverse ministry, comprising education, information, and tourism as well as culture, the SCAD was established in its current form in 1993 when the Ministry of Tourism was formed as a separate institution from the SCAD. The original Ministry of Culture was created by the military government of General Oswaldo López Arellano in 1975

because of the insistent petition of intellectuals, teaching unions, professional schools, and some labor unions to design a cultural politics appropriate to the actual needs. Until then, cultural politics were diluted in various ministries and institutions, the principle one being the Ministry of Education (Herranz 2001:232, author's translation).

Thus, almost 25 years after the IHAH was established, the government created SECTIN in 1975.³⁶ Recognizing the state's duty to "preserve and disseminate cultural values," this Ministry was charged with "fostering and promoting civic, moral, cultural, and historic values that contribute to the formation of the Honduran [...] nationality."³⁷ Over the next two decades, this ministry was significantly restructured four times. Currently designated the *Secretaría de Cultura, Artes y Deportes* [Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Sports] (SCAD), it separated from tourism in 1993 when the *Secretaría de Turismo* [Ministry of Tourism] (SETUR) was established.

Although the IHAH has been a legally autonomous institution since 1969, it is institutionally closely connected to the SCAD, as the minister of culture serves as president of the IHAH's board of directors. These changes signaled a major shift for "cultural heritage" as a responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Also, cultural heritage institutions and policies became increasingly linked to how they connected their missions and mandates to tourism within state policies, which increasingly became strategies of economic development.

Under the administration of President Carlos Roberto Reina (1994-1998), in the context of the indigenous pilgrimages, then Minister of Culture, Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle in his first mandate as Minister, established the National Council on Culture and Arts and incorporated four new institutes or directions under its purview, including the IHCAP. Finally, this institutional restructuring called to establish relationships with ethnic cultures that conserve their culture and to research and disseminate culture and traditions

³⁶ Jefe de Estado en Consejo de Ministros, *Decreto No. 234*, 23 June 1975. Document in possession of author.

³⁷ Jefe de Estado en Consejo de Ministros, *Decreto No. 234*, 23 June 1975, art. 1c. Document in possession of author.

of autochthonous and popular culture.³⁸ During Pastor Fasquelle's first mandate (1994-1998), the SCAD represented a significant transformation from prior state positions regarding commitment to and dialogue with indigenous and ethnic issues. Indeed, he maintained that "it should be clear that we need a policy specifically directed at the development of minority cultures and communities of the country" (Pastor Fasquelle [2007]:7, author's translation).

After his mandate ended, the advances made regarding a more inclusive, pluralistic understanding of national identity were generally abandoned by subsequent administrations. At this point, particularly between 2002 and early 2006, the IHT and the Ministry of Tourism essentially displaced the IHAH and SCAD as the state institutions through which international financing on projects connected to cultural heritage. Such projects emphasized the archaeological ruins of Copán, often in arrangements with the Asociación Copán, a local NGO established in 1990 by prominent Honduran archaeologist, Ricardo Agurcia, who also serves as executive director of the organization.

In his second mandate from 2006-2009, Pastor Fasquelle sought to reintroduce the intellectual vision and cultural policies promoted under his first administration, which had largely abandoned by the subsequent ministers after his mandate ended in 1998.

Indeed, in this most recent mandate, he maintained that

the myth of the nation as a descendant of Copán and of an homogenizing mestizaje had not worked and it had to be replaced by an inclusive interpretation of the diverse ancestral populations and also the living indigenous community, of their histories and memories, and of the

³⁸ Presidente de la República, *Acuerdo No. 397*, 21 September 1994. Published in *La Gaceta*, 29 July 1995, pp. 24.

connection of each locality with its own antiquity (Pastor Fasquelle [2011]:19, author's translation).

This vision fits squarely with the policies of a more inclusive multiculturalism.

Conclusion

This exploration into the historical trajectories of cultural heritage institutionalization in Honduras set out a necessary understanding of the relevant state agencies of the cultural heritage sector. Historically, cultural heritage policies were directly linked with both education and tourism sectors, and continue to be dispersed in different, sometimes competing, state agencies. Although contemporary institutionalization of cultural heritage politics lies primarily with the SCAD and the IHAH, the IHT also plays a central role in the promotion of national cultural heritage and national and ethnic identity. Derived from the historical institutional connections between culture and tourism, the IHT enjoys direct institutional relationships with the IHAH and the SCAD.

Early legislation and policies about cultural heritage, in the Independence and Liberal Reform eras, overwhelmingly emphasized protection, promotion, and investigation of the ancient Maya, particularly in Copán—the site of monumental archaeology in the extreme western region of Honduras, and is the country's only cultural property inscribed in UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites. Two interrelated state discourses about national identity that emerged in the early history of the nation-state remain dominant in contemporary cultural politics and the national imagination: the deeply-rooted, popular (and popularized) notion of national identity as a homogenized indo-Hispanic mestizaje—Hale's (2004) "mestizo nationalism"—and a universalized

mayanization. Since the mid-1990s, the state began to redefine its discourse on national identity, recognizing and emphasizing the ethnic cultural plurality of the nation, championing multiculturalism, and moving away from policies of assimilation or integration. Then Minister of Culture, Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle, called to “de-Copanize” cultural heritage politics and policies (Pastor Fasquelle [2011]:19; Euraque 2012:92), a concept directly connected to, though ultimately different from, what Darío Euraque terms “de-mayanization.”

PROPAITH is a benchmark project that is representative of this new emphasis in state discourse to multiculturalism and away from a mayanized indo-Hispanic mestizaje. This discussion of the history of national discourses and institutionality of the cultural heritage sector in Honduras presents a framework to understand the role that PROPAITH, as well as the MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN, have played in state discourse on ethnic national identity.

CHAPTER 3: PROPAITH AND THE CONTRADICTORY SHIFT TOWARD MULTICULTURALISM

To consider artisanry only from the economic point of view seems to me to have been the big mistake of our century. I am referring to the tendency of considering it as consumer and service goods [... The state and state agencies] need to try to reconceptualize, to understand that our cultures are producing diversity, not homogeneity. We need to try to avoid the processes bought from the global market and that respond to the supermarket shelves, that our image depends on consumption.

—Carlos Mordó, cited in Cruz Barcenas 2003, author's translation.

Introduction: Overview of PROPAITH

Within the context of an official redefinition of national identity, in early 1995 the IHAH established PROPAITH. The project's main objectives were to revive and revalorize traditional artisanry of indigenous and mestizo groups, and to provide a marketable economic legacy that might improve the quality of life of the artisans (OAS 2004:38; van Dyke 2002). PROPAITH was one of the first state-sponsored programs that exemplified the reformulation of official discourse of the nation's collective identity to a pluralistic and multiethnic one. National and international resources committed to the project underscore its significance, not only as an economic development project but as a medium for consolidating and disseminating the emerging shift of state discourse about Honduran identity to one of multiculturalism.

As the earliest and most comprehensive state project that embraced and promoted the reformulated discourse of multiculturalism, what contributions did PROPAITH make within the cultural heritage sector and the broader national imagination? Despite its

visible success in marketing a national Honduran identity through artisan production, in early 2006, the IHAH director, Ricardo Agurcia, decided to terminate the program, within the context of an institutional restructuring. However, the legacy of the program continues to influence notions and imagery of national identity as evidenced by the opening exchange. Yet, PROPAITH's goals, objectives, methods, and activities frequently contradicted its rhetoric. As such, it presents a complicated, inconsistent, and ultimately confusing vision of the imagined multiethnic community that it attempts to project. I maintain that it contributed to the shift away from the historically dominant mestizo nationalism by promoting ethnicized artisanry from diverse indigenous cultural groups. Yet, simultaneously, the underlying vision of PROPAITH upheld antiquated notions of national identity and ethnographic theorization and continued to depict reductionist, essentialist visions of Honduran national identity.

PROPAITH was established as a multi-disciplinary, academically grounded program that emphasized an ethnographic approach to an economic development project. In fact, its first director, Alessandra Foletti (1995-1998), received her master's degree in cultural anthropology from the *Universidad de las Américas* in Puebla, Mexico, four years before PROPAITH began.¹ An Italian "development worker," as Jackson (2005) might call her, Foletti previously worked for the SCAD as part of *Alfarería Lenca* (Lenca Pottery), a project that researched this particular artistic expression of the Lenca, and likely served as inspiration for developing PROPAITH.

¹ Alessandra Foletti, [2012], curriculum vitae. <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/alessandra-foletti/37/456/939>, accessed 21 January 20120.

Originally slated for two years, PROPAITH was repeatedly extended because of the success of its holistic approach.² Extending nationwide, PROPAITH worked with seven indigenous and Afro-descendant groups as well as mestizo communities. In its decade long tenure it worked with more than 2,000 artisans—95 per cent of whom were women—comprising 30 organizations in thirteen different communities. Of these organizations, PROPAITH helped eight establish themselves as legally recognized corporate bodies.³ PROPAITH sought to organize additional artisan groups (for example, Miskitos and Tawahkas in La Mosquitia; Garífunas in Triunfo de la Cruz; Maya Chortí in Copán; and, Lencas in Erandique),⁴ but no documentation suggests these efforts were successful, at least in an institutional manner.

Ostensibly committed to supporting local economic development, PROPAITH helped finance the construction of 12 workshop spaces in artisan communities, donated equipment, and provided seed funds for microprojects to almost all the organized groups. Additionally, it implemented more than 250 organizational and production workshops and conducted more than 100 field visits to artisan communities. It organized at least five regional exchanges with artisans from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. It organized and financed more than 85 national sales expositions and participated in 60

² Patricia Cardona, 6 March 2010, personal communication.

³ Document likely written by Patricia Cardona, July 2005, “Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras, PROPAITH,” pp. 2; document likely written by Patricia Cardona, July 2005, “Grupos Apoyados por PROPAITH.” Documents in possession of author. See also, van Dyke 2002:101.

⁴ SCAD, 2001, “Memoria (1998-2001): Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia.” Document in possession of author.

other national ones and in about 20 international exhibitions or sales expositions, including in the U.S., Europe, Asia, and throughout Latin America.⁵

PROPAITH centered around two main dimensions, one ethnographic, and the other economic, though they were intimately intertwined. This distinction corresponded to the organizational structure, which defined a Rescue (or Preservation) Component and a Promotion (or Commercialization) Component. The details of its operative structure are discussed below. However, it is crucial to note here that both these dimensions engaged the notion of a national identity. Since inception, a central element of PROPAITH linked the preservation of artisanal production to a promotion of collective, inclusive Honduran identity. The project is “based on the conviction that [...] traditional artisan production is a fundamental element in the revalorization of cultural heritage and in recognizing a multiethnic Honduran identity.”⁶

The project’s director in 1999 lamented that the limited marketed artisan production in Honduras that existed prior to PROPAITH’s establishment was “destined to the souvenir market, which had prostituted and affected the identity and symbolism of the produced objects.”⁷ In an effort to provide more agency to artisan producing communities, in its historical-ethnographic dimension, PROPAITH researched and

⁵ Alessandra Foletti, 3 May 1995, “Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras,” final version, Tegucigalpa, IHAH, AEHIHAH, box 368; Nilda Lagos to Alessandra Foletti, 15 December 1997, memorandum with no number, but a separate document from the following source, AEHIHAH, box 371; Nilda Lagos to Alessandra Foletti, 15 December 1997, memorandum with no number, but a separate document from the previous source, AEHIHAH, box 371; Alessandra Foletti to Carmen Julia Fajardo, 17 October 1995, oficio no. 092, AEHIHAH, no box; IHAH-PROPAITH, 15 April 1999, Informe Narrativo Parcial del Proyecto, presentado a Agencia Sueca para el Desarrollo Internacional, AEHIHAH, no box; IHAH, no date. Fondos recibidos para PROPAITH, AEHIHAH, box 369; PROPAITH, 2000, Informe de Labores 2000, AEHIHAH, box 365; PROPAITH-IHAH, 2003, “Informe de Labores 2003,” AEHIHAH, box 365; Martha Patricia Cardona to Saúl Bueso, 9 August 2005, oficio no. 050, AEHIHAH, box 371. All documents in possession of author.

⁶ PROPAITH, n.d., brochure summarizing project, author’s translation, AEHIHAH, box 368.

⁷ Iris Pineda van Dyke, [1999], “La Experiencia de PROPAITH en Nuevo Diseño y Desarrollo de Producto en Comunidades Rurales e Indígenas,” speech on behalf of IHAH-PROPAITH, pp. 1, AEHIHAH, box 372.

documented distinct indigenous artisan traditions, thereby strengthening national identity by rescuing, preserving, and reaffirming the artistic and cultural legacies of these traditions. In its economic development dimension, PROPAITH supported, promoted, and commercialized ethnic artisanry, thereby reaffirming and disseminating an indigenized, ethnicized notion of “a genuine national identity.”⁸

PROPAITH provided various interconnected justifications for the project, emphasizing that it was much more than just a “romantic question [...] of aesthetic and static conservation.”⁹ In fact, its justifications encompass cultural heritage, economic, educational, and tourist spheres: 1) to preserve cultural and artistic heritage, a legacy from the pre-Columbian era; 2) to provide a dignified source of income for particularly women in rural areas; 3) to contribute to artistic and cultural development of the country, which are centers of tourist attraction.¹⁰

Financing Sources: Too Big to Fail or Too Big Not to Fail?

PROPAITH was originally structured as an autonomous program, including specialists and personnel hired specifically for the program, an autonomous budget, and its own equipment, transportation, and office space. However, it remained intimately linked with the IHAH for the duration of its existence, especially because the IHAH was the national implementing agency, and was ultimately responsible for its promotion and

⁸ PROPAITH, April 2002, document summarizing PROPAITH, Tegucigalpa, IHAH, AEHIHAH, box 365. See also, speech by Alessandra Foletti, 24 October 1996, “Inauguración tienda artesanal de PROPAITH,” AEHIHAH, box 372.

⁹ Alessandra Foletti, 3 May 1995, “Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras,” final version, Tegucigalpa, IHAH, pp. 8, author’s translation, AEHIHAH, box 368.

¹⁰ Alessandra Foletti, 3 May 1995, “Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras,” final version, Tegucigalpa, IHAH, pp. 8-9, AEHIHAH, box 368.

administration.¹¹ In 1999, likely due to instability in the directorship of the program, the IHAH placed PROPAITH under the IHAH's Department of Anthropological Investigations, where it remained until the program ended in 2006.¹² In addition to annual financial support, the IHAH also provided PROPAITH with logistical support, transportation, assistance with publications, promotional and propaganda material, and was a co-sponsor in various exhibitions.¹³

The GOH, through the IHAH, provided annual funding to PROPAITH, which averaged to approximately 25 percent of the total annual budget of the program. However, significant funding came from the governments of Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and France, as well as from various international development aid organizations and national organizations (see Appendix 3 for a breakdown of all known funding sources). Documentation shows that PROPAITH also solicited financial support from other embassies (Italy, Germany, Holland, U.S.), as well as the UNESCO regional offices in Costa Rica and the GENFUND Program (Trust Fund for Gender Mainstreaming in the World Bank), which is financed by the governments of Norway and Holland.¹⁴

PROPAITH's base document also suggested that other non-profit NGOs could assist the project, with direct funding as well as with personnel and other resources.

¹¹ Alessandra Foletti, 3 May 1995, "Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras," final version, Tegucigalpa, IHAH, pp. 28, AEHIHAH, box 368.

¹² Document likely written by Patricia Cardona, July 2005, "Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras, PROPAITH," pp. 2. Document in possession of author.

¹³ Alessandra Foletti, 3 May 1995, "Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras," final version, Tegucigalpa, IHAH, pp. 28, author's translation, AEHIHAH, box 368.

¹⁴ Alessandra Foletti to Olga Joya, 17 October 1995, oficio no. 093, AEHIHAH, no box; Alessandra Foletti to Juan Chong, 25 August 1995, oficio no. 066-95, AEHIHAH, no box; Mireya Batres Mejía to Iris Pineda, 22 January 2002, oficio no. OS-029-03, 22 Jan 2002, AEHIHAH, box 371. All documents in possession of author.

Importantly, this document specifically suggests Asociación Copán as a potential donor.¹⁵ The executive director of this local NGO, archaeologist Ricardo Agurcia, had been director of the IHAH from 1982-1986 and is a central actor in Honduras's cultural heritage sector, having participated in the exhibit development of all three museums in this study. The Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI) and Swedish Agency for International Development (ASDI) were the most stable funding sources throughout PROPAITH's duration. By 2005, foreign organizations had committed close to two million U.S. dollars to PROPAITH,¹⁶ in addition to the economic and personnel resources that the IHAH and other state agencies provided. (See Appendix 3 for PROPAITH's known funding sources.) This is a significant figure, especially in light of the IHAH's general budget.

Between 1996 and 2006—the general time frame of PROPAITH—the IHAH received only about 25 percent of its total budget from the national federal budget; the remaining 75 percent was generated by revenue from archaeological parks and museums that the IHAH oversees (Euraque 2010:80). More than 90 percent of this self-generating income originates from revenue from the PAC.¹⁷ The amount allotted from the federal budget reflects the general disregard that the GOH places on cultural heritage projects. At less than 0.1 percent of the total federal budget, the funds “assigned to the SCAD to invest in cultural programs and projects [are] the lowest in Central America (with the only exception of Nicaragua)” (Euraque 2010:78-79, author's translation). This has been

¹⁵ Alessandra Foletti, 3 May 1995, “Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras,” final version, Tegucigalpa, IHAH, pp. 28, AEHIHAH, box 368.

¹⁶ The amount in local currency is approximately 37,000,000 Honduran lempiras.

¹⁷ Darío Euraque, 2007, *El Papel de los Ingresos del Parque en Copán y los Objetivos del IHAH: ante Solicitud de Alcalde de Copán*, IHAH. Document in possession of author.

the budgetary pattern since the establishment of the SCAD in 1975 (Quesada 1977:70; Pastor Fasquelle [2011]:15).

In 2007, the IHAH's budget totaled just over two million U.S. dollars, roughly the total amount of PROPAITH's total budget.¹⁸ Of this, approximately 60 percent was destined to personnel salaries and only about 15 percent of the annual budget or US\$312,000¹⁹ was available for all archaeology, anthropology, history, museum, conservation, restoration, and other projects that the IHAH carried out throughout the country (Euraque 2007, 2010:80-85). These figures clearly indicate that PROPAITH never became an independent, self-sustaining project, and largely depended on international funding, a fact that likely influenced the decision to terminate the project.

PROPAITH's Organizational Structure

As a project that focused specifically on indigenous and traditional artisanry, PROPAITH defined "traditional artisanry production" as a process of artisan fabrication where manual labor is prevalent and where the production has been a continuous, dynamic process, from pre-Hispanic or colonial time until present. Additionally, it implies production by a self-identified indigenous group or one of indigenous tradition.²⁰ Despite this broad definition, PROPAITH limited its focus to two principal media: pottery and products made from plants, including wood, vegetable fibers, fruit, and seeds.²¹ Qualifying them as elements which "originate from the earth and the plants,"

¹⁸ The amount in local currency is 38,194,300 Honduran lempiras.

¹⁹ The amount in local currency is 5,892,154 Honduran lempiras.

²⁰ Alessandra Foletti, 3 May 1995, "Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras," final version, Tegucigalpa, IHAH, pp. 2, AEHIAH, box 368.

²¹ Alessandra Foletti, 3 May 1995, "Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras," final version, Tegucigalpa, IHAH, pp. 3, AEHIAH, box 368.

PROPAITH reveals an interest that emphasizes the use of raw material (frequently referred to as natural or ecological resources) in artisanry production as a central element of indigenous identity.²² This emphasis negotiates two distinct positions. First, as a marketing strategy, highlighting the natural origins of the products appeals to a particular kind of consumer (discussed below). At the same time, while PROPAITH's rhetoric recognizes indigenous artisan traditions as dynamic processes, emphasizing the connection to nature and ecological resources projects romanticized imagery of these communities as "timeless, static," holdovers from pre-Columbian times.

Also, notably, in all primary documentation, it seems that the word "traditional" is a euphemism for "mestizo," and is denuded of its historical and invented origins, to draw on Hobsbawm (1983). Additionally, documents rarely speak of Afro-descendant groups, even though Garífuna communities were an original target group. Interestingly, PROPAITH seems to envelop them within the indigenous or "traditional" designation. This is another example in which PROPAITH, despite its rhetoric, homogenizes ethnic communities.

PROPAITH's operative structure centered around two components of indigenous and traditional artisan activity: Rescue (or Preservation) and Promotion (or Commercialization). The particular objectives of the Rescue component centered on researching, publishing, and disseminating information about different indigenous and traditional artisanry in Honduras, particularly those groups with whom PROPAITH intended to work closely. According to the director, this component would "reaffirm a

²² PROPAITH, [1999], "PROPAITH, 1995-1999," Informe 1999, AEHIHAH, box 372; Olga Joya, n.d., "Catalogación de producto y oferta comercial a los nuevos mercados de la artesanía de las Comunidades Indígenas," speech given at the Sexto Seminario Iberoamericano de Cooperación en Artesanía, AEHIHAH, box 372.

genuine national identity” (van Dyke 2002:101, author’s translation) through traditional artisan production. The Minister of Culture at the project’s completion corroborated this as the state’s position, maintaining that PROPAITH contributed to the Honduran collective memory through “[exploring] the world of artisanry and open[ed] perspectives for the understanding of who we are as a nation and a people.”²³

The Promotion component was geared toward strengthening and promoting indigenous and traditional artisans, on an individual, group, and community level. It achieved this through three fundamental aspects: organization, production, and commercialization. These subcomponents included leadership and production workshops, technical and marketing assistance, and direct commercialization of artisanal products in the main public archaeological parks and museums in the country (van Dyke 2002:100), as well as in some private museum, including the MAHSPS. This dimension also produced publications, exhibitions, and sales expositions showcasing the artisanry (Van Dyke 2002). I examine these two structural components in the following sections.

Rescue or Preservation Component

Focused on gathering, researching, and disseminating accessible information about artisan traditions, the fundamental objective of the Rescue Component was to develop a comprehensive understanding of the artisan traditions of the distinct ethnicities that live in Honduras. This was achieved primarily through intense fieldwork, with participatory methodology, oral testimonies, and research of written and oral sources by

²³ Alessandra Castegnaro de Foletti, [2003], “Viaje por el Universo Artesanal de Honduras,” pp. ii, author’s translation. Book with no publication information produced by PROPAITH and IHAH.

diverse specialists, including anthropologists, historians, and linguists.²⁴ Research carried out in this component was mainly historical, anthropological, and ethnographic, seeking a holistic understanding of artisanal traditions. This included research into the following aspects: artisan traditions (including production processes, raw materials, forms, finishes); lexicon, myths, and cosmovisions related to the artisan process; socioeconomic studies of artisan communities; and, information about individual artisans.²⁵ Another central activity gathered samples of artisanal work from all ethnic groups in order to establish an ethnographic collection of artisanry that is representative of them at the present juncture. This complemented the photographic and audiovisual databases that PROPAITH created.

In theory, PROPAITH prioritized researching and preserving artisanal traditions that were less well known or in danger of extinction—particularly those of the Tolupan, Chortí, Pech, Tawahka, Miskito, and Garifuna communities—in the tradition of “salvage ethnography” to preserve material culture before it vanished (Kreps 2003:86-87). A secondary focus analyzed and synthesized information on more well documented artisan traditions and those not in immediate danger of disappearing, including Lenca and mestizo communities.²⁶ In 1998, PROPAITH published six commercial catalogues that explored a range of artisan traditions and the ethnic groups who produce them: Tawahka tuno artisans; Lenca mat-makers [*petateras*]; Lenca potters; mestizo artisans of reed

²⁴ Olga Joya, n.d., “Catalogación de producto y oferta comercial a los nuevos mercados de la artesanía de las Comunidades Indígenas,” speech given at the Sexto Seminario Iberoamericano de Cooperación en Artesanía, AEHIAH, box 372; van Dyke 2002:101.

²⁵ PROPAITH, n.d., brochure summarizing project, author’s translation, AEHIAH, box 368; Olga Joya, n.d., “Catalogación de producto y oferta comercial a los nuevos mercados de la artesanía de las Comunidades Indígenas,” speech given at the Sexto Seminario Iberoamericano de Cooperación en Artesanía, AEHIAH, box 372.

²⁶ Alessandra Foletti, 3 May 1995, “Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras,” final version, Tegucigalpa, IHAH, pp. 12-18, AEHIAH, box 368.

[*junco*] and cornhusk [*tusa*]; and, Miskito artisans (Foletti 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 1998d, 1998e, 1998f). These catalogues provide historical and ethnographic information about the artisan groups, elaboration processes, and symbolism, as well as photographs that illustrate PROPAITH's artisan offering.²⁷ As products of the historical-ethnographic research carried out by PROPAITH, these publications demonstrate the areas where PROPAITH was most successful. Although the project began with a focus on eight ethnic groups, these publications reveal the indigenous communities and artisan production in which PROPAITH was most involved and with whom PROPAITH maintained the longest relationships.

In 2003, PROPAITH published two comprehensive books, which included indigenous artisan traditions from all ethnic groups with whom PROPAITH worked. The Catalogue of Honduran Artisanry contained 260 color photographs documenting the range of products that the artisans produce.²⁸ Each photograph is accompanied by basic information about the piece, including the material it is made from and its measurements. The project's magnum opus was a 200 page book titled *Viaje por el Universo Artesanal de Honduras* [Journey Through the Artisanal Universe of Honduras].²⁹ Through glossy photographs and extensive texts, this book describes the artistic traditions of the ethnic groups with whom PROPAITH worked.

²⁷ Iris Pineda van Dyke, [1999], "La Experiencia de PROPAITH en Nuevo Diseño y Desarrollo de Producto en Comunidades Rurales e Indígenas," speech on behalf of IHAH-PROPAITH, pp. 3-4, AEHIHAH, box 372; Olga Joya, n.d., "Catalogación de producto y oferta comercial a los nuevos mercados de la artesanía de las Comunidades Indígenas," speech given at the Sexto Seminario Iberoamericano de Cooperación en Artesanía, pp. 3-4, AEHIHAH, box 372.

²⁸ 500 copies were published (PROPAITH-IHAH, 2003, "Informe de Labores 2003," pp. 10, AEHIHAH, box 365).

