

# Introduction

## The Tourism Encounter

**ONE HAS ONLY TO PERUSE** a few issues of *Condé Nast Traveler* or read the *New York Times* Travel section for a few weeks to be persuaded that tourism in post-conflict “hot spots” is very much in fashion. Over the years that I have carried out the research and writing of this book, I have clipped newspaper and magazine articles on the pleasures of travel to postrevolutionary and postconflict nations, so that I now have folders stuffed with the material. Many pieces describe the joys of travel to postsocialist Eastern Europe and to recently communist Asian nations that are now looking to tourism to build their economies and lend stability to young democracies. Even in the midst of the war in Iraq, that nation’s tourism ministry and entrepreneurs stood ready to build new hotels and other attractions to entice tourists and economic development.<sup>1</sup> In Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly with the leftward turn, or “pink tide,” there are numerous examples of nations’ efforts to promote and deliver sustainable tourism in areas that recently shunned and were shunned by international travelers.

To offer just one example, an article appeared in the International section of the *New York Times* a month before Nicaragua’s 2006 presidential election, announcing that this small Central American nation was introducing the winner of a competition for a newly invented cocktail to call its own, the *macuá*, named after a tropical bird in the region. This rum-based drink, it was hoped, would soon be as closely associated with Nicaragua as the margarita is with Mexico, the *mojito* with Cuba, and the *pisco* sour with Peru—all drinks that help “brand” the four countries discussed in this book. Nicaragua, the author wrote, “which many still associate with the guerrilla war that tore

the place apart in the 1980s, is eager to stand on its own two feet again.” One of the judges in the contest was quoted as commenting that the invitation to Nicaraguans “to put their best drink forward” could serve as “a model for the politicians now vying for the presidency.” He concluded that “it was a democratic competition, where the best drink wins” (Lacey 2006).<sup>2</sup>

### **Of Revolution and Resorts: The Allure of the Once Forbidden**

Why examine societies that have experienced radical historical turns through the improbable lens of tourism? I address this question in *The Tourism Encounter*, based on my research in Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru—nations that in recent decades experienced political transitions that caused a decline in tourism and now, in spite of or in some cases because of that history, are once again becoming popular travel destinations. After writing about changing Latin American political economies in two earlier books, I turned my attention to tourism in postrevolutionary and postconflict nations as an agent not only for economic recovery and political stability but for the refashioning of cultural heritage and nationhood. Since 2000, I have made over a dozen research trips to my long-term sites of study in Latin America and the Caribbean to explore the new forms of cultural representation and historical understanding that accompany and contribute to the growth of tourism in these transitional societies. Through four comparative cases, I argue that tourism often takes up where social transformation leaves off and even benefits from the formerly off-limits status of nations that have undergone periods of conflict or rebellion. Moreover, tourism offers a window on shifting relations of culture and power as heritage, national identity, race, class, and gender are reconfigured. This work presents tourism as a major force in the remaking of transitional nations, with implications that extend beyond the Latin American region.

My research in Cuba and Nicaragua over the past two decades has shown that while these nations’ tourism industries have sold travelers on scenic beauty and colonial charm, they have also capitalized on some travelers’ desire for a brush with recent revolutionary history. Romantic notions of heroic struggles combine with consumerism to drive and sustain tourism, global capitalism’s leading industry. In the process, selective histories are promoted and these nations are remade, marketed as exciting and sometimes challenging tourist destinations. In Cuba, monuments to the revolution are on proud display alongside the remaining big American cars of the 1950s, and Che Guevara’s image appears on souvenirs for sale in exclusive hotels. As I will discuss in Chapter 1, the island

is poised and waiting for the time when travel from the United States once more will be legal, opening the floodgates still wider to tourism. In Nicaragua, it is easier to learn of nineteenth-century conflicts than those of the last few decades, but travelers are seeking and finding traces of revolution in the remaining murals and on the T-shirts and postcards sold by street vendors. The return of Sandinista leadership following the 2006 Nicaraguan elections and the transfer of control to Raúl Castro in Cuba that same year have brought international attention once again to these nations and make this study particularly timely.

