Introduction

IMAGINE A LARGE SCREEN SUSPENDED in front of a manual slide projector. Every time the projector changes slides, the distinct sound of a click is followed by total silence. Then, a buzzing sound.

Click. Silence. Buzz. Slide 1. Cancún. A beach resort city in the Mexican Caribbean. Ata, a thirty-nine-year-old Pemex worker from Veracruz, sits in the kitchen of his small prefabricated house.[1] His wife, Ana, prepares dinner. He recalls his experience of Hurricane Wilma in the city where, in 2005, he had just migrated to work at a large national construction firm. His face is tense, his teeth grind, his hands clench in fists on the table. During the storm he had no choice, he says, but to leave several workers from the villages locked in a small industrial warehouse with just a portable radio and an insufficient supply of water. His supervisor ordered him to lock them up despite knowing that there were only a few gallons of water on hand. Feeling responsible for their well-being, Ata recalls disobeying orders and returning in his van to pick up the workers in the eye of the storm. He mutters, "I remember the silence. The lampposts and trees all over the street. . . . I remember their faces when I opened up the doors. They were terrified. The storm was not over yet. They had never experienced a hurricane before." Ata's disobedience got him fired. What struck him most was that only two days after the hurricane, those same workers were queuing up among many others hoping to be recruited by tourist resorts to clean the algae and debris from the beach. As Ata put it, "It is as if they were hungry for tourism to come back." For the next two months, the laborers worked to beautify "paradise" in a city built, purposely, to exclude them.

Click. Silence. Buzz. Slide 2. Celestún. A fishing town trapped inside a protected natural area. At the estuary of the UNESCO Ria Celestún

Biosphere Reserve, near the Gulf of Mexico coast, only five hours away from Cancún by car. The ocean breeze. The penetrating chirp of birds emanating from nearby mangrove forests. At intervals, a strong, noxious smell of putrefactive fish, garbage, and salt. Aboard a rudimentary boat, a group of eight middle-aged German tourists observe in silence with their orange life vests on and cameras in hand. They watch two fishermen shout insults and exchange punches over who will give them a ride to observe the pink flamingos at the estuary. For the tourists, this is an unexpected scene. They later tell me how they were taken aback by the violence, which was in stark contrast to the "pristine natural oasis" and "natural sanctuary" featured in the brochures they had received from their hotels. For the fishermen involved in the fight, as well as for both Lalo, a biologist working for a national conservationist NGO in the estuary, and myself, violence had become "the new normal." Fights seemed to be the way to win a spot in the estuary in order to access fish and, more importantly, to get physically close to ecotourism's dollars.

Click. Silence. Buzz. Slide 3. Temozón Sur. Inside an old hacienda's *casa principal* transformed into a luxury hotel in inland, rural Yucatán. It is midday. Intense tropical heat. Insects buzzing. And silence. Stasis. Patricia, a middle-aged Maya indigenous woman dressed in a traditional white *terno* sits in a wooden chair fighting sleep. There are "important guests" at the hotel and she is on call waiting for them to decide if they want body massages. She won't be able to go home that night to care for her sick mother and attend to her three children. When this happens, she says she feels "captive," "treated like a prisoner." Besides, she suffers because she cannot explain to others in the village that the massages she offers inside the gates of the hotel are not sexual, or that the *terno,* the traditional festive attire of Maya women, she wears to work is not meant to seduce guests. But at least, she says, the hacienda hotel gave her "a house to live in, small but a house after all," and she does not have to commute to work or migrate to the coast or the United States, like many other local villagers. She says she is "grateful" to the hotel's owner, whom she refers to as the "new patron."

Click. Silence. Buzz. Slide 4. Tekit. At home at another inland town. It is dusk already. Electrical lines crisscross from house to house. The lamppost lights just went on. A *cumbia* song plays loudly on a portable radio. It is muffled and interrupted by mechanical noises. On and off, short and slow, without pause. Inside a one-room cement house, Luis and Lucía, a young married Maya couple, are sewing on Singer machines. Their heads are bent over, their

backs slightly curved toward the machines. Their eyes, watery and red, are intently focused on the needles. One hand on the needle, one hand on the fabric. Their feet, in flip-flops, are on the pedals. Behind them there is a king-size bed with a white embroidered quilt, a wooden wardrobe, a large plasma TV and radio with speakers, and a small altar with all its figurines covered with blue sheets. They tell me that these sheets protect their belongings "from cotton pollution." Like most in town, they are assembling the regional shirt, the guayabera, coveted as a textile souvenir and ubiquitous as uniforms in the hospitality industry. They have become financially indebted and beholden to Lucía's uncle who brings them the cloth to sew. They claim that assembling the shirts is a "true, true job." But it generates cataracts in their eyes, asthma in their lungs, and financial and moral debts. And yet, this work is the only way for them "to have a good life," to save money for the village's fiesta, to stay together as a family, and to care for the land as their ancestors did.