²⁹ Alessandra Castegnaro de Foletti, [2003], "Viaje por el Universo Artesanal de Honduras," pp. ii, author's translation. Book with no publication information produced by PROPAITH and IHAH. One thousand five hundred copies were published (PROPAITH-IHAH, 2003, "Informe de Labores 2003," pp. 10, AEHIHAH, box 365).

Promotion or Commercialization Component

The Promotion Component encompassed three main dimensions: organizational activities of artisan cooperatives; product or production training and technical assistance to artisans; and, marketing, commercialization, and publications. The main objective of this component was to contribute to the development of artisanry typical of certain ethnic groups. Training workshops and technical assistance provided to artisan communities focused on designing and incorporating new techniques, improving processes of production, and improving their equipment (OAS 2004:39). Commercialization of the artisanry was structured and far reaching; PROPAITH participated in more than 150 national and international events, the majority of which were artistic and cultural exhibitions and sales expositions. By 2002, four years before the project ended, PROPAITH had sold more than US\$60,850³⁰ worth of artisanry in these sales expositions.

In the organization subcomponent, PROPAITH provided indigenous artisan communities access to resources, training, and direct commercialization. It achieved this through workshops and trainings in administration, leadership, group cooperation, sense of ethnic belonging, self-esteem, and participation.³¹

The production subcomponent strove to improve artisanal quality, promote traditional techniques, stimulate new designs, and introduce new raw material.

Workshops on design, form, dyeing treatments, technique, finishes, and quality control

³⁰ The amount in local currency is 1 million Honduran lempiras (PROPAITH, April 2002, document summarizing PROPAITH, Tegucigalpa, IHAH, AEHIHAH, box 365).

³¹ Document likely written by Patricia Cardona, July 2005, "Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras, PROPAITH," pp. 2. Document in possession of author; Olga Joya, n.d., "Catalogación de producto y oferta comercial a los nuevos mercados de la artesanía de las Comunidades Indígenas," pp. 3, speech given at the Sexto Seminario Iberoamericano de Cooperación en Artesanía, AEHIHAH, box 372.

were key activities in this subcomponent. Additionally, PROPAITH organized artisan exchanges within the country and region (specifically with El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua) in an effort to stimulate dialogue about production, technique, and material.³² Also within this dimension, PROPAITH created diversified product lines, which were consolidated into and marked within the following categories.³³

1. archaeological: gathers and tries to salvage and disseminate forms, images, and iconography of pre-Columbian heritage as well as decorative systems of ancient architecture. This is achieved through the production of “genuine” ceramic replicas, in addition to the adaptation of motifs in other materials, such as natural fibers, stone, and wood.
2. traditional: gathers artisanry of a vernacular nature, in both design and style, from indigenous as well as rural mestizo communities. Objects produced are both decorative and utilitarian.
3. contemporary: geared to incorporate new designs and interpretations that emerge from current artistic sensibilities of indigenous, Afro-descendant, and mestizo artisans and the demands of the contemporary consumer.
4. colonial: gathers aesthetic features and imagery of cultural syncretism that were produced through the process of mestizaje.

³² Document likely written by Patricia Cardona, July 2005, “Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras, PROPAITH,” pp. 2. Document in possession of author; Olga Joya, n.d., “Catalogación de producto y oferta comercial a los nuevos mercados de la artesanía de las Comunidades Indígenas,” pp. 3, speech given at the Sexto Seminario Iberoamericano de Cooperación en Artesanía, AEHIAH, box 372; “Memoria 1996 IHAH,” pp. 6, end of year report summarizing activities, likely written by the SCAD. Document in possession of author.

³³ PROPAITH, [1999], “PROPAITH, 1995-1999,” Informe 1999, pp. 4, AEHIAH, box 372; PROPAITH, April 2002, document summarizing PROPAITH, pp. 2, Tegucigalpa, IHAH, AEHIAH, box 365.

The first three categories were consolidated in 1997 after some frustration from PROPAITH employees about incoherent and unclear definitions, both conceptual and practical.³⁴ The colonial line was introduced in 1999.³⁵ Throughout the project, PROPAITH proposed various other artisanry lines. It seems that some were incorporated into its repertoire for short-term or seasonal duration; others may have ultimately been incorporated into the existing four categories described above. In the beginning of the project, documents show that PROPAITH recognized the need for “a clear distinction between the following lines: flora and fauna; Christmas; rock art; archaeology; contemporary.”³⁶ Christmas designs, including angels, crowns, flowers, dolls, mobiles, traditional arrangements, and trees, seemed to appear on a seasonal cycle.³⁷ In 2002, there was an effort to incorporate an ecological category into PROPAITH’s offering, as well as a new line of pre-Hispanic replicas based on archaeological models from Copán Ruins, the Comayagua Valley, and the Sula Valley.³⁸

The commercialization subcomponent focused on creating points of sale in parks and museums under IHAH administration; supporting direct sales of artisanry through sales expositions and local, community stores; and promoting artisan production nationally and internationally. To achieve this commercial promotion, PROPAITH

³⁴ Year end report likely written by Alessandra Foletti, “Informe Final Anual 1996,” IAF001, pp. 14, AEHIHAH, box 365.

³⁵ PROPAITH, [1999], “PROPAITH, 1995-1999,” Informe 1999, pp. 7, AEHIHAH, box 372; Olga Joya, n.d., “Catalogación de producto y oferta comercial a los nuevos mercados de la artesanía de las Comunidades Indígenas,” speech given at the Sexto Seminario Iberoamericano de Cooperación en Artesanía, pp. 3, AEHIHAH, box 372; Iris Pineda van Dyke, [1999], “La Experiencia de PROPAITH en Nuevo Diseño y Desarrollo de Producto en Comunidades Rurales e Indígenas,” speech on behalf of IHAH-PROPAITH, pp. 3, AEHIHAH, box 372; year end report likely written by Alessandra Foletti, “Informe Final 1997, PROPAITH-IHAH,” IAF0018, pp. 23, AEHIHAH, box 365. See also, van Dyke 2002:101.

³⁶ Year end report likely written by Alessandra Foletti, “Informe Final Anual 1996,” IAF001, pp. 8, AEHIHAH, box 365.

³⁷ IHAH, December 2002, “PROPAITH Informe 2002,” pp. 6, Tegucigalpa, AEHIHAH, box 365.

³⁸ PROPAITH, April 2002, document summarizing PROPAITH, Tegucigalpa, IHAH, AEHIHAH, box 365; IHAH, December 2002, “PROPAITH Informe 2002,” pp. 5, Tegucigalpa, AEHIHAH, box 365.

participated in more than 150 national and international fairs and sales expositions; of these, PROPAITH organized and financed more than 75. Direct sales from these events totaled more than US\$60,850.³⁹ (See Appendix 4.1. for an example of an exposition sale.)

PROPAITH's marketing strategy stipulated commercialization in events only of an artistic-cultural nature and in rooms with a museographical ambiance, which "reflect the natural context"⁴⁰ of the products' origins, referencing the ecological relationship between artisans and their materials. In these events, products were geared toward a certain type of consumer, "a demanding consumer, who has a good income, and a certain academic preparation that allows him to appreciate and value the aesthetic and symbolic attributes of the artisanry."⁴¹

PROPAITH also made products more accessible to the general population, by spurring the construction of souvenir stores, called *Arte Étnico* (Ethnic Art). Branches of these souvenir shops are situated within museums and archaeological parks under IHAH administration. The project conducted studies about opening artisanry stores in touristic points of interest, particularly in the PAC and on the Bay Islands as the main sites of international tourist attraction.⁴² In addition to the stores constructed at IHAH museums and parks (PAC, Los Naranjos Eco-Archaeological Park, Omoa Fortress, Archaeological Museum of Comayagua, and in Tegucigalpa at PROPAITH's offices, the Old

³⁹ The amount in local currency is 1 million Honduran lempiras (PROPAITH, April 2002, document summarizing PROPAITH, Tegucigalpa, IHAH, AEHIHAH, box 365).

⁴⁰ Olga Joya, n.d., "Catalogación de producto y oferta comercial a los nuevos mercados de la artesanía de las Comunidades Indígenas," pp. 3-4, speech given at the Sexto Seminario Iberoamericano de Cooperación en Artesanía, AEHIHAH, box 372.

⁴¹ Olga Joya, n.d., "Catalogación de producto y oferta comercial a los nuevos mercados de la artesanía de las Comunidades Indígenas," pp. 3-4, speech given at the Sexto Seminario Iberoamericano de Cooperación en Artesanía, AEHIHAH, box 372.

⁴² PROPAITH, [1999], "PROPAITH, 1995-1999," Informe 1999, AEHIHAH, box 372; SCAD, 2001, "Memoria (1998-2001): Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia," pp. 54. Document in possession of author.

Presidential House in the historic center, and Republican Museum Villa Roy), PROPAITH coordinated its efforts with *Casas de Cultura* (in Santa Rosa de Copán), private museums (such as the MAHSPS), in three international airports (Bay Islands, Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula), and in malls (Mall Multiplaza in Tegucigalpa) to establish kiosks, stores, or points of sale. The only report that mentions product mark-up, establishes a 100-150% mark-up on pottery, and a 50-100% mark-up on the rest of the artisanry.⁴³ Information about income generated by direct sales in these stores is incomplete, but records show that, annually, stores under IHAH administration sold between US\$7,000 and US\$48,700 worth of artisanry.⁴⁴ In 1999, PROPAITH planned to open a store in Miami, though the absence of further discussion in subsequent documentation suggests that this was ultimately an unsuccessful venture.⁴⁵

Straddling Old and New Discourses about Ethnic National Identity: Contradictions

Despite its rhetoric to support and promote an inclusive, pluriethnic Honduran identity by preserving and marketing traditional indigenous artisan production, contradictions abounded throughout PROPAITH's tenure. Annual reports, memorandums, and site visit reports called for the introduction of new pieces, forms,

⁴³ Alessandra Foletti to Carmen Julia Fajardo, 9 October 1997, "Informe visita a tienda en Copán Ruinas del 3 al 5 octubre, 1997," IAF009, pp. 4, AEHIHAH, box 365.

⁴⁴ In local currency, this amounts to between 100,000 and 845,612 Honduran lempiras. Year end report, "Informe de Labores 2003, PROPAITH-IHAH," AEHIHAH, box 365; PROPAITH, [1999], "PROPAITH, 1995-1999," Informe 1999, AEHIHAH, box 372; IHAH, December 2002, "PROPAITH Informe 2002," pp. 6, Tegucigalpa, AEHIHAH, box 365; document summarizing store sales, "Ventas x mes durante el año 2006, Tiendas de PROPAITH," AEHIHAH, box 369; SCAD, 2001, "Memoria (1998-2001): Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia," pp. 54. Document in possession of author.

⁴⁵ PROPAITH, [1999], "PROPAITH, 1995-1999," Informe 1999, AEHIHAH, box 372; Olga Joya, n.d., "Catalogación de producto y oferta comercial a los nuevos mercados de la artesanía de las Comunidades Indígenas," pp. 4, speech given at the Sexto Seminario Iberoamericano de Cooperación en Artesanía, AEHIHAH, box 372.

designs, and finishing techniques.⁴⁶ Design and product workshops with artisan groups introduced the following aspects: treatment of reed-weaving through the technique of sulfur etching [*mordentado*]; extraction techniques of natural dyes and decorative use of plant fibers; new motifs, forms, and designs in product categories; new finishing techniques of enameling and glazing in pottery production.⁴⁷ Another workshop for mat-makers “revolutionized the style of traditional *petate*, incorporating decorative designs in different colors.”⁴⁸ Other workshops sought to introduce new media, or re-introduce media typically associated with objects from a pre-Columbian Maya past, including obsidian, polychrome ceramics, leather, and opal, jade, and other semi-precious gems.⁴⁹ While introducing new elements to artisan production, PROPAITH legitimized these workshops as “within the framework of promotion and rescue of artisanal tradition and the ethnic roots of such production.”⁵⁰ (See Appendix 4.3.-4.6. for examples of these “invented” designs.)

In addition, the archaeological category, which incorporated “genuine replicas” of pre-Columbian iconography and forms, projects a stagnated imagery of modern artisans. Rather than producing new work, it sought to precisely reproduce—on a mass scale, but maintaining the notion of a local individual artisan—objects of national archaeological symbolism. Documentary evidence suggests that objects produced within this category

⁴⁶ IHAH, December 2002, “PROPAITH Informe 2002,” pp. 5, Tegucigalpa, AEHIHAH, box 365.

⁴⁷ PROPAITH, [1999], “PROPAITH, 1995-1999,” Informe 1999, pp. 4, AEHIHAH, box 372.

⁴⁸ Year end report likely written by Alessandra Foletti, “Informe Final Anual 1996,” IAF001, pp. 7, AEHIHAH, box 365.

⁴⁹ PROPAITH, [1999], “PROPAITH, 1995-1999,” Informe 1999, pp. 5-7, AEHIHAH, box 372; year end report, PROPAITH, [2004], “Informe de Actividades, enero diciembre 2004,” pp. 4-5, AEHIHAH, box 365.

⁵⁰ Document likely written by Patricia Cardona, July 2005, “Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras, PROPAITH,” pp. 4-5. Document in possession of author.

were primarily, if not solely, replicas of Maya objects originally found in Copán. By having diverse ethnic groups reproduce Maya objects, and by also incorporating Maya symbols and iconography into products from other ethnic groups (such as the Lenca and Tawahka), PROPAITH simultaneously encouraged a collapsed notion of Honduran indigeneity and ethnic diversity into a “universal indian,” in the tradition of the mayanization discourse. (See Appendix 4.7-4.8. for examples of these universalized and mayanized designs.)

On other occasions, PROPAITH personnel made disparaging comments about the form, media, quality, and ethnic value of artisanal production. For example, the production coordinator commented that mestizo “embroiderers produce pieces with no ethno-cultural consideration [...] such as stuffed animals and silk flowers; the flowers with seeds that they make are also very ‘kitsch.’”⁵¹ In 1996, while trying to consolidate the production lines, PROPAITH’s director registered her concern that

the product[s] that the artisans are bringing to the commercialization events do not sufficiently reflect the production training [they have received]. On the one hand, the artisans continue producing objects prior to the training with quality and design problems that, for those reasons, have been changed or improved. On the other hand, the new products do not produce enough continuity and consistency.⁵²

Another contradictory element of this Production subcomponent involved PROPAITH’s efforts to standardize size and quality of artisanry products, further homogenizing artisan

⁵¹ Ricardo Cruz to Alessandra Foletti, 25 April 1995, “Informe Curso San José Guajiquiro,” IRC 002, AEHIHAH, box 287.

⁵² Alessandra Foletti to Ricardo Cruz, 26 November 1996, Memorandum MAF074, AEHIHAH, box 371.

production for the benefit of market demands and the particular type of consumer to whom PROPAITH directed its products.⁵³

Finally, PROPAITH sought to improve artisan production processes. For example, in 2000, it installed propane gas kilns in three Lenca pottery communities. These kilns increased productivity, reduced manufacturing costs, and allowed for a better finish because of more stabilized temperatures.⁵⁴ Yet, these initiatives were not publicized. I believe that this lack of publicity indicates that PROPAITH wanted to continue to promote and project a romanticized imagery of the production processes (which is highlighted in their publications), while creating more standardized products. Thus, PROPAITH strove to balance “genuine” or “authentic” expressions of indigenous artisan traditions against the demands and needs of the consumer and a more efficient production process.

Mapping Ethno-Artisan Territory

In all elements of the project, PROPAITH maintained a clear distinction between the different indigenous sectors with whom it collaborated. One of PROPAITH’s most remarkable and impacting publications was an “Ethnic Artisan Map of Honduras,” which delimited the different geographic areas of the indigenous groups participating in the program, referenced in Chapter One (see Appendix 5). Published in 2000 and widely distributed throughout the country, this map helped develop a new ethno-territorialization. Importantly, in 1995 (the same year that PROPAITH began), Honduras ratified the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 of the International Labor

⁵³ Year end report likely written by Alessandra Foletti, “Informe Final 1997, PROPAITH-IHAH,” IAF0018, pp. 23, AEHIHAH, box 365.

⁵⁴ PROPAITH, [1999], “PROPAITH, 1995-1999,” Informe 1999, pp. 6, AEHIHAH, box 372.

Organization (ILO), which opened the door for indigenous groups to present formal land claims to ancestral territory (Euraque 2010:68, 329-330; see also, Newson 1986; Palacios Barahona 2007). Between 1993 and 2007, “the National Agrarian Institute emitted a total of 448 property titles in favor of [six] indigenous groups, that covered 278,655.33 hectares” (Euraque 2010:339-342). By delimiting the locations of indigenous artisan zones, PROPAITH’s ethnic-artisan map complemented the nascent ethno-territorialization that was emerging in Honduras at this time (see Appendix 5). Due to its widespread distribution, this map became the new authority on the contemporary locations of Honduras’s indigenous groups in the national imagination.

The PROPAITH map could also be interpreted as what Anderson calls the “map-as-logo” (2006:175). It shares, with the practice of colonial states, the geographical distinctions with color distinctions, though in this case it not different colonies that are identified through a unique color, but rather the regional ethnic distinctions through the medium of artisanry. Similarly, this map was reproduced and widely distributed, particularly in touristic spaces, especially in places with increased international tourism. Like the imperialist maps of the late colonial period, PROPAITH’s ethnic artisan map of Honduras, as a “logo-map, penetrated deep into the popular imagination, forming a powerful emblem” (B. Anderson 2006:175).

Conclusion

Illustrating the long standing legacy that PROPAITH had on artisan communities, an IHAH employee relayed the following statement in 2008, reporting on a trip to La Moskitia in the eastern jungles of Honduras, near the Nicaraguan border:

Artisanry is another source of income for Tawahka and Miskita women. The GTZ [German international aid organization *Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*] collaborates in this area through its program PRORENA. In Wampusirpe, I met with the director and vicepresident of [an artisan co-operative]. Both leaders expressed that, since PROPAITH disappeared 3 or 4 years ago, the artisans have not received any more training. Despite all the support from the PRORENA program, they requested IHAH authorities to reactivate PROPAITH or a similar program. [The vicepresident] commented that at one point, she approached the IHAH's financial administrator to request support for the commercialization of their products. The administrator's response was the following: "that they should approach the shopkeepers in Copán Ruins to help them with commercialization," which was not positive.⁵⁵

This interaction illustrates various aspects, contradictions, and tensions of PROPAITH and the legacy of the project. Most importantly, it shows that years after the PROPAITH project ended, and regardless of its problems, artisan communities remembered it as a successful project and sought to continue it. It also demonstrates that PROPAITH was unsuccessful in decentralizing central elements of the project to local artisan communities. For example, that the vice president requested support for commercialization indicates that PROPAITH did not transfer the knowledge or ability of product commercialization to local artisan groups; this meant that without the institutional support of PROPAITH, these artisans were unable to successfully continue marketing their products. In addition, it signals the failure of PROPAITH to put into place institutional agreements that would continue trainings of artisan groups by the IHAH or other state agencies once PROPAITH ended. Finally, the administrator's response signaled a deeply rooted bias, reflecting the institutionalization of the discourse of mayanization, discussed in detail in Chapters One and Two. Encouraging Tawahka

⁵⁵ Yesenia Martinez, 2008, "Informe de viaje a las comunidades Tawakas y Miskitas: Parawas, Parawasito, Kunkuwas, Krautara, Pansana, Krausirpe y Wampusirpe (Raya), 23 al 30 de agosto del 2008," pp. 3, author's translation. Document in possession of author.

and Miskito artisans to seek support from vendors in Copán highlights the historically unidirectional flow of resources to Copán as a site of tourism. Unfortunately, it also reverses the advances that PROPAITH made into promoting cultural policies based on cultural plurality and multiculturalism.

CHAPTER 4: RE/PRESENTING ETHNIC NATIONAL IDENTITY IN MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

Until museums do more than consult [...] until they bring a wider range of historical experiences and political agendas into the actual planning of exhibits and the control of museum collections, they will be perceived as merely paternalistic by people whose contact history with museums has been one of exclusion and condescension.

—James Clifford 1997:207-8.

Introduction

The history of museums in Honduras is sporadic and complicated. However, examining their origins and evolution will help understand their role in promoting and disseminating official discourse of a mestizo national identity, and synergies with the PROPAITH mission. I decided to examine the MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN for a number of reasons. First, it is important to recognize that all three are private museums, that is, they were founded and are run by private organizations. However, according to the Law for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of the Nation, in effect since 1998, legally, all museums in Honduras have to be authorized by the IHAH. This law established that

Museums or cultural centers, official or private, for the exhibition of collections of cultural heritage for public use, can only be organized and established through the authorization of the IHAH, which ought to supervise the adequate assurance of these goods and is obliged to support these centers with the permanent loan of goods of cultural heritage in accordance with a special regulation. Also, the IHAH will authorize and supervise the establishment of private museums with goods of ecclesiastical and private property.¹

The immediate precursor to the current law, in effect since mid-1984, also established that

¹ Congreso Nacional, *Decreto No. 220-97*, 27 December 1997, ch. 10, art. 48. Published in *La Gaceta*, 21 February 1998, pp. 8, author's translation.

the existence, organization, and establishment of museums and cultural centers, be they official or private, for the exhibition of collections of cultural heritage goods, can only be done through the authorization of the IHAH, in accordance with a special regulation.¹

Thus, all museums in Honduras, including the three private ones selected for this study, have to be authorized by the state. In addition, all three museums signed legal agreements of reciprocal support with the IHAH that promote joint programs and projects in the name of cultural heritage, including temporary loans of objects for museum displays. The objects displayed in these museums overwhelmingly include examples from archaeological collections (as opposed to solely objects of “fine art,” such as paintings, sculpture, etc.).² Additionally, the sections of the permanent exhibitions that I examine predominantly focus on historical and ethnographic displays.

Second, the permanent exhibitions in these three museums are comprehensive and include various elements of national identity. Other museums in Honduras (regional, local, municipal) focus on particular departments or municipalities without addressing the national context. The museums in this study discuss national identity and education as aspects of their primary objectives in their mission and vision statements.³ Although museums are settings of informal learning, in Honduras, “visits to museums [...] occur as part of school excursions [...] Parents are not in the habit of taking their children to

¹ Congreso Nacional, *Decreto No. 81-84*, 21 May 1994, ch. 10, art. 46. Published in *La Gaceta*, 8 August 1984, pp. 4, author’s translation.

² For an in-depth study of how the work of one modern Honduran artist embodied the official narrative of a mayanized national identity, see Larach’s MA thesis on renowned artist Arturo Lopez Rodezno (2010).

³ MAHSPS, n.d., “Misión, Visión y Objetivos,” in *Información para practicantes*, author’s translation. Document in possession of author; MIN, n.d., “Acerca del MIN: Misión y Visión,” <http://www.min.hn.acerca/>, accessed 22 November 2011; Chiminike, “Nuestra Misión,” *Misión y Visión*, author’s translation, <http://www.chiminike.org>, accessed 27 January 2012.

museums probably because this is considered the school's responsibility."⁴ In this way they are incorporated into the formal educational program or curriculum while also serving as informal educational institutions to those visitors who attend outside of school excursions.

Finally, these three museums figure prominently in the national imagination of institutionalized Honduranness, arguably more so than any other museum outside of Copán. It is important to remember, however, that both main museums in Copán present only a specific and specialized focus on local Maya archaeology, and thus do not adopt a more national perspective.

All three museums in this study are new, established since the beginnings of the state redefinition of national identity to one of multiculturalism. The oldest museum, the MAHSPS, was inaugurated on 25 January 1994, two days before newly elected president Carlos Roberto Reina took office. Chiminke was inaugurated almost a decade later on 1 November 2003, and the MIN was inaugurated on 10 January 2006. The MIN and Chiminke are located in the country's capital, and the MAHSPS is in San Pedro Sula, the country's second largest city and industrial center, located on the North Coast. Examining these distinct—geographically and otherwise—museums (institutions of power) as multiple domains of research, I draw on methodological techniques elaborated by George Marcus and others about multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995; Falzon 2009).

The following section provides a brief introduction to the three museums of this study, exploring the particular relationship between museums and national identity in a broader context. Then, I present a concise history of efforts geared toward creating a

⁴ World Bank, 25 May 1999, 1999 Project Appraisal Document. Report Number 18452-HO, pp. 25. Document in possession of author.

National Museum in Honduras; understanding this particular history is critical in understanding each of these three museums as a variant of a national museum. The subsequent sections examine and analyze aspects of each museum's permanent exhibit with regards to ethnic representation and discourses of national identity as mestizaje, mayanization, and multiculturalism.

Overview of Museums

It is important to remember that all museums, including private ones, are authorized by the IHAH, and thus directly connected to the state institutions of cultural heritage. The MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN all enjoy a working relationship with state agencies of cultural heritage. The IHAH signed legal agreements of reciprocal assistance with all three museums that establish a collaborative relationship in the coordination and realization of programs and projects related to conservation, promotion, protection, and exhibition of Honduras's cultural heritage.⁵

These legal agreements reinforce the notion that museums are not neutral spaces. Rather, "museums, and the museumizing imagination, are both profoundly political" (B. Anderson 2006:178). Western models of museums in Latin America, in colonial and imperialist tradition, systematically denied the pluriculturalism of the American continent in presentations of official history and national identity, resulting in a distorted image (Risnicoff de Gorgas 1999:52-53). Historically, museums have contributed to this

⁵ IHAH, 9 January 2006, "Convenio de apoyo recíproco entre el Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia y la Fundación Hondureña para la Identidad Nacional"; IHAH, 16 October 2006, "Convenio de Asistencia Reciproca entre el Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia y el Museo de Antropología e Historia de San Pedro Sula"; IHAH, [2007?], "Convenio de Apoyo Recíproco entre el Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia y Centro Interactivo de Enseñanza Chiminike." All documents in possession of author.

distortion of national identity by excluding or misrepresenting minority groups.

Especially in Latin America, where national identities are multicultural or consist of “the concurrence of identity populations” (Risnicoff de Gorgas 1999:54), museums enjoy an empowered position of reinforcing presentations of a collective, national identity.