My research and travel in Peru and Mexico spanning three decades has benefited from revisits to the Andean region and Chiapas in the last several years. These areas, like Cuba and Nicaragua, have undergone recent political upheavals and have turned to tourism both as a development strategy and as a way to refashion nationhood in a time of neoliberalism and globalization. Well-established tourism industries were stalled in these areas for a decade by very different political movements—in Peru by ruthless forces of Shining Path and the military, and in southern Mexico by the antiglobalization Zapatista uprising. Tourism is thriving once again in both areas as conflict has subsided. Cultural and political tourism in highland Peru and Chiapas, Mexico, will provide significant contrasts to postrevolutionary tourism in Cuba and Nicaragua.

Tourism in postrevolutionary and postconflict sites may produce many of the same social dislocations as tourism elsewhere. In both past and present, tourism has had gendered and racialized consequences as constructions of the “exotic” are widely used to entice travelers and brand nations. Yet, as I juxtapose analysis of cultural heritage with critical attention to cultural difference in these sites of travel, I argue that the unequal effects of tourism may have particular salience in transitional societies that have sought to avoid capitalist excesses of tourism. Thus, Cuba and Nicaragua contend with sex tourism along with other forms of unregulated exchange, notwithstanding their expressed desire for “healthy” and sustainable tourism, and women of African descent are often the most marginalized workers in this sector. Cultural and community-based tourism in Andean Peru and Chiapas may introduce other gendered and racialized effects as travelers seek “authentic” experiences with indigenous women and men.

My work presents the stories of diverse individuals whose lives are closely linked to the growth of tourism, from government and industry officials, to informal-sector workers, to global (as well as domestic) travelers who come

to consume forms of cultural expression and historical representation that have emerged in response to the tourist trade. In all four nations, my long-term research is based on a commitment to understanding contemporary processes as both constituted by and constitutive of cultural histories. My multisited research in these distinctly different transitional societies reveals how interpretations of the past and desires for the future coincide, and often collide, in the global marketplace of tourism.

Before I continue, a cautionary note on terminology is warranted since I do not always follow convention in my use of such terms as “postrevolutionary,” “postconflict,” and “transitional,” all used in relation to the four nations I consider in this book. It is difficult to find words that do justice to the diverse histories and politics represented here. In the Latin American and Caribbean context, scholars are giving increasing attention to the aftermath of violence during civil wars and under military governments and to processes of democratic transition. Anthropologists have engaged in this important research into postwar (postconflict) periods when nations frequently experience continued violence despite efforts toward peace and reconciliation (Rojas Pérez 2008). Of the cases I consider, Peru best fits the description of a nation emerging from civil war and still struggling to put an end to conflict. Nicaragua following the Sandinista revolution and the Contra war might be another, though the present-day political climate makes notions of postrevolution and postconflict somewhat fraught in that case. Chiapas is harder to describe as “postconflict” since the Mexican state’s harsh response to the Zapatista indigenous-identified social movement is ongoing, if quieter. And finally, my references to “postrevolutionary” Cuba should not be taken to engage in the contentious debates over whether there will be an inevitable transition toward a certain future in that nation. Rather, I wish to use this terminology despite its shortcomings in a processual way (not simply relating to *before* and *after* in an absolute sense) and as a shorthand for recent developments in societies undergoing significant, if often ambivalent, change.