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During my ethnographic fieldwork in the Yucatán Peninsula in southern Mexico, from 2002 to 2016, I documented the region's dramatic transformation through state-planned tourism development. The vignettes above situate the four ethnographic chapters of this book, in which I explore the livelihoods, contradictions, and sacrifices, the invisible and partial relations, the labor and sensorial landscapes that have created and sustained this region as a global tourist space since the mid-1970s. These moments illustrate how tourism pervades the region's landscape, transforming social relations and household dynamics by erasing potentialities and displacing habitual ways of doing, living, and imagining. But simultaneously, they show how tourism opens up unexpected collaborations, spaces of hope, and opportunities for well-being that previously did not exist.

The goals of this book are to make empirical sense of the tension between how tourism destroys and how it creates, and to understand how the Yucatán's inhabitants "get stuck to tourism" as their only route for making a "good life." I do this through an ethnographic exploration of how people like Ata, Patricia, Lalo, Luis, and Lucía maneuver within what has become an inescapable tourism reality. Their experiences, and the buildings and landscapes they inhabit, constitute a contemporary geography of late capitalism whose importance has been underestimated.

The everyday scenes and contradictions captured in the vignettes above belong to Yucatán, but they could easily describe other everyday lives in the many places around the world where tourism has become an inescapable component of contemporary life.

Tourism is a major force in the shift to a service economy, one that organizes the circulation of people, goods, capital, and images around the world. Services and commodities created for tourists shape quotidian and intimate acts in consumer societies, from how we make sense of and move around our cities, to how we daydream about escaping from the grind of work and everyday pressures, to how we construct personal identities. Although as tourists we rarely notice, the people who provide these services and produce those commodities are also transformed by them.

Chances are that you have been a tourist, traveling to experience new things, to learn from others, to encounter new landscapes and emotions, to give back, or to rediscover your inner self. Souvenirs from those trips might decorate your home. Chances are that you have experienced tourism, both its pleasures and its prices, crowds, and pollution. You might even have worked for the hospitality industry, as a bartender, a volunteer, a guide, or maybe you have shared your couch or rented your house to tourists.

The powerful effects of tourism are a relatively recent phenomenon. Barely a century ago, tourism was a privileged activity within the reach of the affluent alone. It was only after the Second World War, with the expansion of the consumption society and the emergence of the leisured middle classes, that tourism began to consolidate itself as an industry that has since morphed into a pervasive reality. This process began between the mid-1950s and the 1970s, when states and governments in the First World started to promote mass tourism through modernization discourses that emphasized technological and infrastructural development and economic growth as a way to help societies with "comparative advantages" in their march toward Western ideals of mass consumerism and progress (Mowforth and Munt 2015; Britton 1991). The expansion of the tourist industry accelerated in the 1980s and 1990s as part of neoliberal agendas set by states and international organizations across the world and meant to develop emergent ideas of socially equitable and green economic growth (Rojek and Urry 1997). For many countries, especially poorer countries in the so-called Third World, tourism was seen as a path that could integrate them symbolically and practically into the world community

(Enloe 2000, 3). Since the 2000s, amid ecological and financial crises, tourism has continued to grow. Governments have fostered this expansion through discourses of poverty alleviation, pro-poor development, heritage preservation, and community participation as ways of "contributing," "giving back," and "empowering" through "guilt-free" ethical spending and mindful travel.[2] The UN proclamation of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development reflects the contemporary belief that tourism is a catalyst for effective development because it enhances natural conservation and "resource efficiency," reverses colonial inequalities, empowers marginalized indigenous people, and builds cross-cultural "corporate empathy" and "global prosperity."[3]