Although private museums themselves do not *define* official national identity, the presentations and interpretations of their collections play a role in furthering national discourse and notions of national identity in the collective imagination (Risnicoff de Gorgas 1999). Museums are often remiss to incorporate ethnic diversity into their displays, thereby reinforcing official discourse by presenting an homogenized image of indigenous groups and erasing notions of pluricultural and multiracial diversity (Kreps 2003; Schildkrout 1995:68-70).

Although they are all private museums, the MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN represent different segments of the museum spectrum. The MAHSPS is a regional museum in Honduras’s North Coast, or Caribbean, region and in the industrial center of the country. Conceived of by the non-profit organization *Centro de Estudios Precolombinos e Históricos de Honduras* [Center of Pre-Colombian and Historical Studies of Honduras] (CEPREHON), the museum opened in 1994 (MAHSPS 2008:3). Since the museum’s inception, its director has been Doña María Teresa de María Campos Castelló de Pastor, a Mexican ethnographer who also holds a degree in fine art.⁶

The MAHSPS is a multi-functional space that serves the region as a kind of community museum (Archibald 2004; Gurian 2010; Hirzy 2002). The museum offers children’s programs, art classes, and rents out its two auditoriums for conferences,

⁶ María Teresa de María Campos de Pastor, [2008?], curriculum vitae. Document in possession of author.

workshops, and even rock concerts. Visitors may utilize its cafeteria and library services without visiting the museum exhibits. These exhibits focus primarily on the Sula Valley and the North Coast—where the Spanish first arrived to the territory in 1502—though some displays also address issues that are less strictly regional. The content of the exhibits is divided between pre-Hispanic archaeology and post-conquest (colonial, republican, and modern) history. In the MAHSPS, I examine the first half of the permanent exhibit, which focuses on pre-Columbian history in the Sula Valley through its extensive archaeological collection. However, the second half of the exhibit focuses on post-conquest history of the region until the 1950s and encompasses such themes as indigenous resistance to the Spanish, arrival of Afro-descendant groups, and different waves of immigration. Although the exhibit narrative focuses primarily on the regional history of the Sula Valley, it is in the context of the museum’s mission of “strengthening national identity.”⁷

An initiative of former First Lady, Mary Flake de Flores (1998-2002), the Chiminike Interactive Learning Center, or children’s museum, was inaugurated in 2003. This museum was constructed as part of the Interactive Environmental Learning and Science Promotion Project (PROFUTURO), a loan project financed by the International Development Association of the World Bank. This project was originally meant to finance an Interactive Learning Center in Tegucigalpa “as part of a wider cultural heritage strategy” for the country.⁸ However, after Hurricane Mitch devastated the country in 1998, the GOH modified the project to also incorporate “emergency needs and

⁷ MAHSPS, n.d., “Misión, Visión y Objetivos,” in *Información para practicantes*, author’s translation. Document in possession of author.

⁸ World Bank, 26 April 2006, “Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501),” Report Number 35652, pp. 2. Document in possession of author.

sustainable development to address the challenges resulting from the hurricane.”⁹ The revised PROFUTURO project included developing and implementing sustainable development resources, including Chiminike, and capacity building, communication, and project implementation strategies. Constraints on this study do not allow me to examine all elements of the PROFUTURO project, so I focus primarily on the Chiminike learning center. However, I also reference other subcomponents of the project, particularly in the sustainable development resource subcomponent, since these elements are intertwined with Chiminike’s objectives and reach. Within Chiminike, I focus on the section of the permanent exhibit titled, “Honduras and Its People.” The rest of the permanent exhibitions encompass such diverse themes as daily life in the city; the human body; the universe and space missions; relationship between humans and the environment; gravity; and, energy.

The newest of the three museums, the MIN was designed to strengthen Honduran national identity. Since its establishment in early 2006, the director of the MIN has been Mario Hernán Mejía, a specialist in cultural policies, cultural development and management, and development project planning in education, science, and culture throughout Central America. He was the director of Planning and Evaluation Management in the SCAD for six years and worked as a consultant for UNESCO, the UN Development Program, and the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Guatemala.¹⁰

The permanent exhibit of the MIN focuses on the history of Honduras, particularly its geological emergence, historical complexity of its geography in

⁹ World Bank, 26 April 2006, “Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501),” Report Number 35652, pp. 2. Document in possession of author.

¹⁰ Mario Hernán Mejía, [2009?], curriculum vitae. Document in possession of author. See also, M. Mejía 2007:75, 2011:53.

articulating national unity, and key milestones that contributed to the historical formation of the nation. The final section of the permanent exhibit, titled “You Are Honduras,” explores the cultural diversity of the country. An additional permanent feature is the Virtual Copan Auditorium, a virtual experience that transports visitors through space and time to the ancient Maya city of Copán as it might have appeared during the height of its glory, more than a thousand years ago. In this museum, I examine primarily the introductory and final sections of the permanent exhibit; however, since the entire permanent exhibition is framed around the issue of national identity, it is occasionally necessary to reference other relevant sections.

Efforts to Establish a National Museum

Since 1879, during the Liberal Reform era, the GOH attempted to establish a museum that housed, exhibited, and protected archaeological objects (Borbolla and Rivas 1953:23). However, these attempts were ultimately futile. A decade later in 1889, the GOH issued an accord that established a National Museum in Copán, which called for its construction and subsequent administration by the Society of Honduran Antiquities, simultaneously established under the decree.¹¹ This was to be achieved through a contract with U.S. businessman, E. W. Perry, president of the American Honduras Company from Chicago, an agent of the US Department of Agriculture, and “a man of foresight and pluck” (Charles 1890:91). Mr. Perry had other business interests in Honduras, particularly in the eastern region with lumber and cattle, and eventually breached this contract. In 1891, the GOH transferred to the Peabody Museum of Harvard University

¹¹ Cámara de los Representantes del Estado de Honduras, *Acuerdo No. 4*, 28 January 1845, cited in Borbolla and Rivas 1953:27; see also, American Honduras Company 1888.

concession rights of Copán Ruins for a ten year period. In addition to sole research and exploration rights, and the right to half of the archaeological objects found at the site, this new accord also obligated the Peabody Museum to build a structure to deposit archaeological objects found during excavations.¹² The Peabody sent four expeditions to Copán between 1891-1894, when the new GOH cancelled the contract. Although the GOH reinstated it a few months later, the Peabody Museum did not send more expeditions.

On 15 March 1898, the GOH issued legislation expressly establishing the National Museum of Honduras, which would house valuable archaeological objects “for the study of the origin of the ancient race that settled in the country, and also so that these historical monuments of an aboriginal civilization do not leave the country.”¹³ It is important to note that this decree conceived of the National Museum as “just” a building to gather, store, and classify natural and artistic products “that would represent Honduras in international expositions,”¹⁴ and not necessarily as a museum in the commonly understood sense today. Also importantly, this decree was not linked to establishing the national museum in Copán Ruins, as the 1889 accord did.¹⁵ However, 34 years passed before the National Museum was finally established. Driven by efforts from the private sector, particularly the Rotary Club of Tegucigalpa, the GOH eventually inaugurated the

¹² Presidente, *Acuerdo por el cual se acepta el traspaso de una concesión al Peabody Museum*, 20 July 1981, cited in Borbolla and Rivas 1953:30-31.

¹³ Presidente, *Decreto No. 198, por el cual se funda el Museo Nacional de Honduras*, 15 March 1898, cited in Borbolla and Rivas 1953:33, author’s translation.

¹⁴ Aguilar 1991:15, author’s translation; see also, Presidente, *Decreto No. 198, por el cual se funda el Museo Nacional de Honduras*, 15 March 1898, cited in Borbolla and Rivas 1953:32-33, author’s translation.

¹⁵ Seven years later, in 1939, the GOH inaugurated the Regional Museum of Maya Archaeology of Copán, on the town plaza of Copán Ruins. This was constructed as part of an agreement between the GOH and the Carnegie Institution of Washington D.C. (Ávalos 2009:69-74).

museum in downtown Tegucigalpa on independence day, 15 September 1932 (Guilbert, Callejas, and Medrano 1979:40-48).

In addition to its collections of fossils, archaeological objects, minerals, colonial-era weapons, and about 2,000 taxidermied specimens from throughout the country, the National Museum had one workshop for ceramic restoration and another for taxidermy. The building that housed the museum also housed various government offices on the second floor, which added to the difficulties of its operation (Aguilar 1991:20). Twenty years after the museum's inauguration, the SEP declared in its 1952 annual report that "the current condition of the building is completely inadequate [...] All possible minor repairs have been carried out, such as leaks that create flooding in the rooms, threatening the destruction of the conserved material; the floor has also received attention" (Aguilar 1991:23, author's translation). This same year, knowing about the future demolition of the building, the museum's director transferred its "live zoological specimens" to El Picacho,¹⁶ a site on the outskirts of Tegucigalpa that was adequate to house these animals (Aguilar 1991:23). Six years later, the museum was closed, due to the poor conditions of the building, including dangerously large cracks. The remaining collections were split up, with ceramics and archaeological material transferred to the ENBA and the remaining objects transferred to the *Cuartel San Francisco*. Unfortunately,

the storage of the objects in [these] two buildings was disastrous; they were not given appropriate care, many pieces were partially destroyed, and the museographic material was looted [...] By the 1960s [...] any trace of existence of the building [which housed the National Museum] disappeared completely (Aguilar 1991:24, author's translation).

¹⁶ Today, El Picacho is a park that overlooks the city and is frequented by families, especially on weekends, for picnics and to go to the petting zoo that is still housed there.

The loss of this museum and the subsequent negligence of its collections and materials signaled a clear regression in the institutionality of state policies regarding cultural heritage and museums (López Nol 2002).

In the late 1960s, a group of citizens “interested in culture and ashamed by the circumstances that makes Tegucigalpa the only capital in Central America that lacks a National Museum” (cited in Aguilar 1991:25, author’s translation), organized a foundation that would help establish a national museum. Government representatives also participated in this foundation, notably from the SEP and the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras* [National Autonomous University of Honduras] (UNAH); the former agreed to contribute archaeological collections and personnel, and the latter agreed to cede a building in downtown Tegucigalpa for its installation. Although the museum was scheduled to begin operations in 1969, it never reached that point because of a breach of contract between the SEP and the UNAH.

In 1973, specialists from the OAS visited Honduras with intentions of designing the space and location of a future national museum in Tegucigalpa. However, a year later, the widow of a former president willed their former residence, a mansion known as Villa Roy, to the IHAH with the condition that within a decade, the National Museum be installed there. A year after the donation of Villa Roy, the IHAH began the process of adequately remodeling and refurbishing it for a museum. The same year, the OAS sent two architects to carry out and present a study about the museum’s installation. This study suggested a multidisciplinary nature for the future museum “in order to present a global and essential panorama of the two fields of museum interest, which are that of nature and of man” (Lacouture 1976:22, author’s translation). A follow-up study in 1976

proposed a nation-wide network of museums, organized into a hierarchy of different kinds of regional museums, as well as local and site museums (Lacouture 1976). A comprehensive study, this proposal also presented the functions and services to be offered; a flow chart of centralized museum services; and, an in-depth discussion of responsibilities and personnel for each proposed section or department, which included conservation, documentation, exhibition, and dissemination. Unfortunately, seemingly little from this proposal was implemented, at least on a national level.

However, despite the lack of advances made on a network of museums, on 4 February 1981, nearly seven years after the building was donated, the National Museum opened its doors to the public. True to the proposal, the exhibitions in the National Museum were diverse and pluridisciplinary,

spanning from prehistory [...] through evolution, the implication of the term ‘race’ and the arrival of the first humans to the American continent [...], the location of Honduras in the great cultural areas of the pre-Hispanic eras [...] which exhibited in their true context the pre-Hispanic cultures that inhabited the whole of the country, and the Maya culture of Copán [...] The encounter between pre-Hispanic cultures and Europeans, the Colonial era, independence, and ethnic groups that survive in the country, and the political formation of the national territory (López Nol 2002:75, author’s translation).

Fifteen years later, in 1996, the IHAH’s Department of Museums carried out a revision of the conditions and content of the National Museum. Following restoration and refurbishment, Villa Roy was re-inaugurated as the Museum of Republican History on 6 March 1997. A key element in this decision was the poor physical condition of the existing Republican Museum, housed in the *Antigua Casa Presidencial* in the historic center of Tegucigalpa. Part of the collections of this museum was merged with that of the

National Museum, and the IHAH began restoring both buildings.¹⁷ Although Villa Roy reopened in 1997 as the Museum of Republican History, Honduras finds itself, again, without a national state museum. However, I maintain that the three museums that I discuss in the following sections—the MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN—can (and do) occupy the national imagination as partial substitutes for a national museum.

Museo de Antropología e Historia de San Pedro Sula: A Regional Museum as National Identity

The MAHSPS opened its doors to the public on 25 January 1994. Established by the private, non-profit organization CEPREHON, it is a semi-private, regional museum that “attempts to give an idea of the cultural developments achieved by the different [ethnic] groups that have lived in the [Sula Valley] across time” (MAHSPS 2008:3). Located in the northwest corner of the country on the Caribbean or North Coast, the Sula Valley was an area of ethnic convergence in pre-Hispanic times. Indeed, a high percentage of Honduras’s approximately 144,000 registered archaeological sites lie in the Sula Valley, indicating the importance of the region’s archaeological cultural heritage.¹⁸ In modern history, San Pedro Sula was a small banana town that grew to become the industrial center of Honduras and the country’s second largest city, behind the capital of Tegucigalpa, with approximately one million residents or 15 percent of the total population.¹⁹ The MAHSPS is located in the heart of San Pedro Sula, near its central

¹⁷ REDCAMUS 2010; SAP, 21 April 2010, “El elusivo Museo Nacional de Tegus,” on Skyscraper City, <http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?p=55916009&langid=6>, accessed 27 February 2012.

¹⁸ Alejandro Figueroa, n.d., “Crímenes Cometidos contra el Patrimonio Arqueológico *in situ*, Honduras, 1998-2006,” IHAH, pp. 18. Document in possession of author.

¹⁹ INE, n.d., “Resumen de la proyección de población de Honduras: Población total 2001 a 2015,” *Proyecciones de Población*, <http://www.ine.gob.hn/drupal/node/205>, accessed 10 February 2012.

park, the municipal palace, cathedral, and the former offices of the National Railway of Honduras.

Initiatives to establish an archaeological museum in San Pedro Sula began in the 1960s (Aguilar 1991:59-65). Many of these early efforts erroneously emphasized the Maya history and archaeology of the area. For example, the Mayanist Group of the North Coast, an organization comprised of members from the city's private sector, organized an exhibition in the municipal office in 1966 highlighting the ancient Maya and colonial eras in San Pedro Sula. From this early phase, individuals and private collectors offered to donate objects to the proposed museum, ranging from pre-Columbian artifacts to colonial era weapons. Even during these unsuccessful early efforts, the future regional museum was imbued with an importance on a national level. In 1969, a noted folklorist and a member of the committee in favor of establishing a regional museum, criticized the GOH, specifically then-Minister of Education, for not supporting these efforts, maintaining that "a museum in San Pedro Sula will not be founded because this has a national sense, something the Minister of Education dislikes" (cited in Aguilar 1991:60, author's translation).

After additional failed efforts in 1969, 1974, and 1976, collectors and other members of the city's private sector formed CEPREHON in 1982, securing the building for the future museum in 1990. The museum's main building was constructed in 1943 and served as a primary school until the late 1980s; by 1992, building remodeling began to better fit the needs of the future museum.²⁰ The museum's initial collection was

²⁰ MAHSPS, 15 December 2010, "Los orígenes del museo," *Historia del Museo*, http://museodeantropologiadesanpedrosula.com/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=45&Itemid=27, accessed 27 February 2012; MAHSPS, n.d., "Misión, Visión y Objetivos," in *Información*

comprised primarily of pre-Columbian archaeological artifacts that were donated by local citizens (La Prensa 2009b; Campos 2008). Its collection has since grown and diversified to include objects of colonial, republican, and modern history; however, it remains primarily a pre-Hispanic archaeological collection. Its collection contains approximately 2,000 archaeological objects, of which about 30 percent are exhibited; its historical collection is comprised of about 200 objects, of which about 80 percent are exhibited (Pilar Herrero U. 2006:20).

Despite being founded as a regional museum, CEPREHON members recognized that the museum's collections constituted cultural heritage of the nation (Campos 2008). The mission statement of the MAHSPS is “[t]o rescue regional heritage for its restoration, conservation, exhibition, and study, with the objective of disseminating the history of the Sula Valley and with that, strengthen national identity.”²¹ Thus within the specific focus of regional cultural heritage, the MAHSPS contextualizes its exhibitions, collections, and activities as part of national heritage and national identity.

In addition, based on my understanding from my internship there, my sense—though unconfirmed by the museum's director or other sources—is that the museography and exhibit organization and goals are strongly influenced by the Latin American, particularly Mexican, system of national and regional museums that focus on history, ethnography, and anthropology, and which are derived from the older model of national museums (Barboza Retana 1995; Earle 2007; Morales-Moreno 1996; Nederveen Pieterse 2006). Such national heritage museums were typically divided along national history and

para practicantes, author's translation. Document in possession of author. See also, Campos 2008; MAHSPS 2008:3.

²¹ MAHSPS, n.d., “Misión, Visión y Objetivos,” in Información para practicantes, author's translation. Document in possession of author.

natural history lines (Earle 2007:152), and were seen as depositories that displayed national—frequently political—images, memories, myths, objects, and symbols (Earle 2007:152; Morales-Moreno 1996:185). Although it is a regional museum, I maintain that the MAHSPS plays a role similar to that of national museums in Guatemala, Mexico, and other Latin American countries by providing an anthropological, ethnographic, and archaeological basis for national and regional identity and pride (Morales-Moreno 1996:181; Earle 2007:155). Such ethnographic museums are “symbolically central” (Nederveen Pieterse 2006:163-164) in the national imagination. I believe that this is a reasonable interpretation because of the director’s own background; she is intimately connected to the cultural heritage sector and institutions in her native Mexico. In addition, as a Mexican ethnographer, she carried out early fieldwork on topics such as typical indigenous dress throughout Mexico; the current situation of indigenous women in a particular area of northwestern Mexico; and flora and fauna in traditional indigenous medicine in Mexico and Mesoamerica. The majority of her publications reflect this focus on characteristics of Mexican and Mesoamerican traditional indigenous cultures, though a few of her publications focus on aspects of Honduran culinary traditions.²²

Originally recognized as a Municipal Museum and partially subsidized by the mayor’s office, the city stopped paying a monthly subsidy to the museum in 2002, after eight years of financial compensation (Campos 2008:3-4). Subsequent mayors have not reinstated this subsidy, which paid for the building’s maintenance as well as some staff salaries. This default has forced the MAHSPS to dismiss seventeen employees.²³ In 2010, the latest year for which I have data, the museum employed a total of seventeen staff

²² Teresa Campos, 15 November 2010, personal communication.

²³ Teresa Campos, 15 November 2010, personal communication.

members, including exhibit guides, security guards, front desk staff, a library coordinator, and two specialists (in restoration and museography).²⁴

Despite its budgetary constraints, or likely because of it, the MAHSPS has forged alliances and partnerships in addition to the agreement of reciprocal assistance with the IHAH.²⁵ These alliances are with such diverse regional institutions and business as educational centers, other cultural institutions, artistic groups, consulates and embassies, foreign educational institutions, social development organizations, travel agencies, and media agencies (Campos 2008:4-5). These affiliations “reflect the community’s strong endorsement [...] of the museum’s civic-minded mission” (Hirzy 2002:11). For example, one temporary exhibit that I helped install during my internship was financed and organized by the Mexican consulate in San Pedro Sula and a local society of Mexicans living in the region. This exhibit was an *Altar de los Muertos* in honor of the Day of the Dead (November 1). On the evening of the exhibit opening, the museum organized a reception with invited guests from the Mexican community. Another example of how the MAHSPS worked with the regional and national community is that, in late 2010, it hosted the newly formed *Comisión de Verdad* [Truth Commission], an alternative to the government-formed truth commission. This commission, comprised of national and international experts, sought [and seeks] to investigate and clarify the events surrounding the coup d’état of 28 June 2009 and “to demand justice for the Honduran population

²⁴ MAHSPS, n.d., “Misión, Visión y Objetivos,” in Información para practicantes. Document in possession of author.

²⁵ IHAH, 16 October 2006, “Convenio de Asistencia Reciproca entre el Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia y el Museo de Antropología e Historia de San Pedro Sula.”

affected by the coup, and to adopt necessary measures to avoid that these kinds of occurrences happen in the future.”²⁶

The museum is divided into two floors with distinct themes in the permanent exhibitions. This main building also contains the director’s office as well as a room for temporary exhibitions, and a small shop that sells books, T-shirts, souvenirs, and locally made artisanry. In part derived from the successful sale exposition that PROPAITH held at the MAHSPS in June 1996, the museum’s souvenir shop continues to sell artisanry originally linked with PROPAITH. The museum views the products on display in the store as another form of museum display: “the artisanry store serves to exhibit examples of living heritage and to support the Honduran artisans who produce them” (Campos 2008:2, author’s translation). Although this store was originally stocked with products from the PROPAITH project, it remains unclear how and from where the museum replenishes its stock, now that PROPAITH has ended. A likely possibility is that it maintains direct contact with one or more of the artisan organizations that has established itself as a legal corporation. Sales of this artisanry contribute to the museum’s income, of which 65% is self-generating. In addition, this income is obtained through entrance fees, donations, educational and cultural activities, and rental of auditoriums for events (Pilar Herrero U. 2006:11).

The MAHSPS offers much more than its permanent exhibition and temporary exhibits. It is a multi-functional space that serves distinct needs for the regional community. As a civically-engaged community museum (Hirzy 2002; Gurian 2010; Falk and Sheppard 2006; Archibald 2004), the MAHSPS is a center of social gathering that is

²⁶ Comisión de Verdad, n.d. “Objetivos,” Nuestra Labor, <http://www.comisiondeverdadhonduras.org/>, accessed 25 January 2012.

actively and visibly involved in civic life in San Pedro Sula (Hirzy 2002). In fact, its director maintains that

the museum has been converted into one of the most important centers of cultural activity [in the city...] The community is aware that the museum is at their disposition, although we still need to convince them that it is the community, by visiting and attending its activities, is what gives the museum life (Campos 2008:5-6, author's translation).

A small cafeteria in the museum's patio serves traditional regional dishes for lunch and the general public can take advantage of this service without paying the museum entrance fee. This also serves as a gathering space for group meetings. During my internship, I observed that on every third Thursdays of the month, local couples attend group marriage counseling in this space; on these days, the MAHSPS offers two for one entrance discounts for couples to visit the museum's exhibits.

At the back of the museum, in a separate building, the museum conservator and museologist have their workshops. Also, the museum's library is housed here; this library collection contains more than six hundred books, journals, and documents that are primarily concerned with the archaeology and history of the Sula Valley; with two congruent research or reading rooms, this resource is open to the general public. During my internship, I observed a light but steady flow of visitors utilizing the library and its space. The majority were high-school students, easily identifiable because of their school uniforms. I also observed that small university groups occasionally gathered here to hold informal lessons or discussions outside of the classroom.

There is also a space for organized children's activities called *Rincón del Cuento* [Story Corner], primarily on Saturday mornings. The two times that I accompanied the museum staff member who led these activities, approximately ten children participated

each time, ranging in age from about five to 12 years old. I observed that parents use this service as free babysitting. The three mothers with whom I spoke all indicated that they did not visit the museum while their children participated in *Rincón del Cuento*, but rather ran errands. When I participated in the *Rincón del Cuento* program, activities were loosely structured. The room has a children's library and we took turns reading books aloud to the young participants. We also played with building blocks and painted or colored pictures that the children then brought home. This program also puts on occasional puppet shows, and other creative, learning-based activities (Rodríguez 2009b).

The museum also has two auditoriums—one with a raised stage that can seat up to four hundred and fifty people. The museum frequently rents out this auditorium for diverse activities; during my internship and prior work with the IHAH, I observed or participated in conferences, workshops, theatre productions, rock concerts, and weddings in this auditorium. The museum also rents out an adjacent, smaller auditorium that can seat up to one hundred people; here, the museum's museologist, trained at the ENBA, offers weekly workshops to the general public on different kinds of media art.

I maintain that the MAHSPS is the embodiment of Gurian's definition of a community museum: it is a

mixed-use space of affiliated organizations and functions, with a blend of meeting spaces, gathering spaces, teaching spaces and stages along with offices and food service. [It] mix[es] social service, day-care, performance and community events with exhibitions (Gurian 2010:73).

For example, in 2007, the MAHSPS undertook 409 activities (which translates to approximately 34 activities per month), with about 30,000 people in total attendance (Campos 2008:6). Although this represents more than the number of visitors to the

museum, many who attend these activities “look curiously through the windows with the idea of returning [to visit the museum]” (Campos 2008:6, author’s translation). From 2002 until 2009, the MAHSPS averaged 23,118 visitors per year. Nearly three-quarters of visitors were school groups, far outnumbering the national average of 56 percent (Pilar Herrero U. 2006:35), firmly cementing the MAHSPS as an institution of non-traditional and informal education.

TABLE 2. ANNUAL VISITORS TO THE MAHSPS, 2002-2004, 2007-2009

	2002	2003	2004	2007	2008	2009
National Visitors	21,224	19,537	18,180	20,957	25,140	22,766
International Visitors	3,376	2,207	2,424	1,046	1,174	674
TOTAL VISITORS	24,600	21,744	20,604	22,003	26,314	23,440

Source: Pilar Herrero U. 2006:35; and Reporte Estadístico de Visitas 2007, 2008, 2009, MAHSPS. Documents in possession of author.

TABLE 3. ANNUAL DISTRIBUTION OF VISITORS TO THE MAHSPS, 2007-2009²⁷

	2007	2008	2009
Public Schools	6,049	8,210	6,028
Private Schools	9,875	11,039	11,017
Honduran Tourists	1,250	1,356	1,177
Foreign Tourists	1,009	1,133	641
Honduran Courtesy Visits	956	1,253	1,572
Foreign Courtesy Visits	37	41	33
Adults	1,831	2,178	2,241
Senior Citizens	155	112	42
Children	841	992	689
TOTAL VISITORS	22,003	26,314	23,440

Sources: MAHSPS Reporte Estadístico de Visitas 2007, 2008, 2009. Documents in possession of author.