### Charting the Tourism Encounter

To describe a convergence of peoples or cultures as an “encounter” can sometimes be to divest a social interaction of its power and to render invisible the historical legacy of political or economic domination of one group by another. Recall the efforts to fashion the five hundred-year anniversary of the Spanish conquest of Latin America as an “encounter” (*encuentro*), suggesting that the European arrival in the Americas was a meeting ground for different though

perhaps equal partners who would participate in a historic exchange of ideas, practices, and resources rather than an imperialist conquest of cultures and civilizations. The outspoken reaction of indigenous peoples of the Americas to that discursive move was a clear sign of the contentious politics of naming such a watershed moment in history. I do not mean to participate in any such revisionist project here, and indeed I utilize the notion of encounter that has been employed by critical theorists to examine earlier periods of global interchange that have resulted in world-historic upsets and contestations. I have in mind “the colonial encounter” of Talal Asad (1973) and “the development encounter” of Arturo Escobar (1995), anthropological formulations that opened highly productive lines of inquiry and debate regarding processes that are often taken as historical givens.<sup>3</sup> I also find inspiration in discussions of the Latin American region in relation to the United States that have been described as “close encounters of empire” (Joseph et al. 1998). Whether or not we elevate tourism to paradigmatic status, it may be possible to suggest that at a time when travel is on its way to becoming the world’s largest industry, tourism’s force in producing global encounters is unmatched and warrants closer examination.<sup>4</sup>

I employ the trope of encounter precisely because it foregrounds the intimate relationship of those coming together from different cultures and societies *and* it does not already assume the outcome of any given engagement, granting agency to players who may be historically disadvantaged on the global stage. Too often in tourism studies, Eurocentrism prevails and more attention is given to the active part of tourists from the global North than to the agency of host nations, communities, and individuals of the global South (noted by Chambers 2000; Stronza 2001). Thus, in my work on the tourism encounter I will not presume that visitors from the global North will always be privileged parties to tourism experiences in the global South, though this frequently may be the case (Nash 1989; Wilson 2008). The ability of southern nations, particularly those that have waged profound struggles, to set the terms of engagement in promoting tourism development will be seen in the chapters that follow. My emphasis is on the ways that actors at the local, regional, and national levels refashion areas for tourism and how visitors respond to such initiatives, an approach that allows us to discern more clearly the dynamics of these global encounters. We will see that although tourism development is rarely a purely revolutionary project, it does not always and inevitably require that nations buy in to global capitalism. I am a champion neither of the view that tourism will work wonders to salvage struggling economies of the global South nor of

the alternative view that imperialist northern interests in the tourism exchange will ultimately triumph. Rather, I wish to illuminate the myriad ways in which transitional Latin American and Caribbean nations have looked to tourism as an industry that may further agendas for change, whether through economic advancement or political repositioning vis-à-vis other nations.

In his richly retrospective essays based on twenty years of ethnographic research on tourism, Edward Bruner (2005:17–18) comments on his use of notions of touristic border, or contact, zones. His interest in the narrative and performance of tourism leads him to comment that he wishes to avoid viewing locals as passive in the face of “touristic invaders” from outside. Instead, he sees locals and tourists engaged in “a coproduction.” He departs from those who take a more critical view of tourism encounters as always inflected by relations of power. While I share Bruner’s concern to make legible the active part of the toured, I nonetheless share with some of those he critiques a desire to recognize power and difference as inherent in the tourism encounter. This may be particularly salient in my work in postconflict and postrevolutionary societies.

As I became increasingly interested in tourism as both a phenomenon and a subject of study in these nations, I was intrigued to find in the work of pioneering tourism scholar Dean MacCannell brief invocations of revolution along with tourism as critical to understanding the modern condition. In his introduction to a more recent edition of his 1976 classic work, he self-reflects that “even the figure of the ‘revolutionary’ has a cameo role on the first pages of *The Tourist* and then, as if on cue, disappears” (1999:xvi). Of further significance to me, MacCannell noted that in retrospect, feminist theory might have contributed more significantly to his analysis of the unintended consequences of tourism (xxiv). I took inspiration from this acknowledgment of what remained to be examined in tourism research and brought my own preoccupation with these matters, revolution and difference, to the work I was carrying out in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Some of the most important research on tourism to date has examined how, in what I am calling the tourism encounter, cultural identity and difference have stirred the imagination of tourists seeking to discover exotic “others” (Bruner 2005; MacCannell 1999; Rojek and Urry 1997). The same concern is found in the work of scholars who have considered the ways in which national heritage is marketed on the tourist circuit in many regions (Chambers 2000; Coombes 2003; Graburn 1976; Hanna and Del Casino 2003; Scarpaci 2005; Van