Today, it is difficult to find a country that has not promoted itself as a tourist destination or that has not used tourism as a major economic sector and an integral part of its growth policies (Telfer and Sharpley 2015). This has made tourism the fourth-largest export sector in the world after fuels, chemicals, and automotive products. In 2019, tourism generated US$8.9 trillion (10.3 percent of global GDP) and 330 million jobs, the equivalent of one in ten jobs in the global economy (World Travel and Tourism Council 2019). Tourism is also one of the largest catalysts of global human mobility, similar in force and manner, some authors claim, to military mobility and empire building (Baranowski et al. 2015). International tourism has been growing at an annual rate of 3–5 percent over the last ten years, outpacing the growth of international trade and other sectors of the economy (World Travel and Tourism Council 2019; UNWTO 2019b). And these numbers show no sign of abating. The World Travel and Tourism Council (2019) forecasts that tourism will grow 4 percent annually until 2030. In less developed countries, "tourism acts as an engine for development through foreign exchange earnings and the creation of direct and indirect employment" (World Travel and Tourism Council 2019). Tourism is the highest or second-highest source of export earnings in twenty out of the forty-seven world's least developed countries (UNWTO 2017b). For many of these countries, "tourism *is* development," as Mexico's 2001–2006 National Development Plan bluntly put it.[4]

Tourism's centrality to the organization of contemporary life makes it a force that extends well beyond the economic realm. Tourism also pervades the sociocultural, political, and ecological arenas. The tourist industry is one of the leading producers of global imaginaries.[5] It is a powerful form of meaning-making: narratives of the self and other, conceptions of the past and the future, and dreams of natural and cultural encounters are produced by

tourism through desire, anticipation, and memorabilia (MacCannell 2011; Gravari-Barbas and Graburn 2016; Salazar and Graburn 2016).Over the last decades, the tourist industry has massively reorganized and repurposed the physicality of places to fit those dreams and imaginaries, recreating the untouched tropical island, the primitive native village, the pristine natural reserve, the authentic past. It has done so through specially curated built environments and infrastructures that aim to foster consumption—the oceanfront all-inclusive resort, the restored colonial building, the scenic highway, the theme park—and through discourses of contemplation, cultural encounter, heritage preservation, cultural remediation, indigenous empowerment, civic engagement, or sustainable participation (Sorkin 1992; Dávila 2016; Vogel 2016).[6]

Tourism has also become a generalized practice of statecraft. Across the Pacific and the Caribbean, tourism has been propelled by governments and tourist stakeholders as the "new sugar" (Sheller 2003; Pattullo 2005; Gonzalez 2013) and in the Americas, as well as in Chinese and Arab regions, tourism has manufactured leisure cities from scratch. This is the case with Cancún in the Yucatán Peninsula (chapter 1), Las Vegas, Atlantic City, Thames Town, and Dubai, among others. These themed cities follow the same modernist ideals that Holston (1989) described in his anthropological critique of Brasília, Brazil's manufactured capital city in the 1960s. In Europe, Canada, and North America, urban planning is almost inseparable from tourism, and cities such as Barcelona, Palma de Majorca, Skopje, Vancouver, and San Francisco are pushed toward creating monumental architecture and cultural and natural heritage designations, and advancing gentrification in the name of tourism growth (e.g., Franquesa 2013; Mattioli 2014; Shoval 2018).

The importance of tourism is also visible in how it produces ideas and captivates hopes about collective and individual class and gender identities, ethnicities, and sense of belonging. At a collective level, international tourism is widely promoted by states, governments, and international agencies as an effective tool for dialogue and cultural exchange capable of building bridges across seemingly insurmountable political and cultural differences. As the UN World Tourism Organization put it, tourism promotes "cultural well-being, environmental restoration, peace and mutual understanding" (UNWTO 1980, 2017a). At an individual level, tourism is about having fun or getting jobs. Tourism also fosters dreams and defines values for the modern and postmodern selves. Tourism, as MacCannell (2011, 53) puts it, epitomizes the imperative social command to "Enjoy!" But tourism and traveling are also

epitomes of freedom, social distinction, and upward class and social mobility for the working, middle, and upper classes. Consumption societies legitimize traveling and spending as civic practices that foster national, regional, local or household socioeconomic good. The mantra "shop, fly, and spend," popularized post-9/11 in the United States, exemplifies these experiences to the extent that moving around the world as a tourist has been internalized as part of what it means to be an exemplary global citizen (Brown 2016).[7]