²⁷ Courtesy visits include: entrance on the first Sunday of the month in which visits are free; entrance with tickets donated by beneficiaries of the museum; entrance of special visitors. It is also important to note that the number of visitors in the months following the coup d’état on 28 June 2009 dropped severely and did not recover to the levels prior to the coup. Visitor numbers in July dropped to about 40 percent of visitors in June 2009, and dropped to about 30 percent and 50 percent of the number of visitors in 2007 and 2008, respectively. The number of international visitors dropped to between 20-64 percent from the previous seven years.

Exhibit Overview

The museum tour begins on the second floor, in the pre-Columbian archaeology area. This is a large, open, interconnected area that is divided by partial walls, separating the exhibits into thematic, often typological areas. There is little interpretation on labels that accompany the artifacts. Instead, lengthy texts hang near the vitrines or displays. All texts are in Spanish; throughout the exhibit, there are a total of approximately 12 boxes beneath the wall texts that have laminated pages with text translated into English. Many of the texts in the vitrine displays are in both Spanish and English. Additionally, the MAHSPS sells educational support guides for teachers as an additional resource to help achieve “the objectives and development of the contents” of the two exhibition areas. Published in 2008, this guide follows the path of the exhibition, organized chronologically, and includes additional activities and lesson plan suggestions that teachers can adapt to their particular objectives and grade levels. This guide uses much of the same text from the exhibit panels, with additional, explanatory information, such as definitions of vocabulary and concepts (MAHSPS 2008).

The *guión museográfico* (museological guide, exhibit brief, storyline, or narrative of the exhibit) for the Archaeology Area was prepared by two archaeologists and museum anthropologists from the U.S. with extensive experience in the Sula Valley. The text of the History Area was written by Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle—the museum director’s husband, but more importantly a prominent historian from San Pedro Sula who specialized in the post-conquest history of the region and who served as Minister of Culture between 1994-1998. Texts from this area are largely derived from his book, *Biografía de San Pedro Sula, 1536-1954* (1990).

The Archaeology Area is divided into five chronological sections: an introduction to the Sula Valley; the Archaic Period (? until 1500 BC); the Formative or Preclassic Period (1500 BC until 200 AD); the Classic Period (200-900 AD); and, the Postclassic Period (900 AD until the conquest [1502]) (MAHSPS 2008). The introductory area focuses on the location of the Sula Valley, its geography, geology, and flora and fauna; maps and texts here are meant to “orient the museum visitor in the spatial and cultural context in which pre-Columbian groups” in the Sula Valley developed.²⁸

The Archaic Period talks about emerging agriculture, emphasizing corn and cacao; it also presents obsidian and shells. The Formative Period focuses on two archaeological sites in Honduras: Playa de los Muertos (in the heart of Sula Valley) and Los Naranjos (south of the Sula Valley in the center of the country). It also explores different kinds of decoration on ceramic vases and a smaller vitrine presents “Ehécatl” figurines, one of the personalities of the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl. The Classic Period area presents many different topics and display cases: Ulúa polychrome vases; marble vases; needles and scrapers (for softening hides or making paper); stamps; tattoos; whistles and ocarinas; incense and incense burners; the Maya ball game and human sacrifice; mass production (using molds); tooth decoration and cranial deformation; jade; and, grinding stones. Finally, the Postclassic Period explores the Maya codices, bronze objects, and spindles.

Exhibit Analysis

The Sula (or Ulúa) Valley is located on the northwest coast of Honduras and is widely considered to be on the southeast Maya frontier, or “periphery” zone of

²⁸ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “The Sula Valley”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “The Geology of the Sula Valley”; see also, MAHSPS 2008:11.

Mesoamerica (Barahona 2009, 2002:74), which generally follows Kirchhoff's 1943 definition (2009 [1943]). The Sula Valley is also defined as a periphery zone in terms of its relation to the intermediate culture area, which includes the eastern region of Honduras, called La Moskitia, and most of lower Central America. Historically and archaeologically, Honduras in general, and particularly the Sula Valley, have been defined as an area of convergence, a marginal or peripheral region, dependent upon—or a “bridge” between—more powerful or more developed cultural core areas (Barahona 2009:33). No living informants or surviving written documents have been found in archaeological investigations to shed light on the cultural and linguistic groups that lived in the Sula Valley. However,

[e]qually persuasive arguments have been offered for using what little is known about each of the indigenous cultures of Honduras, the Paya, Jicaque, Lenca, and Chortí, in order to interpret the prehistory of the [Sula] Valley [... which] seems to have been in a zone of intense interaction between the cultures of Honduras (Joyce 1991:15-16).

In the introductory area of the permanent archaeological exhibition, the text entitled “Cultural Influences in the Sula Valley” indicates this cultural diversity in the valley. (See Appendix 7.2.) Affirming that this region was a “contact area between advanced Mayan and Nahuatl peoples [...], Lencas [...], and Jicaque, Paya and other tribal groups,”²⁹ this text underscores the cultural and trade ties this region had with Mesoamerica. It notes that the Sula Valley was a region of “mingling [...] of cultural [and] linguistic traditions” between Mexican and northern Central American groups and groups from southern Central America and South America.³⁰ However, it emphasizes the Mesoamerican influence, noting that the occurrence of “Olmec vestiges [...] may reflect a

²⁹ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Cultural Influences in the Sula Valley.”

³⁰ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Cultural Influences in the Sula Valley.”

cultural exchange [with] the north coast of Honduras [that] predates the Mayan Empire of city states.” It continues:

Most archaeologists believe that at the time of the great Mayan renaissance (250 A. D. to 800 A. D), there coexisted scattered Mayan colonies throughout the [Sula Valley] residing beside other contemporaneous Indian groups. This theory is borne out by archaeological excavations throughout the area which show that a considerable amount of the pottery exhibits foreign styles, both imported and locally produced variants of these foreign styles.³¹

This text, emphasizing the Sula Valley’s connection to Mayan culture, is indicative of the remaining text throughout the permanent exhibition. Besides placing emphasis on the ties this region had with Mesoamerican cultural groups, this introductory text disenfranchises non-Mesoamerican cultural groups in Honduras by dichotomizing—in unequal terminology, no less—the social and political organization of indigenous groups as “advanced” (Mesoamerican) versus “tribal” (Intermediate Area). Although this socio-political characterization of non-Mesoamerican groups may have, indeed, been tribal (or by moieties, or chiefdoms, etc.), the esteem placed on the Mesoamerican peoples places an opposing value on the “tribal” groups, even if it is a legitimate descriptive denotation.

Furthermore, the use of the term “Jicaque” to reference the Tolupan group presents further problems. William Davidson, foremost historical geographer on Honduran ethnic groups, notes that etymologically, the term is apparently derived from a Nahuatl word (Davidson 2009:199). Historically, the term “jicaque” and its other iterations (for example, “xicaque,” “xicoaque,” “xicaquez”, “hica,” “huaque”) were more generally utilized to refer to “uncivilized indians,” who had not been christianized, throughout

³¹ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Cultural Influences in the Sula Valley.”

Honduras particularly in the eastern regions” (Davidson 2009:199). In the 18th century, the term “jicaque” began to have a more specific meaning, referring to “disperse indigenous groups in the north and central areas of Honduras that had not been conquered, particularly from the administrative area of Yoro” (Davidson 2009:199, author’s translation; see also, Chapman 1992:13; Rivas 2000:147; Barahona 2009:49-50).

The educational support guide, mentioned above, includes segments of this introductory wall text. I find it telling that the guide capitalizes references to the Maya cultural group, but refer to Lenca, Paya, and Jicaque groups in lower-case (MAHSPS 2008:15). In Spanish, languages and nationalities are not capitalized. Although this may seem of negligible importance, barring the possibility that it was simply an oversight or editing error, I see this as a further demonstration of “legitimizing” and certainly emphasizing Mayan history, and as a subtle technique of “trivializing” (Eichstedt and Small 2002:107) the other indigenous groups and their contributions to a modern national identity.

Located in this introductory display is a table of a “Chronology of the [Sula] Zone” that elaborates the ceramic sequence that has been identified in the Sula Valley, as a means of contextualizing the regional history. This table compares the social evolution of the Sula Valley to that of the Maya center of Copán, ranging from the Archaic Period to the Late Post-Classic Period. The text explains this comparison: “The ceramic chronology used for Honduran pre-Columbian pottery is based on the traditional Mesoamerican framework which shows relationships to the Maya World.”³² While recognizing this “traditional” association with established Mesoamerican eras is based on

³² MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Ceramic Sequence of Prehistoric Honduras.”

scholarly models, by *only* comparing the chronology of the ceramic pottery of the Sula Valley region to the Maya chronology, and not including chronologies of additional indigenous groups or culture areas, this table disenfranchises concurrent indigenous groups.

One thematic area in the first section of the exhibition focuses on important pre-Hispanic foods in the Sula Valley zone. A general overview of agriculture, titled “Incipient Agriculture,” focuses on the “discovery of agriculture” (MAHSPS 2008:17), and subsequent cultivation of such crops as squash, chili, maize, and beans. However, this text only references Mesoamerican groups: “Around 7000 B.C., Mesoamerican groups discovered agriculture. Squash [...], together with maize and beans, comprised the basic diet” (MAHSPS 2008:17, author’s translation). A text panel entitled “Corn”, which is placed near a sculpture of the Maya “Young Corn God”, describes the domestication and importance of this food. This description explains different manners of preparing maize in Mesoamerica. It emphasizes one particular process (*nixtamal* process) as “converting maize into [the] ‘true staff of life,’” and notes that this process was probably invented or discovered by Olmecs, another Mesoamerican cultural group.³³ In an effort to link some pre-Hispanic forms of maize preparation to modern Honduras, the text mentions that these foods are still sold in particular areas of western Honduras, part of the “Mundo Maya.” By not including a discussion of foods common to the Intermediate Area (e.g. root crops), this display further reinforces the Maya or Mesoamerican elements of indigenous groups. (See Appendix 7.3.)

³³ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Corn.”

A second panel describes cacao, “The Fruit of the Gods.” This text notes that cacao was “the principal item of trade between the Nahuatl speaking traders [...] and the Maya before the Conquest.”³⁴ The introductory paragraph emphasizes that archaeological excavations in the Sula Valley unearthed vessels that likely have cacao vestiges. This text also quotes an unnamed source, who observed that, by the 18th century, ordinary “Indians drank chocolate twice a day” if not more.³⁵ Although this “universalization” (Eichstedt and Small 2002:108) of “Indians” could feasibly include Lenca, Tolupan, Pech, and other “non-Maya” groups, the fact that it does not specify that (or if) these groups are included, and further, names only the Maya and Nahuatl groups, clearly shows that it is referencing only “advanced” Mesoamerican cultural groups.³⁶

The latter part of the text describes the “ancient Maya” process of preparing cacao; traces its origins to the Olmecs; and, illustrates three different Maya glyphs of cacao.³⁷ Finally, the text mentions that “the first European encounter with cacao occurred when Columbus, on his fourth and final voyage, came across a large Maya trading canoe near Guanaja, the Bay Islands, Honduras, which had cacao beans in its cargo.”³⁸ This account is expanded upon in a separate text panel, titled “First Encounter between the Europeans and the Maya.” What is misleading about this account is that Honduras’s Bay Islands (including Guanaja) on the North (or Caribbean) Coast were

first occupied by the ancestors of today’s indigenous Pech [cultural group]. The Pech did not live within the Mesoamerican frontier, [which was] dominated by the Aztec and Maya, and perhaps for this reason, the

³⁴ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Cacao...Fruit of the Gods.”

³⁵ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Cacao...Fruit of the Gods.”

³⁶ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Cultural Influences in the Sula Valley.”

³⁷ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Cultural Influences in the Sula Valley.”

³⁸ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Cacao...Fruit of the Gods.”

northeast of Honduras has remained historically imprecise (Davidson 2009:245, author's translation).

Furthermore, the account of Columbus's encounter with the canoe mentioned in the text is confusing and unclear. Historian Peter Martyr indicates that

the trader was not necessarily a Maya transporting commercial Mesoamerican products to other Mayas. The native could have been a trader from the island, a Pech, who traded between the island and the adjacent mainland (cited in Davidson 2009:247-8, author's translation).

The textual emphasis on the Maya connection to the North Coast region and the Bay

Islands in particular, underscores the popular, but historically inaccurate or at least

unsubstantiated, notion that "the blood of Hondurans is primarily Maya" (Euraque

2004:50), and makes invisible the history and role of "non-Maya" indigenous groups in

Honduras.

Another thematic area in the first section of the exhibition focuses on natural resources utilized in the Sula Valley. Three resources are highlighted, two in great detail, and one very briefly. Obsidian, or volcanic glass, was used extensively to create sharp cutting artifacts, such as blades and arrows (MAHSPS 2008:19). This text notes that "archaeologists have found evidence indicating an obsidian exchange network or market system [which] corroborates a commerce the width and breadth of Honduras during the Archaic Period."³⁹ This extract, coupled with the mention of different regional sources of obsidian, seemingly recognizes the pre-Hispanic diversity in Honduras; however, the remainder of the text highlights the obsidian connection to Mesoamerica. "Control over obsidian sources [...] in the Mayan [region] gave economic importance and power to whoever held it."⁴⁰ By naming the Maya but not other cultural groups, this sentence

³⁹ MAHSPS, exhibit text, "Obsidian Mines."

⁴⁰ MAHSPS, exhibit text, "Obsidian Mines."

completely ignores other indigenous cultural groups who also utilized obsidian as a resource. By indicating a trade network, but not elaborating which cultural groups in addition to the Maya, participated in this commerce, this text panel further “trivializes” (Eichstedt and Small 2002:107) “non-Maya” groups.

This display area describes jade as a second natural resource. The accompanying text indicates that “burial caches and offerings of jade have been found all over Honduras,”⁴¹ but again, the text mentions only Mesoamerican cultures and not other cultural groups. Furthermore, the text emphasizes the sacredness the Maya placed on jade: “Mesoamericans venerated jade [and] gave it supreme importance [...] To them, jade represented immortality and eternity [as well as] breath, life, fertility, and power.”⁴² This text also mentions the Olmecs by name, “the oldest Mesoamerican culture,” who also venerated jade and carved it into various forms (figures of different gods) and in diverse ritualistic settings (such as burial masks).⁴³ The omission of non-Mesoamerican cultural groups, coupled with the emphasis on the sacredness of jade for these Mesoamerican groups, underscores—again—the “trivialization” (Eichstedt and Small 2002:107) of the majority of cultural groups who inhabited Honduras.

The third natural resource that this display mentions is quetzal feathers. A very short description, this text explains that these were “tail feathers from the royal bird of the Maya” and was “not permitted to be used except by the royal family.”⁴⁴ These three text panels, taken together, do not represent a balanced presentation of all cultural groups in what is now Honduras. Recognizing the importance of these natural resources for the

⁴¹ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Jade.”

⁴² MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Jade.”

⁴³ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Jade.”

⁴⁴ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Quetzal Feathers.”

Maya and Olmecs, the omission of any mention of other cultural groups advances the notion of the ancient Maya civilization as the “cornerstone of [...] the construction of identity” in Honduras (Euraque 2004a:44, author’s translation). The display *could have* included a text panel that discusses one of three issues: first, the importance of particular natural resources for the historic Tolupan, Paya, Tawahka, or Lenca cultural groups; second, the trade routes, exchange, and interactions that the Maya had with these “non-Maya” groups; or, third, an explanation of *why* it is difficult to have similar textual narratives of natural resources used in “non-Maya” cultural groups (for example, the lack of archaeological evidence).

The MAHSPS has a vast amount of ceramic pottery in its collection, and displays much of it in this exhibition. The text panel that accompanies one pottery display is titled “How to Read Polychrome Ceramics.” The first sentence universalizes Polychrome ceramics as Maya: “many decorations which appear on Mayan polychrome vessels in the form of glyphs have become recognized not as artistic motifs but for what they really are: written texts.”⁴⁵ This text continues by describing the standard order of glyphs, and brief descriptions of their significance. The final paragraph mentions that ceramic pottery in the Sula Valley “also used [...] glyphs [but they were] stylized and for purely decorative effect.”⁴⁶ These statements ignore the vast range of pottery found across Honduras and in the Sula Valley, including many types that did not have any glyphs, stylized or not. Again, this omission and collapse of all indigenous groups into one (the Maya), underscores the esteem placed on the Maya in the national imagination.

⁴⁵ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “How to Read Polychrome Ceramics.”

⁴⁶ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “How to Read Polychrome Ceramics.”

A final thematic area focuses on the “Eve of the Conquest” of Honduras, around 1500 A.D.⁴⁷ Text accompanying this display, similar to the introductory text “Cultural Influences in the Sula Valley,” mentions a heterogeneity of the cultural groups that lived in this region. Also similar to the introductory text, is the “trivialization” (Eichstedt and Small 2002:107) of non-Mesoamerican indigenous groups. Interestingly, in this text, *no* cultural group is named. The text distinguishes between two types of social organization: chiefdoms and tribes and provides a brief characterization of them as either a socially stratified hierarchy or an unstructured egalitarian tribe.⁴⁸

By not defining which cultural groups practiced what kind of socio-political organization, the text “universalizes” (Eichstedt and Small 2002:107) the indigenous groups that inhabited Honduras prior to the Spanish conquest. This panel does provide a generalized geographic division of group organization, stating that groups with chiefdoms lived in the western and central part of Honduras, as well as in “scattered colonies” in the northeast of the country; but it does not provide an explanatory (even generalized) location for tribal groups.⁴⁹ The reader infers from this, that these tribal groups inhabited the southern and eastern areas of Honduras. The text’s additional mention of the city of Trujillo in northeastern Honduras also undermines the geographic location of “tribal” groups, since—again—this emphasizes the “advanced” groups. The text *could have* made a similar statement; saying that some tribal groups extended throughout central Honduras and even into the northwest would have balanced the explanation. Instead, it again trivializes, in this case non-chiefdom cultural groups.

⁴⁷ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “En Visperas de la Conquista.”

⁴⁸ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “En Visperas de la Conquista”; MAHSPS 2008:33.

⁴⁹ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “En Visperas de la Conquista”; MAHSPS 2008:33.

Additionally, the panel includes a population estimate of about one million native inhabitants at the time of conquest. Yet again, it emphasizes the Maya civilization; here, the text does not mention the Maya by name, but this is understood implicitly when it speaks of the western hierarchically-structured chiefdoms.⁵⁰

In addition to the systematic omission and “trivialization” (Eichstedt and Small 2002:107) of “non-Maya” indigenous groups, the exhibition presents two lengthy text panels that discuss uniquely Maya “things.” The focus of these two texts is clear from their titles: “Mayan Books...Codices” and “The Maya Ball Game.” Neither of these texts mentions other indigenous groups, and no other text presents a similar discussion of activities and objects of other indigenous groups. (See Appendix 7.6.-7.8.)

Interestingly, different versions of the *guión museográfico* called for a more sustained discussion of national identity than what the permanent exhibit actually includes. For example in the Classic Period area, a version of the *guión* proposed a conceptual group titled “Ulúa Sphere” that included a text called “Ulúa Polychrome Ceramic and Cultural Identity.”⁵¹ This text to accompany the object group reads:

Ulúa polychrome pottery consists of a set of distinct but closely related substyles typical of the area in which they were made. They share many design features, including symbols that probably reflect the religious beliefs of their makers. The manufacture and use of one of these substyles reflects not only membership in a local cultural group with its own identity, but also participation in an ‘Ulúa sphere’ that corresponds to a broader cultural group.⁵²

⁵⁰ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “En Vísperas de la Conquista”; MAHSPS 2008:33.

⁵¹ John Henderson and Rosemary Joyce, 1993, “Centro de Estudios Precolombinos e Historicos de Honduras | Museo de Antropología e Historia de San Pedro Sula: Guión de la planta de Arqueología” Guión 2b, pp. 5.

⁵² No author, but likely written by John Henderson and Rosemary Joyce, probably in 1993, “La cerámica policroma Ulúa y la identidad cultural,” Guión Museográfico, Area de Arqueología, Cédulas, pp. 16.

In the Post-Classic Period area, the archaeologist exhibit developers proposed a map titled “Indigenous Groups in 1525.” This was to accompany texts about settlement patterns, hierarchy; the economy, agriculture, and trade; new political organization; limited emphasis on public architecture; cacao production; relationship with the Yucatan; and the Spanish invasion and documentation of historical information.⁵³ However, despite these two particular suggestions that specify cultural identity of pre-Hispanic cultural groups of the area, they were not included in the final exhibit installation. The overwhelming majority of the texts emphasize the Maya and Mesoamerican cultural elements in the Sula Valley, mentioning the Maya in seven separate wall texts, but only once mentioning Lenca, Paya, and Jicaque⁵⁴ and not the Tawahka or Chortí. not once mentioning another cultural group by name (ex. Tolupan, Pech, Lenca, etc.).

This analysis of the text panels that accompany displays demonstrates the overwhelming emphasis on Mesoamerican, particularly Maya, cultural groups. The textual narrative employs similar techniques to what Eichstedt and Small (2002:106) describe as “symbolic annihilation” of the institution of slavery on plantations in southern United States. In particular, the texts at the MAHSPS “universalize” ethnic diversity and collapse it into a singular notion of “Maya” (Eichstedt and Small 2002:137-140). The narrative does not completely erase “non-Maya” cultures since there are infrequent and indirect references to Lenca, Tolupan, Pech, and Tawahka cultures. However, the infrequency of these references “trivializes” and “deflects” their history, culture, and

⁵³ John Henderson and Rosemary Joyce, 1993, “Centro de Estudios Precolombinos e Historicos de Honduras | Museo de Antropología e Historia de San Pedro Sula: Guión de la planta de Arqueología” Guión 2b, pp. 6.

⁵⁴ This one text employs denominations that have fallen out of favor; Pech and Tolupan are now the preferred denomination to Paya and Jicaque.

significance (Eichstedt and Small 2002). Additionally, since many of the objects displayed are, in fact, from “non-Maya” cultural groups, displaying them but not describing them (use, importance, geographic origin, to what cultural group they belonged, etc.) further collapsing them into a homogenized ancient Maya indigenous group as the only ethnic group referenced and discussed at length.

Chiminike and PROFUTURO: National Identity in Children’s Museums

The Interactive Learning Center [ILC] or children’s museum, Chiminike, was designed and implemented as part of a multi-sector, multi-component cultural heritage project called the Interactive Environmental Learning and Science Promotion Project (PROFUTURO). The total project cost was US\$12.8 million—the International Development Association of the World Bank financed US\$11.2 million and the GOH, which considered this “a flagship initiative,”⁵⁵ contributed US\$1.6 million.⁵⁶

This was a three part project. Components Two and Three—Capacity Building and Communication, and Project Implementation, respectively—focused on developing communication and dissemination strategies of the ILC; designing and implementing a plan of action to prepare staff and volunteers; and strengthening project management. Through these components, the PROFUTURO project supported the creation of the PROFUTURO Foundation in January 2000, a loan requirement linked to the sustainability and management of the overall project, especially the ILC element. In October 2003, the GOH transferred the operation and administration of the ILC to this

⁵⁵ World Bank, 26 April 2006, “Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501),” Report Number 35652, pp. 20. Document in possession of author.

⁵⁶ World Bank, 26 April 2006, “Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501),” Report Number 35652, pp. 17. Document in possession of author.

non-profit private foundation, which has been responsible ever since. This foundation is comprised of high-level businessmen from the private sector as well as members of government, from the Ministry of Finance and the *Consejo Hondureño de Ciencia y Tecnología* [Honduras Council on Science and Technology] (COHCIT), the state implementing agency of PROFUTURO.⁵⁷

While Components Two and Three are important in understanding the programs and strategies linked with the institutional structure and management of the project, this study focuses primarily on Component One, which encompasses the relevant exhibits developed by PROFUTURO. The Sustainable Development Resources unit, which accounted for approximately 80 percent of the total funding for the PROFUTURO project, is comprised of three subcomponents:

- a) Interactive Learning Center [ILC]: supported the development and implementation of a nontraditional, hands-on, and interactive informal learning experience on science, environment, and sustainable development [i.e. Chiminike];
- b) Pre-Hispanic Contribution: supported research on pre-Hispanic practices and scientific knowledge to be disseminated to teachers and students through the ILC and through a small children's facility in Copán [called Casa K'inich];
- c) Archaeological Parks Subprojects: supported activities considered priorities by the PAC Management Plan, including emergency archaeological subprojects and archaeological management subprojects.⁵⁸

Under the Archaeological Parks Subprojects, the proposal called for establishing research priorities and rehabilitation in the four functioning archaeological parks, which, in

⁵⁷ World Bank, 26 April 2006, "Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501)," Report Number 35652, pp. 4, 14, 40, 43-44. Document in possession of author.

⁵⁸ World Bank, 26 April 2006, "Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501)," Report Number 35652, pp. 2-3. Document in possession of author.

addition to the PAC, include Los Naranjos, El Puente, and las Cuevas de Talgua.⁵⁹

However, the final World Bank report indicates that it “financed 21 emergency subprojects to repair Maya structures and areas in the PAC damaged by Hurricane Mitch or in immediate need of preservation and protection from the elements.”⁶⁰ Thus, despite a wider rhetoric of inclusivity of archaeological parks in geographically diverse areas, which would encompass the archaeological history of “non-Maya” ethnic groups, this subcomponent focused entirely on the PAC and the cultural legacy of the Maya. This pattern repeats itself throughout the implementation of the other subcomponents, which I discuss below.

Although the development objective of the PROFUTURO project was to “encourage and expand Honduran scientific, environmental, and *cultural* knowledge and management in the context of [the country’s] development needs and *ethnic diversity*,”⁶¹ the SCAD and the IHAH were not the primary implementing state agencies for the PROFUTURO project nor for any of its subcomponents.⁶² However, these agencies did collaborate directly with the second subcomponent—pre-Hispanic contribution—

⁵⁹ World Bank, 25 May 1999, Project Appraisal Document. Report Number 18452-HO, pp. 4-5. Document in possession of author.

⁶⁰ World Bank, 26 April 2006, “Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501),” Report Number 35652, pp. 12. Document in possession of author.

⁶¹ World Bank, 26 April 2006, “Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501),” Report Number 35652, pp. 2, emphasis added. Document in possession of author.