den Berghe 1994; Zorn 2004). Such questions of enduring significance—identity, cultural difference, and nation—have been viewed perceptively through the lens of travel and tourism (Clifford 1997). Yet there has been little scholarly attention to the prominent role that tourism is playing in the representation and reinvention of histories in postrevolutionary and postconflict societies. This is important both because nations and regions are marketing themselves for international tourism and because they are redefining themselves for their own citizens following periods of dramatic political change.

MacCannell (1999:85–87) gestured toward the relationship of travel and postrevolutionary societies in his passing observations about tourism in the socialist world. He commented that it might seem logical for socialist states to oppose tourism because of its association with market capitalism, yet it is sometimes close to the state “religion,” with “commissars of tourism” using revolutionary heritage sites to draw admiring travelers and build nations. Several studies examine the development of tourism in postsocialist societies, though not in Latin America (Ghodsee 2005; Goldstone 2001; Teo et al. 2001). Another focuses on Havana’s built environment, examining the makeover of the old city for tourism, but offers little on the interface of Cubans and tourists themselves (Scarpaci 2005). Two others take a historical view of tourism in nations included in my study (Berger 2006; Schwartz 1997) but without analyzing the uses of history in the contemporary period. Only a few examples of tourism research conducted in postconflict areas have given attention to the dramatic ways in which such nations are reinventing themselves as part of an effort to draw tourism (Little 2004).<sup>5</sup> Discussion of the contact zones in which cultural insiders and outsiders mix is found in the broadly conceptual work of Pratt (1992) and Prieto (2004), but the scarce writing to date on tourism in postrevolutionary and postconflict areas is often based on secondhand sources or textual material (Martín 2004).<sup>6</sup>

More attention to travel in such areas has come from popular writers than from academic ones. In a recent memoir, a young Chicana from South Texas documents her experiences over four years living in Moscow, Beijing, and Havana. During Stephanie Elizondo Griest’s (2004) sojourn in the postcommunist world, she found in these cities both nostalgia for a more innocent past and impatience for what the growing market economy might usher in. She witnessed the tensions and contradictions as these societies underwent enormous changes in relatively short periods of time; the everyday ironies and the more serious dislocations (for example, sex trafficking) that she describes resonate

with what I have seen in my research. She discovered, for example, that in Cuba in 2000, when 1.8 million tourists visited the revolutionary island, Fidel Castro “opened the doors to tourism with an ad campaign of *cubanas* in string bikinis that said ‘Come and Be Seduced’” (318). When I read her account of a *jinetera* (sex worker or hustler) she met in an Old Havana bar (326–327), I was certain this was the same woman I describe as “Ana” in Chapter 1.

In recent decades, Cuba has doubtless received more attention from writers than any other postrevolutionary nation, and the island nation never ceases to surprise visitors. Historian Rosalie Schwartz (1997:147) offers a vivid account of the years leading up to the revolutionary victory in 1959 as an unfolding drama in which tourism played a leading role:

As actors moved between the worlds of tourism and insurrection, the stage became a battleground. Fulgencio Batista, as tourism’s producer, director, and stage manager, dealt with questions of money and scripts, always with an eye to the critics, at the same time fending off challenges to his authority. Then, in a plot twist, successful rebels took center stage. For a while they were the tourist attraction; they also were proprietors of hotels and business partners with gamblers. It was a play filled with dramatic irony.



