

## BOOK REVIEW

*Tourism and Indigenous Heritage in Latin America: As Observed through Mexico's Magical Village Cuetzalan*: Casper Jacobsen. Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2019. Pp. 194. ISBN 978-1-138-08825-2. Hardback: £105, eBook: £20.

From the early 1990s, a diverse body of tourism scholarship has examined the links between indigenous peoples and tourism, mainly through the theoretical lenses of cultural or community based tourism (CBT), sustainable development and natural resources management (for a review of the Anglophone literature on the topic, see Carr, Ruhanen & Whitford, 2016; for a review of recent Latin American research, see Pereiro, 2016). In the face of globalization and modernity, there has been a growing concern over the governance and preservation of indigenous cultural heritage, in tune with the recommendations posited by international organisations like UNESCO. Going beyond the sustainability and empowerment frameworks frequently employed in the tourism academies, Casper Jacobsen's *Tourism and Indigenous Heritage in Latin America: As Observed through Mexico's Magical Village Cuetzalan* offers the reader a critical examination of the emergence of *multicultourism*, defined by the author as a neoliberal governmentality frame that fuses multicultural politics of recognition with tourism, while conceptualizing indigenous heritage as a "national resource" to be exploited in tourism initiatives.

Drawing from a combination of sociological interactionist approaches (as per Goffman, 1986) and post-Foucauldian conceptions of governmentality and power, Casper takes Mexico's 'Magical Villages' Program (*Pueblos Mágicos*) as a public example of the fusion of multiculturalism and tourism in the Latin American context. The key analytical categories of *frame*, *governmentality* and *translocality* allow the author to examine how different subjects (mestizo and Nahua indigenous citizens) identify, engage with or negotiate the roles envisioned for them by government in the Magical Village of Cuetzalan, Puebla. The text includes analytical chapters on how the key social technologies within the Magical Villages Program, as well as the conceptualizations of indigeneity and other identity configurations are seen at work in different settings. These settings include a community meeting; the urban setting in Cuetzalan; the struggles of Nahua handicraft vendors; or the town's annual fiesta and queen pageant for young Nahua women of the surrounding area.

Instead of an isolated analysis of tourism and indigenous heritage, Casper develops a comprehensive framework in which to base his critique of Mexico's 'Magical Villages' Program, unpacking the program's multiculturalist approach that does not seek to transform ethnic or social inequalities, but to engage harmoniously with national economic priorities and the consolidation of a national identity. The analysis takes into consideration the historical processes of colonisation, independence and the formation of the modern nation-states that have shaped the asymmetric relationships between the mestizo and indigenous populations in Mexico and other Latin American countries. However, one of the text's limitations is its overreliance on Western constructions and understandings of settler-colonial states and societies, while overlooking the rich theorisations around *criollo* rationality, cultural colonisation and decolonial thinking, produced by contemporary indigenous activists and scholars in the region (e.g. Ari Chachaki, 2001; Callisaya, 2003; Cumes 2009, 2014; Frites, 2006; López Bárcenas, 2012; among others).

During the short-term ethnographic fieldwork in Cuetzalan, Casper is capable of approaching key groups to the research, ranging from municipal authorities, citizens engaged with the 'Magical Villages' tourism committee, cosmopolitan newcomers, and Nahua and Totonac ambulant vendors from the nearby Tzicuilan and Tzinacapan villages. A sensible observer, the author is able to identify and problematize the power differences between groups of individuals, in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, profession and social position. He also acknowledges the presence of his accompanying family in the research – a presence that actually facilitated Casper's interaction with several members of the local community, particularly with indigenous women. On the downside, the text provides a limited exploration of indigenous citizens' agency and their historical resistance to external development initiatives.

Finally, the book is not about a single Mexican locality (i.e. the Magical Village of Cuetzalan), but is rather anchored in a translocal web of connections between Cuetzalan and other settings, portraying a critical inquiry into the places and lives in which tourism and indigenous heritage unfold. The text will likely appeal to an international audience, and in particular, to tourism scholars, advanced students and practitioners interested in untangling the complex relationships between multicultural policies of recognition, tourism development and indigenous heritage in emerging regions of the world. The book highlights how such relationships are not politically neutral and thus require critical interrogation. In this sense, sections of the book would lend themselves well to prepare pedagogical materials for post-graduate courses on tourism anthropology, heritage tourism and related disciplines.

## References

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