⁶² Rather, the World Bank elected the *Consejo Hondureño de Ciencia y Tecnología* [Honduras Council on Science and Technology] (COHCIT), established in 1993, as the implementing agency. Since the COHCIT was a relatively new government agency that had implemented only a few small-scale projects, the *Secretaría de Obras Públicas, Transportes y Viviendas* [Ministry of Public Works, Transport, and Housing] (SOPTRAVI), a more established agency with experience with civil works, provided considerable assistance. (World Bank, 26 April 2006, “Implementation Completion Report [TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501],” Report Number 35652, pp. 5. Document in possession of author). Initial estimates show that the SCAD would be directly responsible for approximately US\$1.9 million, or about 20% of the project; COHCIT would be responsible for the remaining US\$7.4 million. (World Bank, 25 May 1999, Project Appraisal Document. Report Number 18452-HO, pp. 22. Document in possession of author). When the initial loan amount increased, the amounts that the implementing agencies were responsible for undoubtedly increased, as well.

providing technical assistance the local NGO that the World Bank selected to carry out this unit. Asociación Copán, founded in 1990, is a non-profit organization “with proven expertise in Honduran archaeological sites,”⁶³ particularly in the PAC. It is important to note that the Executive Director, Ricardo Agurcia, is an experienced archaeologist and two-time former director of the IHAH (1982-1985 and 2005-2006) who participated in the exhibit development of all three museums in this study.

Chiminike: Overview

Inaugurated on 1 November 2003, Chiminike is an extensive facility of about 7,500 square meters that includes, in addition to the six exhibit halls and outdoor exhibits, a large lobby, a ticket counter, an auditorium with advanced audio-visual technology; administrative offices; and diverse spaces for special events such as lectures, birthday parties, and workshops. Chiminike employs about 60 administrative staff and educational guides; in addition, more than 50 volunteers serve as guides in social education.⁶⁴

From its inauguration until February 2011, Chiminike has received approximately 775,000 visitors, which translates to a monthly average of about 10,200 visitors.⁶⁵ This includes visitors from 17 of the country’s 18 departments and 22 foreign countries. Approximately two-thirds of all visitors are students, higher than the national average of 56 percent (Pilar Herrero U. 2006:35). But, students are the main target audience; trips

⁶³ World Bank, 26 April 2006, “Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501),” Report Number 35652, pp. 3. Document in possession of author.

⁶⁴ World Bank, 26 April 2006, “Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501),” Report Number 35652, pp. 6-7, 8, 10. Document in possession of author.

⁶⁵ Chiminike, Twitter post, 1 March 2011, 7.41 am, CHIMINIKE (Museo) @ChiminikeHN, <https://twitter.com/#!/ChiminikeHN/status/42595205450444801>.

from all public schools are “subsidized by a program established by the Profuturo Foundation and funded by donations from the private sector.”⁶⁶

TABLE 4. VISITOR DISTRIBUTION TO CHIMINIKE, 2003-2005

	2003 (Nov. & Dec. only)	2004	2005	TOTAL
Private school groups	89	528	365	982
Public school groups	18	440	445	903
Total school visits	107	968	810	1,885
Visitors over 18	8,826	27,832	39,732	76,390
Visitors under 18	17,204 (66%)	71,790 (72%)	57,175 (59%)	146,369 (66%)
TOTAL VISITORS	26,030	99,922	96,907	222,759

Source: World Bank, 26 April 2006, “Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501),” Report Number 35652, pp. 46. Document in possession of author.

Based on interactive learning concepts, Chiminike includes about 70 diverse exhibits throughout its six thematic halls.⁶⁷ Based on the idea that children learn by doing and playing, Chiminike’s mission is to “stimulate curiosity and the imagination of our visitors through exhibitions, science and technology programs, and resources to identify the culture, art, and values of Honduras.”⁶⁸ In addition to the “Honduras and Its People” exhibit that I examine in the following section, the thematic halls include the following interactive exhibits and activities:

- 1) Maternity and nursery areas for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to develop and strengthen motor skills; strengthen notion of space; develop awareness of self and self-image;

⁶⁶ World Bank, 26 April 2006, “Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501),” Report Number 35652, pp. 6-7. Document in possession of author.

⁶⁷ World Bank, 26 April 2006, “Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501),” Report Number 35652, pp. 47. Document in possession of author.

⁶⁸ Chiminike, “Nuestra Misión,” Misión y Visión, author’s translation, <http://www.chiminike.org>, accessed 27 January 2012.

- 2) The City: daily activities in the world of a city, including understanding concepts and practices of simple machines; trip to a model supermarket; simple banks transactions and instilling the concept of financial saving; basic concepts of aeronautics; use of TV and radio studios;
- 3) Human Body: awakens curiosity about the human body emphasizing hygiene and health; explores personification; diverse experiences in the interrelation of the systems of the human body;
- 4) Journey to Outer Space: presents the history of journeys to space, especially the Apollo mission; how to calculate age and weight on other planets; teaches everything related about our universe;
- 5) Environment: familiarizes visitors with the relationship between humans and environment in order to live in harmonious equilibrium; water cycle; pollution; water conservation and recycling; natural phenomena;
- 6) Anti-Gravity House: presents concepts of gravity force and equilibrium in such a way that it can be applied in daily life and be related to other concepts such as inertia and different types of energy;
- 7) Outdoor Exhibits: molecular structure; trains and locomotion; energy.⁶⁹

As part of the exhibit development, two affiliated researchers conducted an assessment of students, age 7-16, and teachers at five schools (urban/rural and public/private) to better understand their views about thematic content to be included in Chiminike, including Honduran history, heritage, cultural identity, diversity, and pre-

⁶⁹ Chiminike, "Exhibitions," <http://www.chiminike.org/>, accessed 27 January 2012.

Hispanic civilizations.⁷⁰ Most students demonstrated knowledge of Maya culture, but indicated a disconnect or limited understanding between modern and historical events and actors. Students verbalized a great respect and almost idolization of the Maya and their advanced achievements as a civilization; many indicated a desire to learn more about daily activities and religion of the Maya. But students did not identify with them, instead conceptualizing them as “the ‘other,’ a culture children mirror to evaluate theirs as inferior.”⁷¹

Based on this study, the researchers made a number of recommendations to better develop the thematic exhibits and future social assessments. These recommendations included the following:

- a) create programs that facilitate the identification of children with the Mayas, and promote the value of the richness of cultural history;
- b) identify and analyze options that permit the internalization of the Mayas’ achievements in children’s everyday life;
- c) undertake consultations with students, teachers, and parents on ethnic diversity;
- d) undertake an anthropological study about what modern children should learn from pre-Hispanic cultures.⁷²

Interestingly, although this assessment seemingly addresses the ethno-cultural diversity of Honduras, its suggestions to better transmit knowledge about ethnic diversity to its target audience only reference one ethnic group (ancient Maya) in promoting cultural

⁷⁰ World Bank, 25 May 1999, Project Appraisal Document. Report Number 18452-HO, pp. 12, 23-26. Document in possession of author.

⁷¹ World Bank, 25 May 1999, Project Appraisal Document. Report Number 18452-HO, pp. 25. Document in possession of author.

⁷² World Bank, 25 May 1999, Project Appraisal Document. Report Number 18452-HO, pp. 26. Document in possession of author.

diversity. Incorporating a mayanized discourse into the assessment survey, albeit likely unwittingly, is indicative of the implementation of the “Honduras and Its People” exhibit, which generally universalizes and homogenizes non-Maya indigenous groups and excludes Afro-descendant groups.

PROFUTURO proposed a participatory approach in the development and implementation phases of the museum, specifically by incorporating students, teachers, parents, and indigenous groups and other ethnic minorities into the consultation process and by participating in defining exhibits for the museum.⁷³ However, besides the social assessment study of students and teachers, there is no indication that indigenous groups were consulted, let alone involved, in the process of defining exhibits.

Exhibit Analysis: “Honduras and Its People”

The thematic hall that sets Chiminike apart from other interactive learning centers or children’s museums around the world is titled “Honduras and Its People.” The displays and activities in this exhibit present the historic and ethnic legacy particular to Honduras. The *guión museográfico* (museological guide, exhibit brief, storyline, or narrative of the exhibit) introduces the ethno-historical-cultural legacy of Honduras as “enriching, from the Maya Culture to different ethnic groups who still survive” in the country.⁷⁴ The *guión* explains that the ethno-cultural characteristics (such as “traditions, customs, language, [and] physical features”) indicate cultural diversity while simultaneously “uniting the Honduran people and reinforcing national identity as part of our history and cultural

⁷³ World Bank, 25 May 1999, Project Appraisal Document. Report Number 18452-HO, pp. 12-13. Document in possession of author.

⁷⁴ Chiminike, *Guión museográfico* for “Honduras y su Gente,” pp. 1, author’s translation.

legacy transmitted by our ancestors.”⁷⁵ Based on this ethno-historical diversity, the objective of this exhibit as detailed in the *guión museográfico* is to

Introduce [...] visitors to the world of Honduran history and culture, through observation, appreciation, research, and interaction with the exhibits [...] with the objective of awakening a sense of national identity and pride. Children will know and value the history of Honduras, such as cave art, archaeological discoveries, customs and traditions of autochthonous peoples, among others. They will identify ethnic groups that still survive in the territory, as well as the understanding of the origin of Hondurans. They will create some artisanry that is fabricated in different zones of the country, which will greatly contribute to valuing heritage from each region, motivating museum visitors to know, appreciate, and consume that which is ours.⁷⁶

Despite the ethno-cultural inclusivity and recognition of cultural pluralism in this objective statement, the presentation of such diversity hardly translates into the physical installations and texts of the exhibits. The exhibits area is roughly divided into four thematic eras, which I group in the following manner: 1) First inhabitants and the contributions of archaeology; 2) Our Mayan ancestors; 3) Colonial, Independent, and Republican eras; 4) Contemporary ethnic diversity. The first section presents settlement population routes in the Americas after the last glacial period; additionally, to enter the exhibit hall, visitors must walk through a reproduction of a cave, which includes reproductions of cave art from Honduras’s oldest known archaeological site, El Gigante.

(See Appendix 8.2.)

A map of Mexico and Central America discusses “Honduras and Its Cultural Affiliation” at the time of conquest. This presents an overview of Honduras as a region of cultural convergence or interaction between Mesoamerica (to the north) and the

⁷⁵ Chiminike, *Guión museográfico* for “Honduras y su Gente,” pp. 1, author’s translation.

⁷⁶ Chiminike, *Guión museográfico* for “Honduras y su Gente,” pp. 1, author’s translation.

Intermediate Area (to the south). Although the map and accompanying texts present the geographical extension and cultural-linguistic generalities of the culture areas, they do not mention the specific ethnic groups found in Honduras (before or after the conquest). Rather, this section emphasizes the Mesoamerican culture groups, naming the Olmec, Teotihuacan, Maya, Zapotec, Mixtec, Toltec, and Aztec cultural groups. The text discussing “Cultures of the Intermediate Area” only mentions “Chibca origins” of the languages that cultures from the Intermediate Area spoke, and emphasizes the linguistic similarities, but does not mention what ethnic groups in Honduras speak a language with “Chibca origins.” Finally, this area attempts to explain what archaeologists do and how their work contributes to understanding ancient cultures. Visitors can “play at being an archaeologist”⁷⁷ by searching for “archaeological artifacts” in a sand pit.

Transitioning from the first to the second area of the exhibit is a karaoke area where visitors can sing along with traditional and folklore songs from Honduras. The words to these songs are projected against images of Honduran landscapes, frequently from monumental Maya remains in Copán. For example, the song titled *Conozca Honduras* (Get To Know Honduras), by Rafael Manzanares (written in the mid-20th century), does in fact reference these “ruins” once (“Where are the most famous, beautiful Copán Ruins?” [Ministerio de Educación Pública 1971:47-49, author’s translation]); however, it also references other places, events, forefathers, national symbols, and values while promoting national pride. Yet, for the duration of the song, the lyrics are projected against a backdrop of the iconic image of Sculpture 10L-4 in the Monument Plaza that visitors first see when entering the PAC.

⁷⁷ Chiminike, exhibit text, “Piezas para armar,” in *Honduras y su gente*, author’s translation.

The second section of the exhibit focuses on the pre-Columbian cultural-linguistic groups that inhabited the region. However, the exhibition brief differs subtly, though significantly, from the actual installation. The four key exhibit elements are reconstructions of Maya monuments from Copán (see Appendix 8.3.-8.4.):

- 1) a Maya arch or false arch, “a characteristic element of Maya architecture,”⁷⁸ which visitor walk under to continue viewing the exhibit;
- 2) Rosalila temple, “one of the principle places of worship,”⁷⁹ was constructed in the early stages of Copán history, and later buried intact. Honduran archaeologist Ricardo Agurcia (executive director of Asociación Copán) uncovered this temple during excavations in 1989;
- 3) a thatched-roof Maya hut, which includes a diagram of the dwelling with vocabulary words of structural elements in Spanish and, one has to assume, Maya Chortí, though this is not explicit;⁸⁰
- 4) Altar Q, a stone sculpture that depicts the dynastic sequence of Copán, with renderings of each of Copán’s sixteen successive rulers, and is “the most important source for the study of the [Copán] dynasty.”⁸¹ This differs from the other three reproductions in that it is not a full reproduction (in this case of the stone altar), but rather of the carved images; each ruler is projected onto the walls, maintaining the images from Altar Q, but with significant artistic freedom in rendering the colors.

⁷⁸ Chiminike, exhibit text, “El Arco Maya,” in *Honduras y su gente*, author’s translation.

⁷⁹ Chiminike, exhibit text, “Rosalila,” in *Honduras y su gente*, author’s translation.

⁸⁰ Chiminike, exhibit text, “La choza Maya,” *Honduras y su gente*.

⁸¹ Chiminike, exhibit text, “Altar Q,” *Honduras y su gente*, author’s translation.

Additionally, reconstructions of stelae from Copán are scattered throughout the exhibit. Though the *guión museográfico* details the four elements mentioned above, it also briefly mentions different cultural-linguistic groups that inhabited the region contemporaneously with the Maya, specifically the “Maya-Lenca belonging to the Mesoamerica culture area” and the Pech, Tawahka, and Matagalpa, which were of Chibca and Macro-Chibca origins from the Intermediate Area.⁸² Such references are not included in the exhibit text. Rather, the overwhelming focus is on the Maya and Copán, “known for its impressive architecture and sculpture.”⁸³

The third area focuses on the colonial, independent, and republican eras of Honduran history. These installations and texts emphasize the San Fernando de Omoa Fortress on the North Coast; pirates, privateers, and buccaneers of the Caribbean; Honduran independence and subsequent annexation to Mexico and the failed Central American Federation; and, the importance of the banana in the country’s modern history. The only reference to indigenous life is what appears to be a reproduction of two drawings from a chronicler’s book with the descriptive title, “Indigenous people working in agriculture and with looms.”⁸⁴ No other information is provided about this label, not even in the *guión museográfico*. (See Appendix 8.5.)

The final section of this exhibit, which I term “contemporary ethnic diversity,” recognizes the cultural-linguistic diversity of Honduras, including mestizos, and presents

⁸² Chiminike, *Guión museográfico* for “Honduras y su Gente,” pp. 4-5, author’s translation.

⁸³ Chiminike, exhibit text, “La construcción de una gran ciudad: Copán,” *Honduras y su gente*, author’s translation.

⁸⁴ Chiminike, exhibit text, “Indígenas trabajando en la agricultura y en los telares,” *Honduras y su gente*, author’s translation.

it emphasizing the linguistic legacy and geographical location of ethnic groups. This section

reflects the syncretism of a history in which diverse agents intervened resulting in cultural diversity which we have today. [Visitors] will encounter the diversity of autochthonous peoples, their customs, dress, rites, and will be able to play some musical instruments of these groups [...]⁸⁵

The ethno-territorial map titled “Population of Ethnic Groups in Honduras” divides the map into eight sections that roughly correspond to where ethnic groups are settled and provide a population number for each group. (See Appendix 8.6.) Short texts of each ethnic group provide a textual explanation of the demarcated regions and note whether or not each group has maintained its language.

Comparing this map to the ethnic artisan map elaborated by PROPAITH and published in 2000 (Appendix 5), “boundaries” of the ethnicized territorial areas differ significantly. Additionally, the Project Appraisal Document⁸⁶ that sets out the PROFUTURO project includes a map produced by the World Bank (Appendix 6); the population estimates of these two maps also differ significantly.

Typical regional mestizo, criollo, or *campesino* costumes are available for children to try on as well as masks from festivals and rituals from ethnic groups. Visitors can also experiment with musical instruments from various ethnic groups. This final section relies on large portraits of people from diverse ethnic groups engaged in different activities, primarily in festivals where typical dress and related accoutrements are highlighted. However, little or no information accompanies these photographs, instruments, masks, and costumes, resulting in further exotification of the cultural groups.

⁸⁵ Chiminike, *Guión museográfico* for “Honduras y su Gente,” pp. 2, author’s translation.

⁸⁶ World Bank, 25 May 1999, Project Appraisal Document. Report Number 18452-HO, pp. 46. Document in possession of author.

(See Appendix 8.7.) Though this section highlights ethno-cultural diversity, it rather glosses over this diversity, reducing ethnic groups to a territorialized ethno-linguistic essence.

The presentation of mestizaje in the *guión museográfico* is more coherent than that of contemporary ethnic groups and this is reflected in the exhibit installations.

Although this topic occupies little space, the one text that specifically addresses mestizaje—titled “And Mestizaje Continues!”—merits full citation:

The strongest mestizaje in our country has been the emergence of the collision of Spanish culture and indigenous cultures. This does not mean that it has remained static. Quite the opposite! With the arrival of the ancestors of the [Afro-descendant] Garífuna and the [English-speaking Bay] Islanders 200 years ago, mestizaje continued above all in the North Coast. Then, with the arrival 100 years ago of Germans, Italians, and above all, Arabs and Chinese, this mestizaje strengthened.⁸⁷

The *guión museográfico* additionally discusses the geographical regions where cultural and genetic mestizaje was strongest and provides additional information about the role of churches and evangelization in mestizaje.

In 2006, the PROFUTURO Foundation carried out an impact assessment survey on students visiting Chiminike. A total of 260 students, of an average age of ten years old, were questioned regarding their perceptions and attitudes about Honduras. This served as a follow-up survey of the original pilot social assessment conducted during the exhibit development stage. While not as detailed as the baseline survey, the results are important, as they clearly show that Chiminike has a positive impact in perceptions and attitudes about Honduras. Before visiting Chiminike, approximately one-third of children indicated that their knowledge about “Honduras and Its People” was good and half said

⁸⁷ Chiminike, exhibit text, “¡Y el mestizaje continúa!” *Honduras y su gente*, author’s translation.

average. After visiting the museum, more than three-fourths said that they know more and value Honduras more.⁸⁸

TABLE 5. RESULTS OF SURVEY TO CHILDREN VISITORS OF CHIMINIKE, 2006

Before visiting Chiminike			
How do you consider your knowledge with respect to Honduras and Its People?	35% good	50% average	15% bad
After visiting Chiminike			
Do you know _____ about Honduras?	75% more	15% the same	10% less
Do you value Honduras _____?	80% more	10% the same	10% less

Source: World Bank, 26 April 2006, "Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501)," Report Number 35652, pp. 7-8, 46. Document in possession of author.

Though it surveyed less than 1 percent of total student visitors when carried out, this assessment is significant because it indicates the positive role that Chiminike, and museums in general, can have on schoolchildren. Indeed, as mentioned throughout this chapter, museums serve as informal, non-traditional educational institutions. In Honduras, visiting museums is not a common family leisure or recreational activity; rather, schoolchildren mostly visit museums as part of school excursions and only infrequently with their family.⁸⁹ As illustrated in this follow-up survey, exhibit content can significantly influence the perceptions and attitudes of children or student visitors.

The current installations in the "Honduras and Its People" exhibition present an unbalanced perspective when addressing ethnic diversity and national identity. By

⁸⁸ World Bank, 26 April 2006, "Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501)," Report Number 35652, pp. 7-8, 46. Document in possession of author.

⁸⁹ World Bank, 25 May 1999, Project Appraisal Document. Report Number 18452-HO, pp. 23-26. Document in possession of author. See also, Pilar Herrero U., 2006:34-41.

overwhelmingly emphasizing ancient Maya history, culture, and legacy, the exhibit continues to uphold the limited understanding regarding Honduran history, heritage, cultural identity, diversity, and pre-Hispanic civilizations that students indicated prior to developing the exhibits in Chiminike.⁹⁰ In an effort to have visitors connect to and identify with the ancient Maya and internalize their achievements, this exhibit fails to develop a more comprehensive and inclusive narrative of “non-Maya” indigenous, Afro-descendant, and mestizo communities. Additionally, references to the Maya are not connected to contemporary Maya-Chortí communities who live around the PAC, and remain focused on contributions of the ancient Maya.

The *guión museográfico* develops the theme of ethno-cultural diversity slightly more than the exhibit installations and texts. For example, the *guión* also recognizes the Nahua as another indigenous group “trying to recuperate their identity.”⁹¹ The exhibit, however, neither includes them in the ethno-territorial map nor in population estimates of Honduras’s ethnic groups; in fact, the installations do not once mention the Nahua as an ancient or contemporary ethno-cultural-linguistic group in Honduras. Particularly notable in the *guión museográfico* is the paragraph addressing the “resurgence” of ethnic pride in Honduras since the 1980s and the subsequent organization of indigenous and Afro-descendant groups into legal federations to make claims on ancestral rights, language use, and ethnic autonomy. Finally, the *guión museográfico* also mentions the ILO’s Convention No. 169, which Honduras ratified in 1993, as the primary legal protection for

⁹⁰ World Bank, 25 May 1999, Project Appraisal Document. Report Number 18452-HO, pp. 23-26. Document in possession of author.

⁹¹ Chiminike, *Guión museográfico* for “Honduras y su Gente,” pp. 7, author’s translation.

indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples in Honduras.⁹² The exhibit installations and texts also ignore these two topics.

Thus, this exhibit, as the only section in the museum that directly addresses ethnicity and national identity, ensures that Chiminike as an institution upholds the state discourse on mayanization. Simultaneously, it upholds the mestizo as the typical Honduran, by universalizing and exoticising ethnic traditions and customs. The few superficial references to other ethnic groups pays tribute to the redefinition of official discourse of national identity as multicultural, while simultaneously glossing over the history and legacy of “non-Maya” ethnic groups. A more inclusive exhibit of “Honduras and Its People” that addresses ethno-cultural diversity on a more nuanced level, would engage all visitors in a deeper understanding of Honduras’s rich, diverse cultural heritage.⁹³

PROFUTURO: Pre-Hispanic Subcomponent and a Children’s Maya Museum

The total costs of the Pre-Hispanic Subcomponent of PROFUTURO was US\$435,300, or about 4 percent of the total project cost.⁹⁴ This component supported the following activities “to promote ownership among indigenous people”⁹⁵ regarding Copán and the PAC:

- a) a guide training program addressed training and professionalization needs of 35 local residents working as guides or interested in becoming guides at the PAC. In

⁹² Chiminike, *Guión museográfico* for “Honduras y su Gente,” pp. 7.

⁹³ Chiminike, *Guión museográfico* for “Honduras y su Gente,” pp. 1.

⁹⁴ World Bank, 25 May 1999, Project Appraisal Document. Report Number 18452-HO, pp. 5, 22, 27. Document in possession of author.

⁹⁵ World Bank, 26 April 2006, “Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501),” Report Number 35652, pp. 3; María-Valéria Junho Pena and Kathryn Johns Swartz, 2002, “Guiding the Way to New Opportunities in the Copán Valley, Honduras.” *En Breve*. World Bank, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 14:2. Both documents in possession of author.

addition, 18 Maya-Chortí representing three neighboring villages, received training about Copán history and culture, providing them with skills to become guides at the PAC. This program also provided opportunities for one hundred university and graduate students and professionals to visit and learn about ancient Maya culture and become involved in fieldwork and educational opportunities in the PAC;

- b) a research and information program explored the pre-Hispanic contribution to modern science and environmental management, particularly the landscape transformations of the Copán Valley over the past 4,000 years; and,
- c) the construction of a small interactive children's learning center on Maya civilization, called Casa K'inich, in Copán Ruins.⁹⁶

Casa K'inich, or House of the Sun, was originally inaugurated in February 2002. In March 2008, the museum was reinaugurated in its permanent location. As of 2005, the year with the most recent statistics available, more than 60,000 people had visited the museum, of whom approximately 40 percent were students.⁹⁷ According to Asociación Copán, the local implementing NGO, this museum was designed "to cultivate the next generation of Hondurans to care for the World Heritage Site of Copán."⁹⁸ Similar to the conceptualization of Chiminike, Casa K'inich is designed for children to learn through interactive play. Activities and exhibits in this children's museum include dressing Maya

⁹⁶ World Bank, 26 April 2006, "Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501)," Report Number 35652, pp. 3, 10-14, 41; María-Valéria Junho Pena and Kathryn Johns Swartz, 2002, "Guiding the Way to New Opportunities in the Copán Valley, Honduras." *En Breve*. World Bank, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 14:2. Both documents in possession of author.

⁹⁷ Asociación Copán, 2008, "Ongoing Projects: Casa K'inich Maya Learning Center"; World Bank, 26 April 2006, "Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501)," Report Number 35652, pp. 14, 27. Document in possession of author.

⁹⁸ Asociación Copán, 2008, "Ongoing Projects: Casa K'inich Maya Learning Center."

nobles with magnetized clothing; practicing Maya math and writing; learning about the Maya calendar and astronomy; trying on equipment used in the Maya ballgame and watching a reenactment of the game; Maya Trivia; Environment and Stewardship; Natural Environment; Four Kings Stelaes; Maya Deities; Architecture; Maya Music; Map of the Maya Area; Contemporary Map; Decline of Copan.⁹⁹

TABLE 6. VISITOR STATISTICS TO CASA K'INICH, 2002-2005

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005
Visitors	6,141	11,000	21,194	23,000

Source: World Bank, 26 April 2006, "Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501)," Report Number 35652, pp. 14, 41. Document in possession of author.