Historical restoration under way in Old Havana



Years after the revolution took hold, C. Peter Ripley (1999:8) wrote a travel memoir based on a half-dozen trips during the 1990s, when tourism had returned following a long absence. In it he comments that “Castro had decreed that tourism would be Cuba’s future,” though this was “an unlikely front line for continuing Cuba’s Revolution.” He discovered a handmade billboard that read “To defend tourism is to defend the Revolution” (8) and concluded that “Castro needed tourism to revive the national economy and save the Revolution” (17). Ripley’s observations during that time of crisis known as the Special Period are not surprising. My own work presents evidence of apparent contradictions in Cuba, but as in all the nations under consideration here, the improbable forms of tourism in postrevolutionary and postconflict societies are actually a calling card for many travelers.

### **Tourism’s Contradictions in Transitional Societies**

In conceptualizing my work, I have found inspiration well beyond the emerging field of tourism studies. The broad contours of north-south and east-west encounters led me back to the germinal writing of Edward Said (2003) on “orientalism” as a discourse of power that originated in colonialism. This foundational work has shaped the thinking of many who examine the politics of global interfaces, from colonial to post-postcolonial times. His commentaries on European travelers in the Orient and their appropriation of cultural difference, their exoticizing of non-Western societies, provide a powerful basis for critique of tourism as an imperialist practice. When desires for cultural difference are coupled with desires for travel to previously dangerous and forbidden lands, as in the areas considered here, the attraction may be formidable. Nevertheless, travelers’ inclination to consume and subordinate other cultures as they consolidate their own greater power in the exchange is often tempered by their vulnerability as they are swept away by desire and as their hosts contrive to manage tourism in their own interests.

Mary Louise Pratt (1992) made penetrating observations regarding what she named “contact zones” and the process of “transculturation” to identify encounters and processes whereby representations from the global metropolis have been deployed by groups in the periphery. Even though contact zones involve two-way exchanges, they generally reference “the space of colonial encounters . . . usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (6). Her discussion of how travel writing “produced ‘the rest of the world’ for European readerships at particular points in Europe’s

expansionist trajectory" (5) meshes well with the notion of encounter that I wish to bring to tourism studies. Renato Rosaldo's (1989:68–87) exposition on "imperialist nostalgia" is also relevant here, as he describes the lament of Europeans that the cultures they have destroyed no longer have their earlier, characteristic charm. One might imagine that in the postrevolutionary and postconflict societies I consider we would not find the same lament. After all, such societies have for the most part undergone social transformations of their own making and have often fended off outside intervention and manipulation. Nostalgia for a more innocent past might therefore be absent.

However, we will see that in the four nations discussed, there can be multiple layers of history selectively evoked to produce nostalgia. In Cuba, some visitors yearn for the prerevolutionary days when Havana was a playground for international travelers, especially from the United States, while others miss the early days of the revolution before it was "tainted" by joint ventures and expensive tourist hotels. Similarly, in Nicaragua some travelers (like some locals) preserve memories of the elite pleasures under the Somoza regime while others recall the exuberant time following the Sandinista victory, when youthful travelers came to lend a hand to the revolutionary society. Recently, Chiapas, Mexico, has regained its privileged status among mainstream tourists attracted by the ageless beauty of its natural environment, colonial towns, and indigenous culture, but Zapatista tourism evokes memories of the recent past when an inspired social movement came on the scene and captured the imagination of activists on a global scale. In the case of Peru, the tourism industry seeks to eclipse the recent history of violent conflict between Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and the military, evoking safer, deeper memories of a rich heritage along with the present and more hospitable culture and environment.

On the subject of nostalgia in posttransition societies, Svetlana Boym's (2001) meditation on the postsocialist world of Eastern Europe shows that despite global media reports of the region's shedding of old ways and its embrace of new market economies, a profound nostalgia for the bygone era is in ample evidence.<sup>7</sup> I find her writing to be particularly evocative of the expressed longings of Cubans and of those visiting the island, longings for what was before and what may be in the future. This longing extends to such hybrid forms as Hemingway's Cuba and the pairing of John Lennon with Che Guevara, now features of Havana's tourism circuit. In Andean Peru and Chiapas, Mexico, we find present-day indigenous people standing in for a more "innocent" past be-

fore conflict and rebellion ushered in a crisis of modernity—even if indigenous men and women were centrally involved in those conflicts. I explore the place of collective memory and nostalgia in the studies presented here.