Tourism is so integral to the tapestry of contemporary life that it is almost elevated to the rank of a human right. In fact, the UN World Tourism Organization's 1980 Manila Declaration on World Tourism reads: "the right to access to holidays and to freedom of travel and tourism, a natural consequence of the right to work, is recognized as an aspect of the fulfillment of the human being by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that the Manila Declaration continues, "tourism is considered an activity essential to the life of nations, its development is linked to the social and economic development of nations and can only be possible if man . . . has access to creative rest and holidays and enjoys freedom to travel" (UNWTO 1980, 1). Five years later, the UN World Tourism Organization Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourism Code asserted that "the exercise of this right constitutes a factor of social balance and enhancement of national and universal awareness" (UNWTO 1985). In 1997, the UN Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET) stated that the "right to tourism" should be seen as "a right equally open to all the world's inhabitants," encouraging all, and in particular public authorities, to support and warrant the liberty of tourist movements (UNWTO 2007). In 2019, the GCET is still not legally binding but it has been signed by hundreds of private stakeholders and adopted as a corporate tourism governance model.[8]

Crucially, the transformation of tourism into a central feature of contemporary social life has not been smooth. The tourist-host relationship has always been an ambivalent one, fraught with tension and deception. Conflict often stems from the industry's selective interpretations of history as heritage and from uneven land appropriation, both of which directly contribute to environmental degradation and rapid acculturation.[9] Like traveling and travel writing, tourism engages in, and reproduces, colonial, celebratory narratives of European or North American superiority (Pratt 2007; Nixon 2017; Sheller 2003). In the Global South, tourism has acted as a form of imperialism through symbolic, embodied, and material violence (Nash 1977; Kincaid 1988; Nixon 2017).[10] Tourism, like war, can reinforce prevailing ideas of

empire as well as forms of gendered and racial domination (Lisle 2016; Gonzalez 2013; Kincaid 1988; Enloe 2000). In the Caribbean for example, myths and metaphors of paradise are formed around the plantation (Nixon 2017). And while contemporary dreams of delight are necessarily reconfigured versions of privilege, so too has tourism become one of the world's most contested political arenas.

The importance of tourism for local, national, and global economies and the generalized and intense circulation of tourism imaginaries and identities have transformed tourism into a powerful geopolitical anchorage that informs, contests, and coproduces contemporary politics at international, national, regional, local, urban, and household scales. On the one hand, and in the name of securing international tourism, tourist cities and regions have become favorite grounds for the privatization of public space and for militarization.[11] Historic battlefields, concentration camps, bases, even nuclear plants have become landscapes of tourism expansion (Lisle 2016; Klein 2008; Enloe 2000; Sheller 2003; Gonzalez 2013). In these sites, tourism is used as a political technology and a weapon to advance nationalist ambitions and ethnic assimilation projects. On the other hand, tourism destinations and attractions, like beaches, religious monuments, and parks refashioned for tourism, have become sites where people gather to claim their rights and to protest political decisions and assaults on citizenship (Low, Taplin, and Scheld 2005; Edensor 1998).

In some places, local populations have attacked tourists or fenced themselves off as ways to cope with contradictions (Boissevain 1996). Among fishing communities in the Gulf of Mexico coast, ecotourism resulted in an uptick in violence, as Lalo and I could observe, as a way to control the few jobs it provides (chapter 2). In other locations, people have exploited cultural stereotypes (Cohen 1987; Chambers 2009; Vainikka 2015) or invented and reappropriated rituals, such as festivals, for nationalist projects (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992; Rowen 2016; Picard and Robinson 2006). In other instances, tourism's meanings and practices cohabitate with entrenched local ways of organizing, creating novel contradictions and struggles for the control of resources, cultural meanings, and physical space (Edensor 1998, 2005; Wynn 2011). Among indigenous peoples in Latin America, for example, tourism development begets new forms of servitude but also old forms of labor activism and resistance (chapter 3). In many European cities where locals have become outnumbered by tourists, like Venice, Lisbon, and Barcelona, antitourism and tourism-phobic social movements are gaining new political leverage in the larger fight for affordable housing and access to

public space.[12] In these places, citizens unite to fight "overtourism," or too much tourism, asking for better regulations and strict limitations on tourism, not in order to demand the end of tourism but in order to regain housing affordability, public space, and quality of city life.[13]