That the World Bank subcontracted a local implementing agency, Asociación Copán, via its Executive Director, Ricardo Agurcia, to carry out the Pre-Hispanic Subcomponent directly reflects the growing preference of transnational development organizations (like the World Bank) in supporting local NGOs. As Jeffrey Jackson points out, multilateral development institutions generally consider local development NGOs to be more cost-effective and efficient than government agencies; to have greater legitimacy in regional politics; to encourage local autonomy, privatization, and decentralization; and to be more committed to local and grass-roots projects (2005:31-33, 308-309). In addition, incorporating local NGOs in development initiatives ensures local participation, thereby quelling concerns about popular, democratic activities. For these reasons, multinational organizations are more inclined to financially support local NGOs in development initiatives and include them in project implementation. Indeed, the final

⁹⁹ World Bank, 26 April 2006, "Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501)," Report Number 35652, pp. 47. Document in possession of author; Asociación Copán, 2008, "Ongoing Projects: Casa K'nich Maya Learning Center."

World Bank report on the PROFUTURO project pointed to the success of implementing this subcomponent precisely because of “local ownership and decentralized implementation. [... B]y linking the program to a trusted NGO, the program was accepted by local residents and had a very positive impact.”¹⁰⁰

Museo para la Identidad Nacional: A Private Version of a National Museum?

As indicated by its name, the MIN explores concepts of nationalism, national consciousness, and national identity. The MIN was an initiative of former president Ricardo Maduro (2002-2006), who in 2004 defined one of the GOH’s priorities as establishing “a modern museum that allows [visitors] to know their origins, history, events that have shaped a national identity and the achievements that have been reached as a nation” (O. Mejía 2007, author’s translation). The following year, a group of twenty high-level state functionaries (including President Maduro and his Minister of Tourism and Minister of Finance), prominent businessmen, and cultural heritage proponents, including archaeologist Ricardo Agurcia and historian Leticia de Oyuela, established the non-profit organization *Fundación Hondureña para la Identidad Nacional* [Honduran Foundation of National Identity]. Its objectives included the following:

- a) Strengthen national identity and country pride by valuing Honduran heritage, be it natural, archaeological, built, [or] cultural, and the appreciation of the country’s history;
- b) Conceptualize, design, and make operative and administrative one or more museums oriented to these objectives;

...

¹⁰⁰ World Bank, 26 April 2006, “Implementation Completion Report (TF-26463 IDA-32500 IDA-32501),” Report Number 35652, pp. 22. Document in possession of author.

- k) Promote the study and formation of national and cultural values in the educational system of the country.¹⁰¹

On 19 January 2006, this foundation inaugurated the MIN, located in downtown Tegucigalpa in a building with late neoclassic architecture, to which the IHAH conferred the category of “national monument” of great historic value.¹⁰² Constructed in 1882, this building originally housed the General Hospital of Honduras until 1923, and was located across the street from the School of Medicine. In addition to teaching rooms, the General Hospital included a botanical garden and museum of mineralogy and zoology. These were removed in the early 20th century when the School of Medicine was transferred to a building housed in the national university in a different part of Tegucigalpa. In 1933, under the Carías administration, a second floor was added to this building and various government ministries and offices were installed, earning its nickname, the Palace of Ministries, by which it is still known (Aguilar 1991:17-18; O. Mejía 2007; Especial Proceso Digital 2012).

Given its location in the capital city near other national institutions (for example, the National Library, Congress, *Antigua Casa Presidencial*, National Theater, Central Bank, National University) and more importantly through its name, the MIN can be considered a national museum. According to Mejía, this museum

has the compromising name which is ‘for national identity.’ Fortunately it is ‘for national identity’ and not ‘of national identity,’ because by saying ‘for’ we are talking about precisely a process of identity construction in which cultural agencies have the capacity, the potential, and the obligation to contribute to it as an instance of informal education and national consciousness taken as a given as the sum of all these cultural identities

¹⁰¹ Fundación Hondureña para la Identidad Nacional, 21 April 2005, Acta Constitutiva, author’s translation. Document in possession of author.

¹⁰² MIN, n.d., brochure summarizing the museum’s permanent exhibit, history, and services. Document in possession of author.

articulated in a project of the nation and this is how we understand national identity (M. Mejía 2011:54-55, author's translation).

The cost of restoring the building and developing and implementing the exhibit approximated US\$5 million (O. Mejía 2007). Various national and transnational organizations contributed to this project, notably the Inter-American Development Bank, the *Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos* [Organization of Iberoamerican States] (OEI), as well as the governments of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and Japan. These two governments also established an endowment fund of more than US\$2 million.¹⁰³ Specialists from the *Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá* [Museum of the Interoceanic Canal of Panama] were hired as consultants for the museological and museographical development and implementation of the exhibits (O. Mejía 2007; Pastor Fasquelle [2011]:27).

Exhibit Overview

The permanent exhibits in the MIN incorporate technologically sophisticated elements, including an “Omni-Globe” that shows different geological eras and the geological emergence of the region through high-tech digital animation; the Virtual Copán auditorium, which I discuss below; a multi-screen presentation at the end of the tour; and, small screen videos, discussing former presidents, archaeologists, and a reenactment of the Maya ball game, that are incorporated throughout the exhibit into larger thematic panels. These panels are saturated with colors, lengthy texts, and many images, such as maps, drawings, portraits, and handwritten documents. These panels are situated along the walls of the rooms; archaeological artifacts are displayed in the center

¹⁰³ The amount in local currency is 40 million Honduran lempiras.

of the rooms. Exhibits are organized in sequential thematic structure, creating a controlled presentation and uni-directional circulation flow.

The anteroom presents the museum's mission and objectives and I discuss this section in detail below. Rooms One and Two address the geological and geographical aspects of Honduras. An illuminated globe projects different geological eras across time and shows how Honduras and the broader region was formed geologically through continental drifts. This section also addresses the emergence of flora and fauna in the region, and explores the different geological regions within Honduras and their characteristics. It continues by addressing how the geographical complexity of the country hindered the formation of a national identity—including impressions of early European explorers and chroniclers—and the organization of space in the colonial period. It further explores the origins of Honduran historicity and infrastructure development and modernization in “the consolidation of the geopolitical unity of Honduras.”¹⁰⁴

Room Three explores the historical formation of the nation-state and presents important historic and cultural events that contributed to formation of Honduras as a nation. This section addresses “The First Hondurans” who settled in the region after the last glacial period, hunter-gatherers and the shift to sedentary lifestyles, and archaeological evidence of ancient settlers, including cave art. This section also includes a panel on Copán, which I discuss in my analysis below. It also includes discussions about the arrival of the Spaniards in 1502 and subsequent colonial life, including evangelization and mission projects, and the construction of fortifications against foreign threats. It continues with independence and republican periods and the modernization of

¹⁰⁴ MIN, n.d., brochure summarizing the museum's permanent exhibit, history, and services, author's translation. Document in possession of author.

the state in the 20th century—this includes the importance of bananas in the national economy, military governments in power, and the return to democracy in 1982, after years of dictatorships in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁰⁵ The final room presents the section “You Are Honduras,” which I discuss below. The MIN also has multiple spaces for temporary exhibits, and holds approximately six temporary exhibits each year, which encompass diverse themes of national and international art.

Unfortunately, multiple attempts to obtain the *guión museográfico* were unsuccessful. I first met with the director of the MIN about this issue in December 2010. In this meeting we also discussed the museum’s plans to add an ethnographic room that would improve the presentation of ethnic groups in the exhibit. In that meeting and in subsequent emails, Mejía informed me that he was willing to provide me with a copy of the narrative. However, in response to my subsequent request for the brief in late 2011, he responded that he was unable to send me a digital copy, but would prepare a printed version the next time I was in Tegucigalpa.¹⁰⁶ My requests to have acquaintances in Honduras pick up this version and mail it to me were met with silence. His response in February 2012 to my final request stated the following: “At this time we are preparing a publication about the content of the permanent rooms and because of copyright issues, I cannot send you the *guión museográfico*.”¹⁰⁷ This forthcoming publication will include information about archaeological research, restoration of the museum’s building, the current museum content, and will also incorporate material from the MIN’s new ethnographic exhibit, which is not yet completed (as of April 2012). He later explained

¹⁰⁵ MIN, n.d., brochure summarizing the museum’s permanent exhibit, history, and services, author’s translation. Document in possession of author.

¹⁰⁶ Mario Mejía, 4 January 2012, personal communication.

¹⁰⁷ Mario Mejía, 27 February 2012, personal communication, author’s translation.

that he could send me the narrative once this publication, which is being coordinated with the IHAH, is released, which he thought would be in May or June 2012.¹⁰⁸

The *guión museográfico* would have provided a comparative element to analyze how the proposed content actually transferred to the installations. Like those of the MAHSPS and Chiminike, it might have presented a more comprehensive and inclusive vision of ethnic diversity, legacy, and contributions to national identity. Although this narrative would have deepened my understanding of the conceptualization of indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in the permanent exhibit, the actual installations and texts provide sufficient material. After all, it is the exhibit itself—not the *guión*—that visitors experience and engage with. Thus, in the following section, I rely solely on the texts and installations in the permanent exhibit.

Exhibits Analysis

In my analysis of the MIN, I distinguish between four exhibit areas in the museum's permanent exhibition. The Anteroom presents a lengthy text defining the museum's mission and objectives, and clearly situates national identity as a principal theme throughout the exhibit. The Virtual Copán Auditorium presents a technologically advanced audio-visual journey to Copán. Third, I examine various texts, installations, and artifacts throughout the whole of the permanent exhibit as they relate to the presentation of ethnic groups and national identity. Finally, the exhibit in Room Four of the permanent exhibit, titled "You Are Honduras," specifically addresses themes of contemporary cultural diversity.

¹⁰⁸ Mario Mejía, 29 February 2012, personal communication.

Anteroom

This room presents a lengthy text defining the MIN's purpose, objectives, and importance. Since this text sets the tone for the remainder of the exhibit, it merits full citation:

National identity is nurtured in historical memory. It is impossible to understand or love a country if you do not know its past. The stronger the sense of historicity of a people, who belong to a common past, the stronger their national identity and capacity to face challenges that destiny presents. At the same time, the accumulation of collective experiences throughout many centuries acquires significance and transcendence when it is converted into written memory, since this is how memory becomes permanent and durable.

The preservation of historical memory should be a state mission, since societies and individuals need to satisfy their primary claims of origin and belonging. The conscience of sharing a common past is key to legitimizing our sense of unity and transcendence, that is, of making us proud for what our ancestors have achieved and making us confident of our future as a nation.

These are the concepts that have inspired the creation of the MIN. This museum has been conceived of to strengthen our national identity. It hopes to motivate interest in the study and culture of Honduras, exalt national values, and promote a sense of pride to be Honduran. Honduran society is the sum of accumulated achievements and values across many centuries and it is the knowledge of this process that legitimizes the defense of our national conscience.

In this way, this museum has the objective of renewing the historical conscience of Hondurans so that, in visiting our rooms, they feel stimulated to think historically, creating a new and stronger sense of historicity.

To achieve this objective, this museum emphasizes individual values that have marked our shared past, explaining each one of our historical processes within a regional or global context and emphasizing how just how rich our history is.¹⁰⁹

This lengthy text is unique in the museum setting in Honduras. Although all three museums in this study promote national identity in their exhibits, as established by their mission and vision statements, the MIN is the only one that clearly and explicitly

¹⁰⁹ MIN, introductory text to the permanent exhibit, author's translation.

addresses *why* national identity and collective memory matter and why museums are (or should be) a central forum for engaging in these issues. Although the MIN, like the MAHSPS and Chiminike, is a private museum, by calling on the government to preserve historical memory and national identity, the MIN insinuates its relationship with the state; after all, former President Maduro (2002-2006) and members of his cabinet helped establish the MIN. In this way, the MIN occupies the place of a national museum in the popular national imagination.

Interestingly this text does not once reference ethnicity. Although the MIN's vision statement is to "consolidate the knowledge of [...] Honduras's ethnic, cultural, and natural diversity,"¹¹⁰ excluding the ethno-cultural element from this statement that introduces the permanent exhibit is indicative of the exhibit as a whole, and by extension the institutional position on national identity. In the following sections, I discuss three particular areas that address aspects of ethnicity, some in great detail. However, these are separate areas or panels that are expressly for discussions on those and related topics. That ethnicity is not integrated into the broader discussions of collective historical memory and national identity reflects the deeply-rooted hold of narratives of a homogenized indo-Hispanic mestizaje within cultural heritage institutions.

Virtual Copán Auditorium

Museum officials consider Virtual Copán to be a critical educational resource that allows visitors to be transported back in time and through space to see and experience a Copán, "the city of our Mayan ancestors," as it may have appeared during the height of

¹¹⁰ MIN, n.d., brochure summarizing the museum's permanent exhibit, history, and services. Document in possession of author.

its splendor.¹¹¹ The auditorium can accommodate more than fifty visitors at once, with graduated seating facing an enormous curved screen the size of the wall. Produced by a Japanese company and Belgian company, this tour explores the plazas, sculptures, and monumental structures of Copán and presents possible reenactments of rituals and ceremonies that may have been carried out there at the height of “the glorious era of our Maya ancestors.”¹¹² The three-dimensional virtual tour lasts approximately 20 minutes, and is repeated four times daily (five times on Saturdays).¹¹³

The entrance to the auditorium is constructed to look like a Maya temple. (See Appendix 9.2.) The outside is painted a similar color to that of the Rosalila Temple and carved hieroglyphs decorate the exterior walls. Visitors enter the auditorium through heavy wooden doors with carved Maya iconography and hieroglyphics. Conceptually, visitors enter a Maya monument where the presentation transmits the “knowledge and experiences of the Maya civilization.”¹¹⁴ Touted as the only version in the Americas, the MIN markets this experience as a more affordable and accessible way to “visit” the PAC and understand Maya history and culture. Though the price of Virtual Copán doubles the total price of the entrance ticket, it is still less than half of the entrance fee to the PAC.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ MIN, n.d., brochure summarizing the museum’s permanent exhibit, history, and services, author’s translation. Document in possession of author.

¹¹² O. Mejía 2007.

¹¹³ MIN, n.d., brochure summarizing the museum’s permanent exhibit, history, and services, author’s translation. Document in possession of author.

¹¹⁴ *Especial Proceso Digital*, 2012, author’s translation.

¹¹⁵ Total cost to enter the MIN, including the Virtual Copán presentation, in local currency is 60 Honduran lempiras or approximately US\$3. The total cost to enter the PAC for Hondurans is 130 Honduran lempiras or approximately US\$6.25 (approximately half for students and senior citizens). The total entrance fee to the PAC for foreigners is US\$40 (*El Heraldo* 8 July 2010).

Permanent Exhibit Content

Themes regarding indigenous and mestizo peoples are addressed throughout the permanent exhibit. One large wall panel, titled “Discovering Copán,” focuses on chronicles and investigations in Copán since its “rediscovery” by Europeans in 1576. Large photographs of different areas of the PAC, with well-known monuments, sculptures, and artifacts, add visual imagery to the textual presentation. This highlights the contributions of seven scholars, from the colonial period to modern-day, in the archaeological investigation of Copán and advances made in deciphering Maya hieroglyphs. Other texts discuss the collapse of the Maya world and evidence of the collapse in Copán. A looped video shows a reenactment of the Maya ball game. Texts integrated into other panels examine the contributions of early explorers of Copán.

In the context of migration and settlement patterns in the Americas, the panel “The First Hondurans” provides brief descriptions of some other archaeological sites in the national territory. However, this discussion focuses only on archaeological sites in caves, and does not provide similar level of detail regarding individual researchers and findings as the Copán presentation. No other archaeological sites, even ones with monumental architecture such as Los Naranjos, Yarusela, Currusté, are referenced.

A panel describing Columbus’s arrival to Honduras in 1502 includes a text titled “La Canoa de Isla Guanaja,” accompanied by a drawing depicting an indigenous village on the water’s edge. That this drawing is in “primitivist” or “naïve” artistic style, with no accompanying information (e.g. artist name, painting title, date, or interpretative comments about the style or content) cements popular imagination of indigenous life as primitive. (See Appendix 9.3.)

One section presents estimates of demographic changes before and after the conquest, into the 17th century, as well as causes of the indigenous devastation. These figures are generalized into regional estimates (600,000 in the center and west of the country, 200,000 in the eastern region at the time of conquest) and do not reference different indigenous groups or tribes, thereby collapsing all indigenous groups into one universal category.

The section exploring colonial life in Honduras presents two texts about *pueblos de indios* (indigenous villages). These focus on their formation and organization, as well as growing urbanism and domestic architecture of such villages. They do not specify which indigenous groups were subjugated to this colonial system or where these villages were concentrated. These *pueblos de indios* were more common in the central and western parts of the territory, where Lenca and Chortí groups lived, this text homogenizes all “Indians” within the national territory. One text superficially explores social and cultural changes brought about by this system. However, the text illustrated indigenous groups as lacking agency:

By the end of one or two generations, the pueblos de indios became hispanized, forgetting their native language, and many features of the ancestral culture. This was the result of biological and cultural mestizaje that the Conquest brought. In fact, their hispanization and consequent christianization was due, above all, to mestizaje [...] Due to the intense mestizaje, by the 18th century, these pueblos stopped considering themselves as ‘pueblos de indios.’¹¹⁶

Although a series of *casta* paintings accompanies this section, no further information explores the process or implications of mestizaje. (See Appendix 9.4.)

¹¹⁶ MIN, exhibit text, “Pueblos de indios,” author’s translation.

Archaeological artifacts, primarily Maya, are displayed throughout the permanent exhibit. Object labels include only basic, non-interpretative information, including object name (e.g. “Ornamental Object” or “Sculpture”) and description (e.g. “Well polished, conical ear spool with fixative” or “Stone sculpture fragment of volcanic tuff of light green color; high relief bat).”¹¹⁷ The only additional information is the object’s dimensions and that it belongs to the IHAH collection on loan to the MIN. Many artifacts are iconic pieces from Copán, including effigy figures, censers, jade artifacts, and fragments of hieroglyphic sculptures. (See Appendix 9.5.) This presentation does not contextualize the artifacts nor does it integrate them into the surrounding exhibit. This lack of information allows them to be understood as national symbols of a mayanized archaeology.

Honduras Eres Tú | You Are Honduras

This room presents contemporary ethnic diversity in Honduras. It includes only two panels: the first is a lengthy text that presents an overview of ethnic diversity from pre-Conquest to modern times, and the second is a poem about Honduras. This final space also includes a multi-screen presentation or video wall with synchronized projections on 16 screens. A looped composite video projects images of diverse people and landscapes across Honduras.

The text panel immediately defines Honduras as

a multicultural and pluriracial nation. We are a mix of peoples and cultures, and a great variety of ethnic groups has left deep marks among us. At the dawn of history, we were Lenca, Maya-Chortí, Chorotega, and Nahuatl from the north, and Tolupanes, Pech, and Tawahka who arrived from the south.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ MIN, object text, “Ornamental object,” author’s translation; MIN, object text, “Sculpture,” author’s translation.

¹¹⁸ MIN, exhibit text, “Honduras: Plurirracial y multicultural,” author’s translation.

The text continues, listing the many Europeans who arrived to the territory during the colonial period, including Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, Dutch, French, Irish, and British. The Afro-descendant cultural and genetic influence has been greatly influential since the beginning of the 17th century, not only from African slaves but also from black fugitives. In 1797, the Garifuna arrived on Honduras's north coast from St. Vincent, as did other black Caribs at the end of the 18th century. From the racial amalgamation of black with local indigenous peoples, emerged the "hybrid" Miskito ethnicity. Throughout the colonial period, "people from many parts of the world plunged their roots in our soil. The [colonial era] established the basis of our cultural plurality and our biological mestizaje."¹¹⁹ (See Appendix 9.6.)

Continuing into the republican and independent eras, this text discusses the policy of *blanqueamiento*, or racial whitening of the nation. Prominent politicians, including founding fathers, promoted this ideology, calling for white North American and European immigration. After the Liberal Reform Era (1876-1920) and renewed migration policies, immigration from the Middle East and Asia greatly increased. "From then until now, in an unceasing process, they mixed culturally and biologically with Hondurans until becoming indistinguishable from any of us."¹²⁰ Central Americans from neighboring countries also immigrated to Honduras. The rise of the banana enclave economy in the early 20th century attracted North Americans to the North Coast as well as many West Indians as laborers on these plantations; contemporaneously, an influx of European and Russian Jews, victims of anti-semitic persecutions, occurred.

¹¹⁹ MIN, exhibit text, "Honduras: Plurirracial y multicultural," author's translation.

¹²⁰ MIN, exhibit text, "Honduras: Plurirracial y multicultural," author's translation.

This lengthy text ends by summarizing the socio-historical and ethno-cultural developments that have fostered Honduran national identity, affirming that “from [...] ethnic fusion, history and culture have shaped and continue to shape and enrich our national identity.”¹²¹ This text brings the exhibit full-circle, returning to the themes first expounded in the introductory text in the anteroom. Emphasizing inclusivity, cultural multiplicity, and a rich common past, this text concludes by instilling a national historical conscience and sense of unity and pride. In so doing, it seeks to strengthen Honduran national identity. Approximately 20 photographs of contemporary Hondurans accompany this text, in addition to details from four *casta* paintings that appear to be reproductions of colonial Mexican works of art (see, for example, Katzew 2004). These portraits present a visual representation of the ethno-cultural diversity and inclusivity discussed in the text. (See Appendix 9.6.) In this context, omitting captions with information about ethnic or cultural belonging accomplishes the opposite of what similar omissions achieve throughout the rest of the exhibit. Neither universalizing nor collapsing the subjects into one ethno-cultural category, this visual imagery successfully illustrates the pluriculturality and inclusivity presented in the text. National identity subsumes ethno-cultural identity.

The second panel is a poem by Honduran poet Carlos Manuel Arita Palomo titled “Honduras.”¹²² A tribute to the nation, this poem tours the country, mentioning cities, towns, and geographical features throughout the country. This poem subtly reinforces the

¹²¹ MIN, exhibit text, “Honduras: Plurirracial y multicultural,” author’s translation.

¹²² Arita Palomo (1912-1989) was also a lawyer and chief justice of the Supreme Court under Roberto Suazo Córdoba (1982-1986). From 1959-1963 he directed the magazine *Correo Literario de Honduras*, under the auspices of the SEP. His literary career spanned from 1932-1984; he wrote nine poetry books and anthologies, which frequently emphasized the fatherland, as well as three narratives (J. González 2004:30-31). Honduran poet, Victor Cáceres Lara, described him as “the poet of the fatherland” (cited in Arita 1982:3)

ethno-cultural diversity presented in the first panel by appealing to regional and national territorial sensibilities of (Honduran) visitors, thereby presenting a textual ethno-territorialization of the country as opposed to a visual, mapped one (such as the PROPAITH map, and those in Chiminike). The accompanying photographs, showing portraits of children, colonial era buildings, and Maya archaeological artifacts do not fully capture the diversity of the poem, but they do expand the visual imagery of Honduran-ness or Honduran national identity beyond a homogenized indo-Hispanic mestizaje that is all too frequently presented.

Although this final section presents a lengthy text detailing ethno-historical processes that have led to contemporary Honduras as a pluricultural nation, it ultimately plays the same role as the final section of Chiminike's "Honduras and Its People" exhibit. While this section presents a fairly comprehensive overview of ethnic and cultural diversity in the national imagination, that it is not integrated into the whole of the exhibit reveals the deep institutional understanding of national identity. Indeed, the MIN's projection of national identity mirrors that of the GOH. While prominently affirming, and even celebrating, cultural differences (as evidenced in the MIN's "You Are Honduras" installation), the underlying institutional discourse (as evidenced throughout the rest of the exhibit) continues to neglect, silence, and homogenize indigenous and Afro-descendant groups, "converting them into folkloric precursors to national culture" (Hale 2004:41, author's translation).

While the MIN is more successful than Chiminike in not explicitly promoting a mayanized version of national identity, by highlighting Copán and its virtual modernity, the MIN's exhibit tacitly upholds what Stutzman terms an "inclusivist ideology of

exclusion” (cited in Hale 2004:35, author’s translation) regarding “non-Maya” ethnicities. This is reflected in the prominent panel on “Discovering Copán,” other texts about early explorers and researches of the archaeological site, the display of Maya artifacts throughout the exhibit, and the Virtual Copán presentation, compared to the little or no information provided about principal archaeological sites in other regions of the country. In addition, the conspicuous absence of discussions of African and Afro-descendant communities further supports a homogeneous (mayanized) indo-Hispanic notion of mestizaje.

Interestingly, this exhibit does not address linguistic diversity in its discussion; this is significant because legal recognition of Honduras as a “pluricultural and multiethnic” state is set forth only in the context of recognizing the “plurilinguistic character” of the nation in establishing bilingual and intercultural education.¹²³

The proposed renovation of this final room, tentatively named the Ethnographic Room, includes audiovisual elements and will integrate musical instruments, tools of daily life, and pottery of ethnic groups recognized by the state. The director of the MIN maintains that this renovation will strengthen the presentation of ethnic groups.¹²⁴ While this addition is hopeful for presenting a more balanced, comprehensive, and inclusive exhibit on ethnic diversity, it remains to be seen how it will be implemented. I foresee an exhibit that pays homage to the principles of the new interpretative framework of multiculturalism, the redefinition of national identity as promoted by the state, while firmly maintaining the mayanized “nationalist mestizo ideology” (Hale 2004:22) that

¹²³ Presidente Constitucional de la República, *Acuerdo Presidencial 0719-EP-94*, 3 August 1994, in Herranz 2001: 529-532.

¹²⁴ *Especial Proceso Digital* 2012.

seems to be ingrained in the Honduran imagination on a subconscious level. In short, my sense is that while the MIN may include more ethnographic objects and texts about ethnic diversity, it will not embrace the framework of multiculturalism on a conceptually profound level.

Conclusion

The three museums in this study, the MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN, are all private museums, which are “sites of power [and] links in the chain of cultural reproduction” in contemporary Honduras (Nederveen Pieterse 2006:176). They represent distinct segments on the museum spectrum, as versions of regional, children’s, and national museums. Although none is a national museum in the strictest sense of the term, all three occupy notions of a national museum in the popular imagination.