Beyond these potent interventions in cultural theory and analysis, another work has some resonance with mine. Naomi Klein's (2007) *The Shock Doctrine* has received wide attention for its claim that global capitalism seeks crisis conditions in order to restructure economies and societies to favor its own growth and dominance.<sup>8</sup> She presents ample evidence, ranging from the U.S. management of Hurricane Katrina, to the war on terrorism and the conflict in Iraq, to post-Tiananmen Square China. But how well does this apply to nations that have undergone radical transitions and that are looking to tourism for stability and growth? Are they servants of capitalism's open-market demands? Or are there exceptions to the argument, places that are charting alternative paths of development and change that might collaborate with capitalist interests, but on their own terms?

The comparative cases in the chapters that follow will offer different responses to these questions. Often, the evidence is contradictory and ambivalent. While it is possible to conclude that under conditions of globalization tourism must compete on the open market, we must be alert to alternative forms when and where they arise, whether at the community, regional, or national level. With the political sea change in Latin America and the Caribbean, tourism does not always conform to expected norms of capitalist development. And precisely after crises and transitions there may be movements for change that, to some degree, pose a challenge to the world capitalist order. In the final portion of her book, Klein (2007:447) acknowledges that resistance to neoliberalism and global capitalism never vanished altogether and that in recent years, "on the international stage, the staunchest opponents of neoliberal economies were winning election after election." She offers examples from Latin America's leftward turn in Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, Brazil—and the list could go on. My work will foreground four more "exceptional" cases and contend that they may not be so exceptional after all as local, regional, and national actors develop new initiatives through the apparatus of tourism; as they do so, we may discover new narratives and practices of development in the remaking of these Latin American nations in transition.

The works I have cited devote less attention to gender in the tourism encounter than might be expected. In cultural analysis more broadly in recent decades, gender is understood along with race, class, and sexuality to be a critical

social vector that, when examined closely, often necessitates a profound shift in perspective. From interventions such as Joan Scott's (1986) classic discourse on gender in historical analysis and Adrienne Rich's (1986) landmark writing on the gendered politics of location to Caren Kaplan's (1996) far-reaching feminist critique of postmodern narratives of travel and displacement, feminists have contributed significantly to our thinking about the contours and politics of travel. Regarding more focused studies of women's place in tourism development (Bolles 1997; Ghodsee 2005; Kinnaird and Hall 1994) and a more abundant body of work on sex tourism (Brennan 2004; Cabezas 2009; Padilla 2007), scholars have begun to bring needed attention to the gendered consequences of travel and of the tourism encounter. However, analyses have only begun to draw together feminist critique and broader questions of the cultural politics of tourism. My work attempts to bring feminist insights to the four cases that I examine as exemplary of nations in transition—nations that are hopeful that tourism will bring about what earlier social transformation did not. A section of this book is devoted to considering the gendered and racialized effects of tourism, but I would argue that feminism has its imprint throughout the text as



Tourists consulting a guidebook as they stroll in Lima

I question the ways that cultural difference, intimacy, and the “exotic” intersect with gender in these comparative cases.

### Fashioning This Text

Until recently, I tended like most anthropologists to settle in one place at a time for a sustained period of research. My first two major projects, in Peru and Nicaragua, were decade-long explorations of areas I would revisit over many years. If a period of conflict had not kept me from continuing my research in Peru during the 1980s, I might not have had the impetus to begin a new research project in Central America. At the time, some friends thought that I was “out of the frying pan and into the fire,” though my first trip to Nicaragua in 1989 was near the close of the Contra war conflict and my research there turned to the post-Sandinista decade of the 1990s. As I wrote my previous book, *After Revolution: Mapping Gender and Cultural Politics in Neoliberal Nicaragua*, I drew on my personal narrative of “arriving late for the revolution” to describe my research in Peru, Nicaragua, and also Cuba, where I had made several trips to examine questions related to my broader interests in Latin America and the Caribbean. The same late-arrival story might characterize my first trip to Chiapas, well after the emergence of the Zapatista movement.