At the same time, tourist sites and infrastructures created for tourism—such as hotels, scenic drives, museums, fairs and festivals, markets, malls, trains, or airports—have become at risk for violent attacks due to their iconic status as global symbols of Western excess and uneven capital accumulation (see Clayton and Korstanje 2012). The terrorist attacks in Barcelona's popular Ramblas, Berlin's Christmas market, and iconic tourist areas in London, Paris, Manchester, and Brussels are examples of this growing global phenomenon.[14]

In addition to its economic, social, and geopolitical significance, tourism has also become an important variable in the precarious ecological balance of the planet. In the Anthropocene, or more accurately the Capitalocene (Moore 2015), tourism is a driver of climate change.[15] Tourists fly, drive, or navigate to their destinations using carbon-intensive means of transportation. Skiing, water activities, recreational hunting and fishing, mountain hiking, biking on trails, sightseeing, shopping, and eating out are tourism-related activities that contribute to environmental pollution and gas emissions. Between 2009 and 2013, the practices of traveling, shopping, and eating associated with tourism were responsible for 8 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions (Lenzen et al. 2018). Tourism-led urbanization, infrastructure development, beach development projects, and food and souvenirs commodity chains, to name just a few, also affect soil, flora, fauna, air, and water in forests, deserts, and oceans across the globe.

All these economic, political, sociocultural, and ecological variables together make tourism one of the most powerful orderings of the geographies of contemporary capitalism.

TOURISM AS AN ORDERING OF LATE CAPITALIST GEOGRAPHIES

Arguing that tourism is an ordering implies that it is an active social and geographical force that carves up the landscape and permanently recasts values and identities, as well as sociocultural, political, and ecological life.[16] Tourism spaces are not already there, waiting for us to visit them. Rather, they are spaces that need to be systematically imagined, narrated, planned,

designed, constructed, performed, sustained, and secured, in both imagination and physical form, *as* tourist spaces *under* the tourist gaze.[17] This is a process of production that takes place through the labor of government officials, planners, real estate agents, architects and designers, conservationist experts, development volunteers, and service workers alike (Urry 2011, 2007; Sheller and Urry 2004; Gonzalez 2013).

Tourism orderings work in practice by *re-spatializing* and *scaling-up* territory, nature, and sociocultural life for global consumption. By re-spatializing I mean creating new sociocultural relations and ecological processes through their relocation in social and geographical space (Low 2016); and by scaling-up I mean amplifying—both in discourse and practice—particular ideas about space, nature, and culture.[18] These processes of tourism re-spatialization and scaling-up occur simultaneously across geographical scales at material, symbolic, ecological, and political levels.

On a material level, tourism scales up places and peoples, ecosystems and habitats as productive forces in the pursuit of profit-making. In this sense, tourism has become one of the most powerful terraforming activities in late capitalist societies. Governments and corporations engineer forests, mountains, beaches, deserts, islands, wetlands, and material infrastructures such as roads, streets, houses, hotels, pools, parks, and museums, designing them to shape new relations of people, capital, labor, and resources (Hannam, Sheller, and Urry 2006). Tourism landscapes and infrastructure require not only new modes of circulation, but also new forms of stasis, immobility, and mooring, as well as forms of being and acting in the world (Bissell and Fuller 2013). Tourism reworks bodies and creates subservient classes of workers, especially among ethnic and indigenous minorities. Tourism landscapes and infrastructure reorient action to and through consumption; in order to enlarge the presence of markets, they promote flexible labor and intensify the extraction of land as well as natural and cultural resources for the enjoyment of a few.[19]

On a symbolic level, tourism creates and stabilizes iconic infrastructures and modernist architectures through which the world is apprehended and ordered according to Western cultural imaginaries of escape and encounter. These modernist infrastructures and architectures colonize imaginations of the past, the present, and the future, and manufacture neoliberal consent around embodied dispositions to serve and/or to consume.[20] In so doing, tourism secures territories in a sedentarist Western metric of progress, civilization, and cultural domination. For this reason, tourism's symbolic orderings are also a pervasive lens through which people view the world and each