As a regional museum on the North Coast, the MAHSPS “attempts to give an idea of the cultural developments achieved by the different [ethnic] groups” in the Sula Valley (MAHSPS 2008:3, author’s translation). However, this mission is not translated to the displays and narratives of its permanent exhibit on the pre-Hispanic past, which maintains the national, institutionalized tradition of a Maya emphasis. My discussion of the Archaeology Area in the MAHSPS reflects on the archaeological tradition in Honduras that—historically and overwhelmingly—focused on the ancient, monumental Maya ruins of Copán. In this case, the presentation and display of archaeological material culture emphasizes the Maya world, and a broader link to Mesoamerica, while systematically neglecting, trivializing, and universalizing indigenous groups and cultural

influences from non-Mesoamerican culture areas, particularly the Intermediate and Circum-Caribbean areas.

The “Honduras and Its People” exhibit in Chiminike, the children’s museum in Tegucigalpa, presents a slightly more inclusive understanding of ethnic national diversity. However, it similarly emphasizes the ancient Maya and the monumental architecture and sculptures from Copán. In addition to displays about pre-Hispanic history, this exhibit also explores aspects of contemporary ethnic diversity in Honduras. However, such elements are presented only superficially—unlike the detailed and varied presentations of aspects of ancient Maya life. This, then, provokes an exoticized and essentialist understanding of contemporary indigenous and Afro-descendant populations. The *guión museográfico* presents a more inclusive discussion of contemporary ethnic diversity, including mestizaje and references to contemporary ethnic social movements and organizations in Honduras, but is not included in the exhibit installation. Finally, during the exhibit development phase before the museum’s inauguration, museum specialists called for studies about ethnic diversity, in pre-Hispanic and contemporary Honduras, to better address or integrate these themes into the exhibit. No evidence suggests that such studies were not carried out. Thus, Chiminike projects an inclusive understanding of ethnic pluralism, at an institutional level and in this particular exhibit. However, the exhibit installations display narratives that ultimately maintain a homogenized, indo-Hispanic and mayanized mestizo nationalism.

The permanent exhibit at the MIN, also located in Tegucigalpa, explicitly explores collective historical memory and national identity in its exhibit narrative, particularly in the Anteroom, or introductory display, and the final display titled

“Honduras Eres Tú.” Throughout the permanent exhibit, it explores themes connected to indigenous populations. However, similar to the exhibits in the MAHSPS and Chiminike, the emphasis rests firmly on the ancient Maya. Texts that discuss other indigenous groups generally collapse them into one universal, non-Maya, indigenous classification; Afro-descendant populations are rarely addressed. The Virtual Copán Auditorium is a clear indication of the institutional emphasis on the ancient Maya. The final section, “Honduras Eres Tú,” presents a detailed discussion of the nation’s ethnic and cultural plurality, from pre-conquest to modern day. This display reinforces the discussion of national unity first presented in the Anteroom. Appealing to national identity as achieved through cultural diversity, this display presents an explicit narrative of multiculturalism. Although this narrative does not extend to the rest of the permanent exhibit, such a discussion at the end of the tour serves to counter the dominant narrative of an indo-Hispanic mestizaje and the emphasis on the ancient Maya of Copán.

In their mission and vision statements, all three museums seemingly recognize and promote the nation’s ethnic plurality. However, close examination of their exhibit displays and texts demonstrate that this recognition of multiculturalism is not fully (if at all) integrated into their representations of national identity. Rather, to varying degrees, all three museums present narratives that mirror state discourse about Honduran national identity; though overtly espousing ethnic pluralism and multiculturalism, these exhibits rather maintain the deeply-rooted, interrelated discourses that understand Honduran national identity as mayanized and homogenized indo-Hispanic mestizaje.

CONCLUSION

Static perspectives on culture come in various guises, for instance notions of national identity. Static views on multiculturalism are based on essentialist and territorial understandings of culture, as in the colonial concept of “plural society” and the contemporary views of multiculturalism [...] Fluid views of culture, identity, and multiculturalism treat culture as a constructed identity, which is perennially in motion, continually under reconstruction. The underlying epistemology is not essentialist but constructivist: cultural identities are not given but produced.

—Jan Nederveen Pieterse 2006:167-168

What it all comes down to is that we are the sum of our efforts to change who we are. Identity is no museum piece sitting stock-still in a display case, but rather the endlessly astonishing synthesis of the contradictions of everyday life.

—Eduardo Galeano 1991:124-25, author’s translation.

Findings and Analysis

In the mid-1990s, within a regional and global context of increased ethno-political mobilizations, the Honduran state began to reformulate its ideology of national identity. Shifting away from the historically dominant indo-Hispanic mestizaje and mayanization to a more inclusive multiculturalism “that valorized difference, in particular Indianness” (Jackson and Warren 2005:551; Hale 2004), it established different institutions and projects dedicated to indigenous issues. This thesis is a multi-sited ethnography that examines the cultural politics of four institutions of power in Honduras. The goal of this thesis was to examine these institutions and related institutional processes and practices and explore how they contributed to the redefinition of ethnicity in national identity.

After presenting the historical, conceptual, and methodological frameworks that ground this thesis in Chapter One, I then examined the existing literature on cultural politics and national identity in Honduras. In Chapter Two, I explored the regional

context that led to the official reformulation of national identity as a homogenized indo-Hispanic, mayanized mestizaje to one of ethnic multiculturalism, promoted by the state and by new ethnic social movements. I then addressed the institutionality of cultural politics in Honduras and presented a brief historical overview of the three central state agencies charged with cultural policies, the IHAH, SCAD, and the IHT. In Chapter Three, I examined PROPAITH, the multi-disciplinary, state-sponsored project that centered on traditional and indigenous artisanry as an economic development program. In Chapter Four, I discussed three private museums, which are “sites of power [and] links in the chain of cultural reproduction” in contemporary Honduras (Nederveen Pieterse 2006:176). Focusing on the sections of their permanent exhibits that emphasize national identity and representations of ethnic groups, I provided content and textual analyses of the exhibits to explore how these informal learning institutions have contributed to or incorporated elements of the new state discourse of national identity as “neo-liberal multiculturalism” (Hale 2004:36) or have maintained older discourses of national identity as a homogenized indo-Hispanic mestizaje or a mayanized “mestizo nationalism” (Hale 2004:22).

My discussions of PROPAITH, the MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN demonstrate that these institutions all projected a complicated and often contradictory understanding of Honduran national identity, particularly regarding its ethnic composition. These four institutions were all inaugurated in an eleven year period, between 1994 and 2006, and reflect the fragmented, incoherent, and even contradictory repositioning of state discourse of Honduran national identity of the time. That is, while ostensibly incorporating a more inclusive, pluralistic rhetoric of national identity, these

institutions continue to present an older, essentialist, and hegemonic vision of a particular homogenized indo-Hispanic mestizo national population and identity.

PROPAITH began as a multi-disciplinary and academic project, aimed at generating income for impoverished ethnic groups through traditional artisanry. Over the extended course of the project (1995-2006), it became clear that the impact of PROPAITH evolved far beyond its initial intended scope of generating alternative employment and marketing products of indigenous traditions. By attempting to “institutionalize the modern notion of ‘ethnic development’ and not just the old notion of safeguarding the ancestral, ‘typical’, and folkloric” (Euraque 2009:5, author’s translation), an underlying contribution of PROPAITH was to contest the hegemonic tendencies of mestizaje by strengthening different indigenous groups through their artisanry and cultural creativity. Thus, PROPAITH paralleled the political identification of indigenous movements by recognizing ethno-cultural elements that clearly oppose the homogeneity of mestizaje. Indigenous mobilization continues to impact the political sphere in Honduras, as evidenced by the indigenous organizations that actively support the resistance movement. By complementing their emerging political manifestation of ethnicity with ethno-cultural development, PROPAITH helped to foster a more integrated perception of Honduras’s multiethnic, indigenous national identity.

Yet, simultaneously, PROPAITH upheld deeply rooted, institutionalized understandings of national identity and projected reductionist, essentialized imagery of indigenous cultures. In particular, it promoted a mayanized vision of diverse indigenous groups through production and commercialization efforts. In addition, by introducing new elements into the design or production processes, PROPAITH contributed to

“inventing traditions” of indigenous artisans. (Hobsbawm 1983). These invented traditions, which can be understood as “neo-artisan pottery” (Ardón Mejía 2000:308, author’s translation), were formalized and ritualized through the project’s marketing strategies and through its link with the IHT. International tourism is a central sector of the Honduran economy, and the IHT aided PROPAITH in promoting and marketing—to a national and international audience—the artisan productions as manifestations of a national cultural identity. These efforts were “formally instituted” (Hobsbawm 1983:1) through projecting standardized, commercialized artisanry to a particular kind of consumer. By solely emphasizing particular and limited forms of traditional artisanry (pottery and natural or ecological resources), PROPAITH continued to uphold antiquated imagery of indigenous communities as “static” holdovers from the pre-conquest era. Thus, while PROPAITH was successful at generating employment, the imagery of indigenous and Afro-descendant groups that it projected remained essentialist, reductionist, and homogenized while simultaneously projecting a new ethnicized element of Honduran national identity, which was often framed around the consumer demands of a globalized tourist economy.

The MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN all play a central role in the regional and national communities and imaginations and, as institutions of power and of non-traditional learning, they could provoke a national dialogue about perceptions of national identity instead of projecting incoherent and contradictory narratives that mirror official discourse. I suggest that these museums would benefit diverse communities (for example, the museums themselves, their visitors, Honduras’s indigenous groups) by adopting “alternative agendas” of exhibition about ethnic groups and national identity (Nederveen

Pieterse 2006: 171-175). To different degrees, these three museums all display “unifying myths of nationality” (Risnicoff de Gorgas 1999:52) that present a classic dichotomy of self and other—in this case, the idealized, homogenized mestizo and the exoticized, essentialized *indio*.

The three private museums in this study similarly present a complicated, and sometimes contradictory, understanding of Honduran national identity, echoing official discourse. The permanent exhibit of the Archaeology Area at the MAHSPS predominantly emphasizes the connections that the Sula Valley and surrounding region had with the *Mundo Maya* and the wider culture area of Mesoamerica. In the exhibit there are 19 wall labels that can be considered group or sub-theme labels, according to Serrell’s exhibit label categories (1983, 1996). These range in length from 60 words to more than one thousand. An additional 67 texts, ranging from five to 500 words, are included within vitrine displays and add significantly to the exhibit narrative; some of these could also be considered group or sub-theme labels, though these are generally shorter than wall-mounted texts. No caption or object (non-interpretative) labels exist.

Of these 87 total texts, 18 texts specifically discuss the Maya and/or elements of Maya culture,¹ including two displays with multiple texts, objects, drawings and other imagery explore in great detail aspects of ancient Maya life—Maya Codices and the Maya Ball Game.² An additional nine texts specifically discuss connections to Mexico

¹ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Jade”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Las minas de obsidiana”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Plumas de quetzal”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Maiz”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Escultura del joven dios del maíz”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Arquitectura y escultura monumental y cacicazgos” MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Como leer cerámica policroma”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Vasijas de marmol”; MAHSPS exhibit text, “Vasijas policromas del Ulúa”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Figurillas como indicadores de interacción.”

² MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Libros Mayas...los códices”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Amate”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Copia del codice Dresde”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “El juego de pelota Maya”; MAHSPS, exhibit

and Mesoamerican cultures (including the Olmec and Zaoptec cultures).³ Four texts universalize indigenous groups, collapsing them into the category of pre-Columbian; of these, two continue to reference Mesoamerican cultures.⁴ Only one text, out of a total of 87, specifically mentions “non-Maya” cultural groups living in Honduras.⁵ Thus, the textual narrative of the MAHSPS overwhelmingly emphasizes Mesoamerican cultures, particularly the Maya, in pre-Hispanic Honduras. The systematic omission of discussions or even references to “non-Maya” cultural groups greatly trivializes them; other texts present a universalized, singular pre-Hispanic “indigenous population” (Eichstedt and Small 2002:137-140). Although different versions of the *guión museográfico* promote a slightly more sustained discussion of national identity and ethnic diversity than what the exhibit actually includes, this exhibit employs widespread narrative techniques that “symbolically annihilate” (Eichstedt and Small 2002:106) the ethno-cultural pluralism in pre-conquest Honduras.

Chiminike, the children’s museum in Tegucigalpa, displays a slightly more inclusive presentation of the nation’s ethnic diversity, but this focuses almost exclusively on contemporary Honduras. The pre-Columbian section focuses almost exclusively on the Maya and monumental architecture and sculptures from the PAC, including four

text, “El juego de pelota”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Juego de pelota y la cultura Mesoamericana”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Juego de pelota y vida pública”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, two polychrome vases with texts that show designs of ball players.

³ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Figurillas de Playa de los Muertos”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Figuras olmecas de Los Naranjos”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Secuencia cerámica del Honduras prehistórica”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Vasijas de marmol”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Dinero que crecio en arboles”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Ejemplos de vasijas encontradas en el occidente de México con ciertas características a los encontrados en el Valle de Sula”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “La cerámica más antigua”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Decoración negativa”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Ehécatl”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Los Naranjos.”

⁴ MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Animales”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Las conchas”; MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Tatuaje”;

MAHSPS, exhibit text, “Jadeita.”

⁵ The introductory exhibit text titled, “Influencias culturales encontradas en el Valle de Sula.”

reproductions and extended texts discussing them.⁶ Although other texts and accompanying illustrations address the region of modern Honduras as an area of cultural convergence, these texts emphasize the influence of the Mesoamerican culture area and not that of the Intermediate Area.⁷ Other texts universalize a singular “indigenous population” during the conquest period, but provide no additional information.⁸ Thus, in the pre-Hispanic section (encompassing the areas I call “first inhabitants and the contributions of archaeology” and “our Mayan ancestors”), Chiminike presents a heavily mayanized display that almost fully focuses on the aspects of the ancient Maya.

The exhibit does, however, recognize elements of contemporary ethnic diversity. In the section I call “contemporary ethnic diversity,” the exhibit presents elements of ethnic diversity through the presentation of language and “typical” dress; however, this section does not critically engage with these aspects, which leads to an exoticized, essentialist understanding of these ethnic groups. It additionally addresses *mestizaje* as a dynamic process and briefly discusses such processes from conquest to modern-day. The original *guión museográfico* of the “Honduras and Its People” exhibit called for additional elements that would present a greater, and more balanced, representation of cultural diversity, but these were not included in the final installation. Finally, in the development phase, recommendations were made to better address elements of ethno-cultural diversity (though still emphasizing the Maya) in the exhibit. These recommendations called for consultations and studies with major target audiences, as

⁶ Chiminike, exhibit text, “El Arco maya”; Chiminike, exhibit text, “Rosalila”; Chiminike, exhibit text, “La Construcción de una gran ciudad: Copán”; Chiminike, exhibit text, “Choza Maya”; Chiminike, exhibit text, “Altar Q.”

⁷ Chiminike, exhibit text, “Honduras y su afiliación cultural, 1500.”

⁸ Chiminike, exhibit text, “Indígenas trabajando en la agricultura y en los telares.”

well as participation from members of ethnic groups, to better present ethnic pluralism. However, there is no evidence that these recommendations were implemented.

The MIN is the closest version to a national museum that Honduras can claim. Although it is a private museum, like the MAHSPS and Chiminike, the MIN more explicitly engages with issues of nationalism, national consciousness, and national identity. The overall content of its permanent exhibit generally follows the same pattern as the MAHSPS and Chiminike—a mayanized presentation of national identity. The Virtual Copán Auditorium, which allows visitors to “experience” Copán at the height of the ancient Maya civilization, is a high-technology educational resource—a unique attraction in the country and region—that highlights the ancient Maya of Copán. Except for the final exhibit (“Honduras Eres Tú”), the MIN—similar to the MAHSPS and especially Chiminike—dedicates a high percentage of exhibit space solely to the ancient Maya.

The permanent exhibit addresses elements of indigenous life throughout, particularly in the third and fourth rooms. Yet references to indigenous groups overwhelmingly universalize them, collapsing them into a single, universal population. Exhibit texts and the accompanying visual imagery portray these cultural groups as static, even primitivist, and as lacking agency. Although the exhibit implicitly addresses elements of mestizaje by presenting *casta* paintings, the lack of accompanying discussions uphold that imagery as relevant in contemporary society. However, in contrast, the final room, titled “Honduras Eres Tú,” represents a significant engagement with ancient and contemporary ethnic diversity (from pre-conquest to the present) and more substantially examines the impact that mestizaje has had on national identity. This

display more overtly recognizes and explores ethnic pluralism than the exhibits in the MAHSPS and Chiminike. Additionally, the visual imagery in this section promotes more diverse and inclusive representations of Honduran identity that encompasses ethnic plurality.

The presentation of ethnic diversity and national identity in the MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN seems to suggest a pattern that follows official narratives of Honduran national identity. That is, the order in which the museum content was developed (and the museums were inaugurated) generally followed official discourse of Honduran national identity, with the later museums engaging more with themes of multiculturalism and ethnic plurality. However, despite increasing discussions of multiculturalism, exhibits in all three museums display and convey deeply-rooted, insitutionalized understandings of a mayanized, and historically mestizo national identity.

By shifting their representations and exhibit narratives away from that of traditional ethnography or history museums and adopting “alternative agendas” of exhibition (Nederveen Pieterse 2006: 171-175), these informal learning institutions could engage ethnic communities about representation. These “alternative agendas” would shift the display emphasis away from objects, preservation, and memorialization of the past to a more “people-centered, action oriented [museum], devoted to social change and development” (Kreps 2008:28). Drawing on a central tenet of the New Museology movement to democratize the museum and museum practices (Kreps 2008:28), such “alternative agendas” might include post-modern, dialogical, hybrid, reflexive, civically engaged and/or socially responsible approaches to representations of national identity. These approaches would counter the fundamentally essentialist, reductionist, and/or

universalized representations of ethnic cultures that they currently employ (Evans 1999; Hirzy 2002; Kreps 1997, 2008; Nederveen Pieterse 2006). Doing so would simultaneously engage in an institutional reflexivity about ethnic representations and (ideally) allow such ethnic communities greater voice and agency in representations about their culture(s).

To be civically engaged and socially responsible museums, the MAHSPS, Chiminike, and the MIN would need to reflect on their historical and current institutional positionality. All three museums address national identity in their mission or vision statements, but only the MIN overtly recognizes itself as a political institution that can reinforce or question notions of national identity and engages the public with this topic in its permanent exhibit.⁹ By engaging in community-based, participatory museology with ethnic (indigenous and/or Afro-descendant) communities, these three museums would challenge the stereotypes, imagery, and discourses about Honduras's indigenous past instead of reinforcing them.

Limitations

This thesis suffered from many limitations, particularly during the fieldwork phase, which directly affected the content. First, and perhaps most importantly, this thesis was an examination of multiple state institutions of power—that is, it engages the topics from a top-down perspective instead of a grass-roots, bottom-up approach. I examine institutions and institutional policies, not individual actors who participate in

⁹ MAHSPS, n.d., “Misión, Visión y Objetivos,” in Información para practicantes, author’s translation. Document in possession of author; MIN, n.d., “Acerca del MIN: Misión y Visión,” <http://www.min.hn.acerca/>, accessed 22 November 2011; Chiminike, “Nuestra Misión,” Misión y Visión, author’s translation, <http://www.chiminike.org>, accessed 27 January 2012.

implementing such policies—neither “development workers” (Jackson 2005) who work for state agencies of transnational organizations nor local citizens who participate in such initiatives. Because it examines state institutions of power, this thesis could be initially misunderstood as promoting a directive, top-down approach in implementing cultural heritage policies.

In addition, this institutional ethnography is largely documentary based and derivative. Although I enjoyed many conversations with both central and peripheral actors in the cultural heritage sector (from 2007-2009 as well as during my fieldwork in 2010), my analyses are inferred mostly from a documentary base and my own observations. I wanted to carry out lengthy, formal interviews with key figures in the institutions I examined (two former directors of PROPAITH and the directors of all three museums) regarding policies and concepts of cultural identity and ethnicity. Also, importantly, this study would have benefitted from more balanced or nuanced insights into these topics from participants in either top-down or localized grassroots initiatives. Sustained and pointed conversations, formal and informal interviews, and oral histories of artisans with whom PROPAITH worked would have provided a deeper understanding of the project itself and its legacy, as well as local understandings of national identity and reactions to official discourse and implementation efforts. Interviews with individuals from agencies who financed PROPAITH (Jackson’s “development workers”) would have presented additional perspectives and understandings of the role and legacies of the project. Another key sector whose voice is missing from this study is the museum audience(s). A more comprehensive study would have examined their understandings of and reactions to the museum displays of national identity and ethnicity. To do so, I would

formulate written or oral entrance and/or exit questionnaires for a visitor sample to all museums as well as structured interviews for a smaller sample of visitors. I would also spend more sustained time observing museum visitors in the exhibit halls and their behavior and interactions with elements directly related to ethnicity, national identity, and ethnic groups (Bernard 1998, 2011).

In addition, although I spent an extended period of time at the MAHSPS, two months during an internship, I did not spend similar amounts of time at the other two museums. I visited the museums and their exhibits multiple times (from 2007-2009 as well as in 2010), each visit lasting for a few hours. But, because they were short visits, I focused my attentions on the exhibit displays (texts and other content) instead of trying to also understand the institutional processes and policies. Ideally, I would have spent extended periods of time at all three museums, as well as in artisan cooperatives that had worked with PROPAITH.

My observations and experiences interning at the MAHSPS were undoubtedly affected by my prior work with the IHAH (2007-2009), which included fairly regular collaborative efforts with the MAHSPS and its staff. I think that many of my colleagues at the MAHSPS continued to think of me as a consultant working with the IHAH, and they did not fully understand what I was doing at the museum. Thus, my positionality, particularly through my institutional affiliations and connections to key players in state agencies responsible for designing and implementing cultural policies, greatly affected my research. Since these players had been ousted after the coup against President Zelaya, I no longer enjoyed access to those state agencies. The aftermath of the coup also meant

that I could not study public museums, which are run by the IHAH whose new administration I did not recognize as legal.

Finally, my proposed fieldwork chronology was ultimately cut in half. This meant that I was unable to carry out research that was central to my original proposal of developing a collaborative museum exhibit that explored elements of ethnic identity. This change in my research schedule meant that I needed to completely reframe my focus. Thus, the institutional processes and relationships that were secondary in my original proposal came to be the central concern of this redeveloped thesis.

Contributions and Future Research

As a multi-sited ethnography that examines how diverse institutional processes contributed to the recent redefinition of official national identity, this thesis contributes to a small but growing literature about Honduran national identity and ethnicity. My examination departs from the existing literature about contemporary Honduran national identity by presenting a multi-faceted analysis of four state institutions of power within the broader official and officially sanctioned institutionality of cultural heritage. My discussion of the PROPAITH project addresses the complicated and contradictory initiatives to preserve and promote “traditional” indigenous artisanry. Most existing literature about traditional Honduran artistic expressions, which is limited, tends to focus on the production processes and use of material. I, instead, explore how institutional policies aimed at the specific artistic expressions promoted by PROPAITH, contributed to the “invention of traditions,” as well as their standardization, in order to appeal to a particular, global market. This state-sponsored project was a significant undertaking in

the institutional history of the cultural heritage sector. It helped popularize imagery of ethnic artisanry and contributed to consolidating the complicated redefinition of state discourse about ethnicized national identity.

I also provide a unique perspective by examining multiple museum exhibits and presenting a multi-faceted discussion and analysis of their displays. While this thesis might be understood as just another case study (in the global context) that illustrates how governments use the cultural heritage sector to promote a homogenized national identity, it is a significant contribution to the literature about such themes in the particular country (Honduras) and Central America in general. This thesis represents the first major study to examine, in depth, Honduran museums and to present a comparative analysis of their exhibit installations. It is also significant in its exploration of the relationship between museums and national identity from an ethno-historical perspective.

One of the major contributions of this thesis is connected to the source of much of my research. This thesis represents the first major study to systematically utilize the documentation at the AEHIHAH in Tegucigalpa. The IHAH's ethno-historic archive holds extensive, rich documentation about the organization, institutionality, history, projects, employees, and much more of this particular state agency in the cultural heritage sector. As such, much more information can be mined about its relationships with other state institutions, local and international NGOs, and multilateral organizations that engage in Honduras's cultural heritage sector during the last half century.

Addressing in detail any of my research limitations discussed above would undoubtedly lead to better understandings of particular actors, agendas, and relationships in the cultural heritage sector. By employing techniques of more traditional ethnographies

(including formal and informal interviews, surveys, extended stays in particular places or spaces), my discussions in this thesis would be greatly enhanced. A more grass-roots perspective would focus on the legacies of PROPAITH in particular indigenous artisan communities and on their current production and promotion processes of this cultural expression. I hope to also augment the understanding of PROPAITH's financing by interviewing particular development workers from the major and minor financing agencies, particularly international donors. This would also serve to better understand the institutional (economic) relationships the Honduran cultural sector has with multilateral development organizations. A different approach would focus more on central individual actors within the cultural sector. Although I allude to certain key individuals in this thesis, life histories or multiple, sustained interviews with these and other figures would allow for a more nuanced, individualized understanding of the cultural heritage sector.

An important population group (or groups) that I did not examine in this study (although I did rely on previously published material) is museum visitors. Future research into visitor perceptions and reactions to exhibit content about national identity and ethnic identities would provide further insight into the contributions of the museum institutions to the shift in state discourse toward multiculturalism. In short, this thesis examines multiple cultural heritage institutions from a top-down perspective. Future research that focuses more on individual characters will provide a much more nuanced perspective into the contributions of cultural heritage institutions of power in the official redefinition of ethnicity in Honduran national identity.

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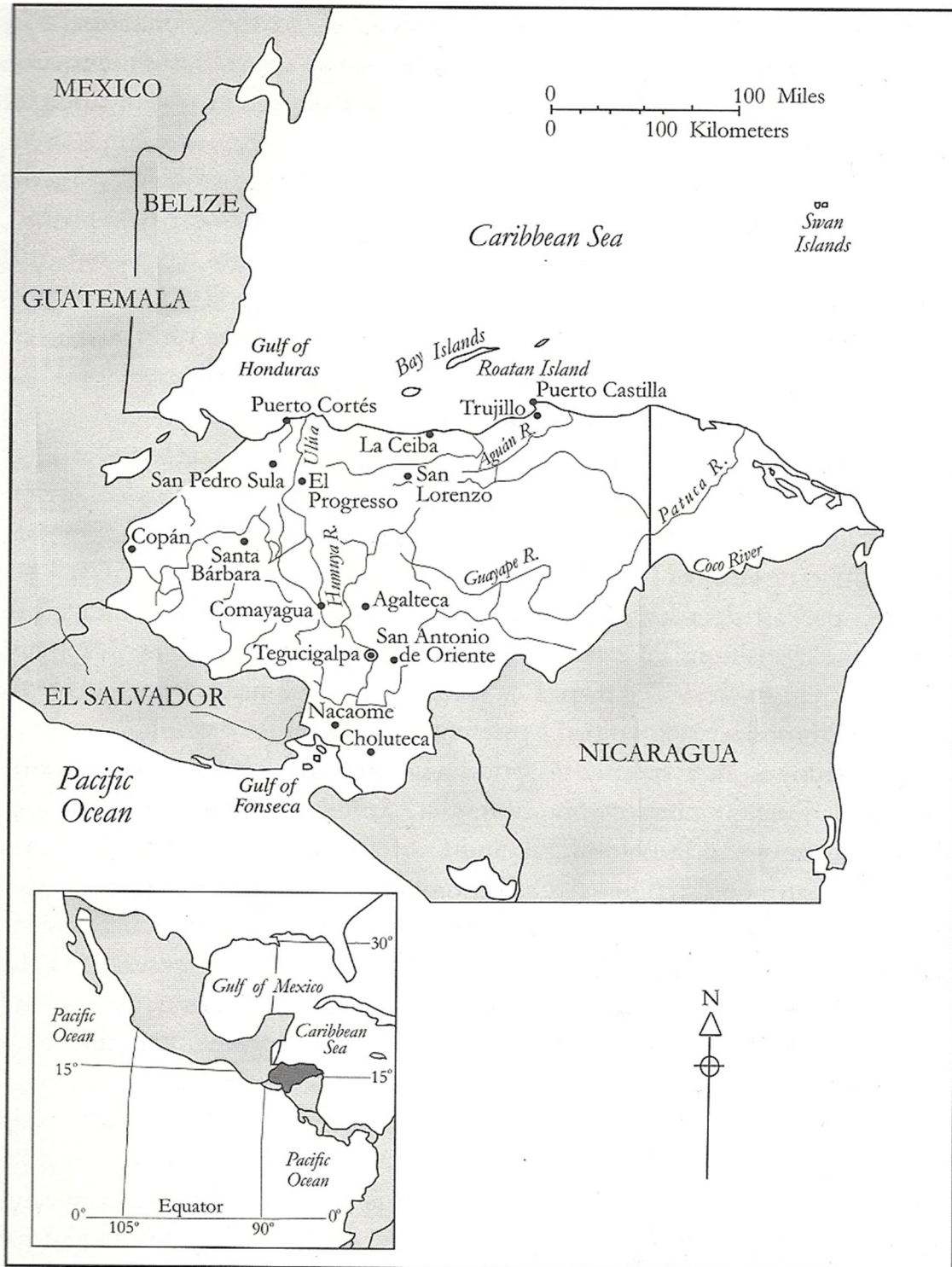
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: MAP OF HONDURAS



Source: Darío A. Euraque, 1996, *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic: Region and State in Honduras, 1870-1972*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

**APPENDIX 2: COMPARISON OF LEGAL DEFINITIONS OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN
HONDURAS, LEGISLATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE OF
THE NATION, 1984 AND 1997**

Decree No. 81-84 (1984)

Chapter 3, Article 5

a) Monuments: Architectural works of high content and value from the anthropological, historical, or artistic point of view from the colonial era, as well as those from the 19th century;

b) Movable Property: Engravings, pictures, sculptures, furniture, jewelry, coins, arms, clothing, machines, and tools and other objects of high content and value from the anthropological, historical, or artistic point of view, manufactured prior to 1900;

c) Complexes: Groups of construction, isolated or together, whose architecture, unity, and integration in the landscape gives them value from the anthropological, historical, or artistic point of view;

ch) Places: Man-made works and combined man-made and natural works, archaeological sites, and typical places that have value from the anthropological, historical, aesthetic, and touristic point of view;

d) Documentary and Library Collections: Handwritten and printed documents, newspaper libraries, incunabula, iconography, seals, specialized libraries, national books, decorations, maps, plans, judicial and administrative files, civil and ecclesiastic registries, stamps, diplomas, tape recordings, microfilms, negative and positive photographs, or any other type of judicial, ecclesiastic, or administrative collections, subject to archive [...];

Decree No. 220-97

Chapter 3, Article 2

1) Monuments: Those immovable heritage properties from the pre-Columbian, colonial, and republican eras what, by their architecture or engineering, are of anthropological historical interest;

2) Movable Property: Engravings, pictures, sculptures, furniture, jewelry, coins, arms, clothing, machines, and tools and other objects of anthropological and historical interest;

3) Complexes: Groups of immovable heritage properties that form a settlement pattern, continuous or disperse, that can be clearly delimited, determined by and physical structure representative of the evolution of a human community, by being a testimony of its culture;

4) Archaeological Site: That abandoned area or place that presents evidence of human activity in the form of artifacts, features, and/or alterations of the same, be they from the pre-Columbian, colonial, or republican era of anthropological historical interest and includes the evidence found in jurisdictional waters on the surface and subsoil;

5) Archaeological Zone: A place where a complex or group of archaeological sites exist;

6) Archaeological Collections: Material remains that are the result of archaeological investigations, rescue, or preservation of archaeological resources or removed through looting, as well as the documentation related to them;

e) Toponym heritage and folkloric expression: Purity of the indigenous name of villages and sites, folkloric expressions, arts, artisanry, and popular industries, and traditional culture of indigenous communities and of populations of recognized colonial influence.

7) Documentary Collections are: Handwritten [or] printed documents, seals, diplomas, maps, plans, judicial and administrative files, civil and ecclesiastic registries, stamps, tape recordings, microfilms, negative and positive photographs, or any other type of judicial, ecclesiastic, or administrative collections, subject to archive;

8) Library Collections: Specialized libraries, national books, newspaper libraries, incunabula, and all with historical interest;

9) Cultural Expressions of living indigenous peoples, their languages, historical traditions, knowledge and techniques, forms of organization, value systems, religious practices, and places associated with them; and,

10) Cultural Expressions of living vernacular origin that are of anthropological and historical interest, religious organizations and celebrations, music and dance, prototypes of artisanry production and of culinary art, oral tradition.

Funding Agency	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
National contribution (IHAH)	\$143,003 ¹		L52,782 ²		L500,000 ⁶	L500,000 ⁶ L700,000 ⁷					L200,000 ¹⁰
	L89,192 ²										
Gov't of Spain					\$98,671 ⁸		\$180,000 ⁸				
AECI	\$376,008 ¹		L796,968 ² L274,991 ³			\$ 248,410 ⁶ L410,890 ⁶ L589,111 ⁶ L516,250 ⁷			L2,160,400 ⁶ \$141,977 ⁹		
	L692,865 ² L202,237 ³										
Gov't of France						L1,448,613 ⁶					
French Embassy	L300,000 ⁴										
Cooperación Francesa	\$53,000 ¹										
ASDI	L371,729 ²		L500,663 ² L299,935 ³	\$68,000 ⁵	\$34,000 ⁵	\$197,128 ⁶ L684,357 ⁷					
Gov'ts of France and Sweden (combined)		L921,097 ¹¹	L2,487,569 ¹¹	L1,402,160 ¹¹	L432,365 ¹¹		L677,306 ¹¹				
Embassy of Canada											L320,828 ¹⁰
UNIFEM	L46,925 ² L42,416 ³		L119,234 ² L176,500 ³								
UNESCO											L56,700 ¹⁰
FFH	L298,124 ² L189,012 ³		L247,022 ² L212,056 ³			L268,017 ⁶ L548,333 ⁷					
COSUDE	L5,500 ²		L26,000 ²								
MOPAWI			L24,000 ³								
PASI	L23,995 ²										
Total Budget (US\$)	\$572,011 ¹										
Total Budget (Honduran Lempiras)	L1,528,330 ² L439,165 ³		L1,742,669 ² L1,013,482 ³			L2,448,940 ⁷					

Sources: All documents in possession of author.

¹ Alessandra Foletti, 3 May 1995, "Programa de Rescate y Promoción de la Producción Artesanal Indígena y Tradicional de Honduras," final version, Tegucigalpa, IHAH. AEHIHAH, box 368.

² Nilda Lagos to Alessandra Foletti, 15 December 1997, memorandum with no number, but a separate document from source 3 (below). AEHIHAH, box 371.

³ Nilda Lagos to Alessandra Foletti, 15 December 1997, memorandum with no number, but a separate document from source 2 (above). AEHIHAH, box 371.

⁴ Alessandra Foletti to Carmen Julia Fajardo, 17 October 1995, oficio no. 092. AEHIHAH, no box.

⁵ IHAH-PROPAITH, 15 April 1999, Informe Narrativo Parcial del Proyecto, presentado a Agencia Sueca para el Desarrollo Internacional. AEHIHAH, no box.

⁶ IHAH, no date. Fondos recibidos para PROPAITH. AEHIHAH, box 369.

⁷ PROPAITH, 2000, Informe de Labores 2000. AEHIHAH, box 365.

⁸ Mario Mejía, 2004:34, 72.

⁹ PROPAITH-IHAH, 2003, "Informe de Labores 2003." AEHIHAH, box 365.

¹⁰ Martha Patricia Cardona to Saúl Bueso, 9 August 2005, oficio no. 050. AEHIHAH, box 371.

¹¹ Darío A. Euraque, 2007:37.

Other references with combined or no monetary values provided:

- 1) In 1996, PROPAITH had coordinated with INFOP [*Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional* or National Vocational Training Institute], ANAH [*Asociación Nacional de Artesanos de Honduras* or National Association of Artisans of Honduras], PROCATMER [*Programa de Crédito y Asistencia Técnica a la Microempresa Rural* or Credit Program to Support Rural Small Businesses], PASI [Pan-American Advanced Studies Institute through the UNAH], FHIS [*Fondo Hondureño de Inversión Social* or Honduran Fund of Social Investment], and had made convenios with PLANDERO [Agricultural Development for the Western Region, a program of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, a specialized agency of the UN], MOPAWI [Moskitia Pawisa Apiska], IDEHCOOP [*Instituto Hondureño de Cooperativas* or the Honduran Institute of Cooperatives, an autonomous institution, decentralized organ of the *Movimiento Cooperativo Hondureño* or Honduran Cooperative Movement], UNIFEM [United Nations Development Fund for Women]. On the commercialization level, it received support from the *Instituto Hondureño de Cooperación Interamericana* or Honduran Institute of Interamerican Cooperation and *Casas de Cultura* in different locals. Also, it built a galley [*galera*] for the Lenca artisan collective Group MAGU with funds from *Las Damas Diplomáticas* [wives of ambassadors in Honduras]. (Speech by Alessandra Foletti, 24 October 1996, "Inauguración tienda artesanal de PROPAITH," AEHIHAH, box 372; year end report likely written by Alessandra Foletti, "Informe Final Anual 1996," IAF001, pp. 5, 6, 12, AEHIHAH, box 365).
- 2) By 2004, PROPAITH had utilized more than \$800,000 from the AECI, ASDI, and French government (OAS 2004:38).

- 3) In 2004, PROPAITH received support from the *Instituto Italo Latinoamericano* [Italian Latin American Institute] (PROPAITH, 2004, Informe de Actividades, enero-diciembre 2004, AEHIHAH, box 365).
- 4) In 2005, PROPAITH signed an agreement of technical cooperation with the *Proyecto de Desarrollo Rural Sostenible de Zonas de Fragilidad Ecológica de la Región del Trifinio* [Project of Sustainable Rural Development in Ecologically Fragile Zones in the Trifinio Region] (PRODERT). Additionally, PROPAITH received financial support from *Despacho de las Hermanas Maduro* [Office of the Maduro Sisters] who paid rent for a promotional kiosk in the Mall Multiplaza in Tegucigalpa (PROPAITH, 2005, Informe de Actividades, enero-junio 2005, AEHIHAH, box 365).

Exchange Rates

Year	Exchange rate	Year	Exchange rate
Jan 1995	\$1 = L9.47	Jan 2001	\$1 = L15.47
Jan 1996	\$1 = L11.71	Jan 2002	\$1 = L16.43
Jan 1997	\$1 = L13.00	Jan 2003	\$1 = L17.35
Jan 1998	\$1 = L13.39	Jan 2004	\$1 = L18.21
Jan 1999	\$1 = L14.21	Jan 2005	\$1 = L18.83
Jan 2000	\$1 = L14.84	Jan 2006	\$1 = L18.9

Source: <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/honduras/official-exchange-rate-lcu-per-us-dollar-period-average-wb-data.html>, accessed 25 January 2012.

\$ = US dollar

L = Honduran lempira

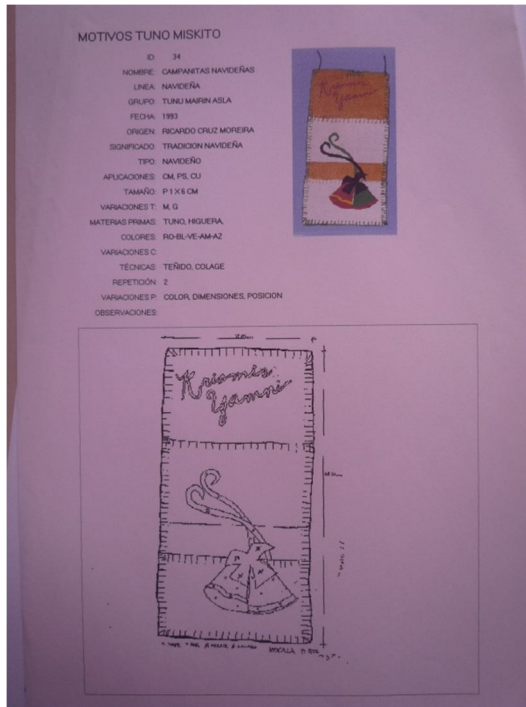
APPENDIX 4: PROPAITH DOCUMENTATION



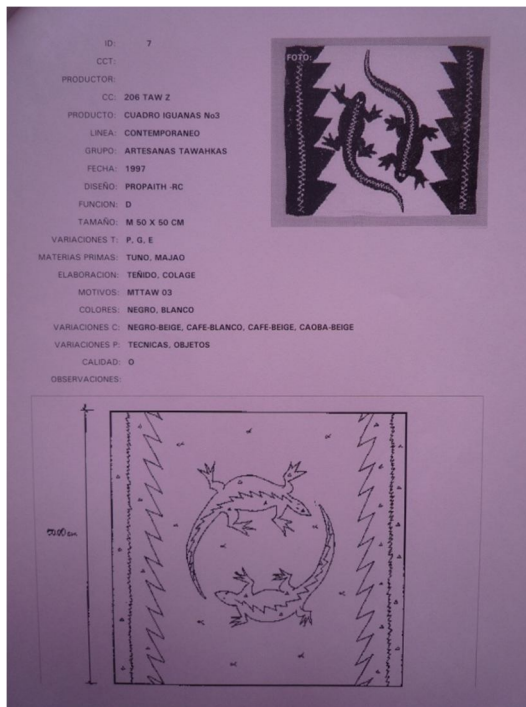
4.1. Image from an exposition sale of PROPAITH at the MAHSPS in 1996. AEHIHAH, box 366.



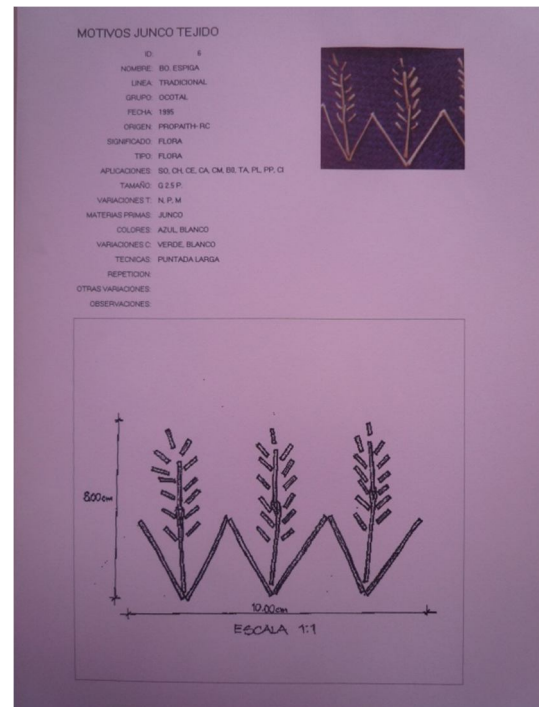
4.2. Slide of male Tolupan artisan weaving a basket, taken from a field visit to Montaña de la Flor. AEHIHAH, box 366.



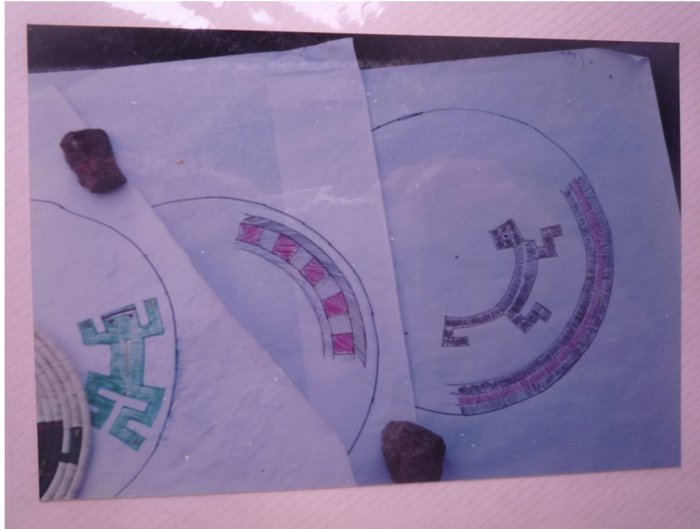
4.3. Example of a design introduced by PROPAITH staff, in this case the Adjunct National Coordinator, who was in charge of production. This belongs to the Christmas line. It is produced by Miskito artisans. AEHIIHAH, box 367.



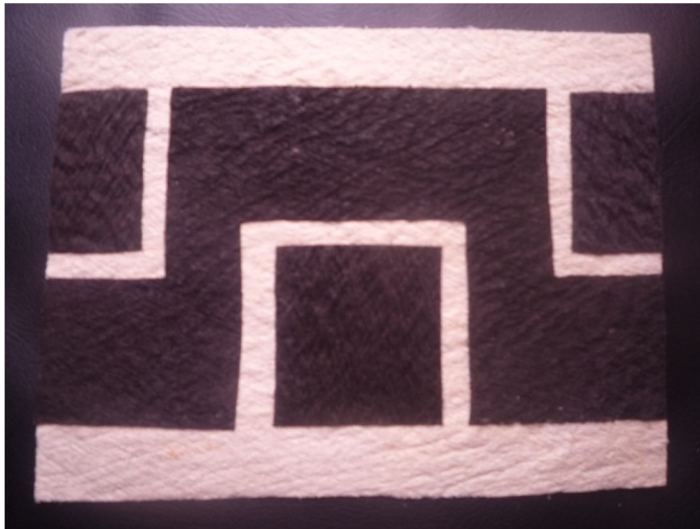
4.4. Example of design in the contemporary line that was designed by PROPAITH staff. It is produced by Tawahka artisans and has become one of the better known designs. AEHIIHAH, box 367.



4.5. Example of design in the traditional line that was designed by PROPAITH staff. It is produced by mestizo reed artisans. AEHIIHAH, box 367.



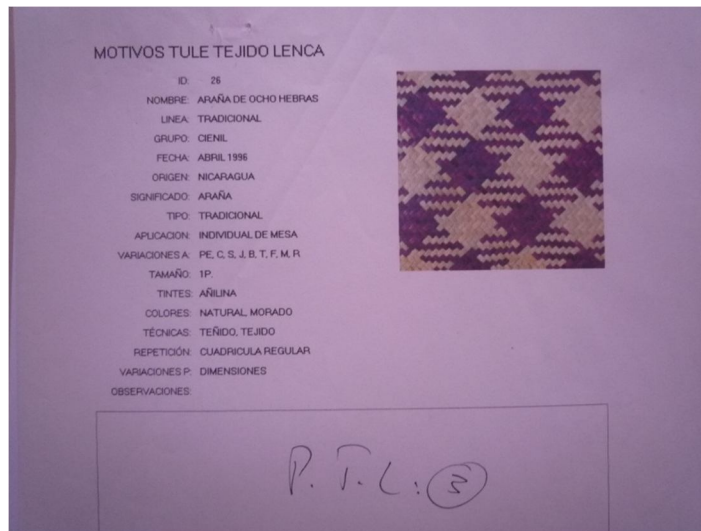
4.6. Documenting the product design process of PROPAITH staff. AEHIIAH, box 366.



4.7. Example of artisanry that universalizes and collapses all indigenous groups as “ethnic.” The back of this card indicates that this is produced by Tawahka artisans. Its title is “Tarjeta motivo étnico geométrico.” AEHIIAH, box 366.



4.8. Example of artisanry that mayanizes artisanry. This card is titled “Nudos de Copán” and belongs to the archaeological line. It is produced by Tawahka artisans. This also demonstrates standardization of products – the back indicates that the standard measurements are 4.5 x 5.5 inches or 12 x 14 cm. AEHIHAH, box 366.



4.9. Example of design influences from outside of Honduras. This is considered part of the traditional line, yet the design originates in Nicaragua. It is produced by Lenca mat-makers. AEHIHAH, box 367.

All photographs by the author.

APPENDIX 5: PROPAITH ETHNIC ARTISAN MAP



APPENDIX 7: MAHSPS PHOTOGRAPHS



7.1. Facade of the MAHSPS.



7.2. Only text with accompanying map that names “non-Maya” cultural groups; text title is “Influencias culturales encontradas en el Valle de Sula.”



7.3. Display of “Agricultura incipiente” that focuses on Mesoamerican agriculture.



7.4. Vitrine with text “Animales.” Example of text universalizing indigenous populations into one category.



7.5. Display of monumental sculpture at Los Naranjos, emphasizing the connection to Mesoamerican cultural groups.



7.6. Display of the Maya ball game, highlighting an aspect of ancient Maya cultural life.



Pequeña vasija policroma decorada con jugadores de pelota en plena acción. La pelota se ve en el aire.

Small polychrome container decorated with ball players at play, with rubber ball in the air.

7.7. Polychrome vase decorated with ball players in action.



7.8. Display of Maya codices on the back wall.

All photographs by the author.

APPENDIX 8: CHIMINIKE PHOTOGRAPHS



8.1. Facade of Chiminike.



8.2. Entering the “Honduras and Its People” exhibit through a “cave” with reproductions of cave art.



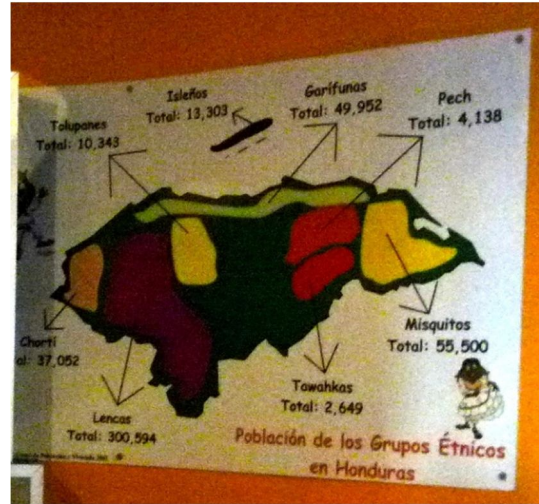
8.3. Replica of the Rosalila Temple from the PAC.



8.4. Reproduction of a Maya hut, with stelae in the foreground.



8.5. Exhibit label “Indigenous people working in agriculture and with looms” with no additional information.



8.6. Map displayed in the “Honduras and Its People” exhibit showing territorial location of ethnic groups in Honduras.



8.7. Display of indigenous and mestizo populations in “traditional” dress with no accompanying information. A number of masks are on the table in the center.

All photographs by the author.

APPENDIX 9: MIN PHOTOGRAPHS



9.1. Facade of the MIN.



9.2. Entrance to the Virtual Copán Auditorium.



9.3. "La Canoa de Isla Guanaja."



9.4. *Casta* painting.



9.5. Examples of ancient Maya pottery display, with text panel “Descubriendo Copán” in the background.



9.6. “Honduras: pluriracial y multicultural” in the final room, titled Honduras Eres Tú.

All photographs by the author.

APPENDIX 10: MUSEUM ANALYSIS CRITERIA

1. Are ethnic groups identified? How frequently? Which ones?
2. Does any part of the exhibit focus on living ethnic groups? How much of the exhibit presents contemporary ethnicity? Pre-Hispanic?
3. Are indigenous and Afro-descendant groups referred to individually? How frequently? Or are they referred to collectively [i.e. “indigenous”]? How frequently?
4. How are the ancient Maya presented in comparison to other ethnic groups? How much space (texts and objects) discuss the ancient Maya in comparison to other ethnic groups?
5. If indigenous groups are referred to individually, are older names used or currently accepted ones [e.g. “jicaque” vs. “tolupán” or “paya” vs. “pech”]?
6. Which (if any) elements or aspects of ethnic groups are presented (e.g. food or agriculture, trade routes, natural resources, language)?
7. Are mestizos or mestizaje identified? How frequently? In the post-conquest, Liberal Reform, or contemporary era(s)?
8. Are cultural areas and areas of influence identified? Which ones? How frequently?
9. Are texts supplemented by materials such as photographs, maps, graphics, or videos as part of the display? How are these presented?
10. Are people in photographs identified?
11. Are objects identified by the maker’s name or ethnic affiliation?
12. What are the cultural demarcations of maps (if presented)? Are population estimates provided?
13. What kinds of labels address ethnic groups and/or mestizaje? Is label text descriptive or technical?
14. Are additional resources (e.g. educational guides, *guiones museográficos*) available for further information about the exhibit? Do they present additional information not included in the exhibit? What?
15. What kinds of additional programming accompany the exhibit (e.g. lectures, films, theater)?