My research interest in tourism grew as I made my way from areas where I had conducted long-term projects in the past to other areas that meshed well with the subject I undertook as a book-length comparative work. There is always some serendipity in research, and I did not originally set out to examine these four nations with the current project in mind. That said, my interests over three decades have led me to places that have grappled with processes of social and political change, making these transitional nations eminently suitable choices for this project. I hope that readers will indulge my desire to go beyond a single detailed ethnographic case study. My aim has been to take insights from several locations that may give us a broader picture of tourism’s part in the remaking of nations in postconflict, and sometimes visionary, times. If I had the time and opportunity to include other nations in the region, for example, Guatemala in the postconflict period or Bolivia since the election of Evo Morales, this might enrich my analysis. I am all too well aware, however, of the pitfalls of extending myself too far, and I also know that other scholars are conducting research in those areas that will be of greater analytical depth than I could hope for; I look forward to the conversations we will have as tourism research advances in more Latin American nations.<sup>9</sup>

By the year 2000 I had grown intrigued by the way that Nicaragua and Cuba variously highlighted or erased signs of revolution in order to market tourism, and I made repeat visits to those countries to study the phenomenon (Nicaragua in 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2008, and Cuba in 2001, 2003, 2005, 2008–2009). Moreover, I began to think comparatively about the other two nations I examine here, Peru and Mexico. These nations had experienced entirely different periods of conflict and uprising in which rebels and militaries clashed. After a nine-year absence, I returned to Peru during the summers of 2006 and 2007 to collect material relating to tourism in the postconflict, postviolence period. Although I had visited Mexico a number of times in the past, I made four research trips to Chiapas, in 2005, 2006–2007, 2008, and 2009, to consider the revival of tourism in the years following the 1994 Zapatista uprising.

My methods have been eclectic as I have tried to understand the changing currents of tourism in nations that are themselves undergoing substantial processes of change. In all four cases, I have observed tourism encounters at close range and interviewed diverse actors in those encounters, including tourism officials and operators and countless tourists, with whom I had conversations and gave out questionnaires. I have tracked mainstream tourism and given attention to solidarity tourism where it occurs, participating in tours catering to different interests. I have spent considerable time at heritage sites, museums, markets, national parks, and other tourism locations and visited libraries and documentation centers in tourism ministries, nongovernmental organizations, research institutes, and universities. I make use of travel writing, tourism literature and guides, advertising, Internet sites, and of course I benefit from and build on related research carried out by others. I consider ethnography to be at the heart of my work, but I call on other sources as “ethnographic partners” in this project.<sup>10</sup> My use of quantitative data on tourism may be scant by some standards, though I provide such material when it is useful to this work. I confess to having a preference for qualitative data, featuring narratives from my research, which will shed light on the questions addressed here.

My work responds to a critical need to develop sustained ethnographic and historical research on tourism in postconflict areas in a time of rapid globalization. Much is at stake, for if travelers’ perceptions and practices serve to consolidate unequal power relations, then tourism has functioned like other global industries to widen the gap among nations. However, if travel enhances rather than diminishes opportunities for positive cultural exchange, then in-

ternational tourism development and the tourism encounter may help lay the groundwork for a more just and democratic world.<sup>11</sup> In any event, it is certain that the new cultural and historical understandings that tourism promotes will be instrumental in shaping global encounters in the future.

### Touring This Book

Here, I present tourism as a staging ground for national-heritage formation in societies undergoing abrupt political and economic transition. I suggest that actors are positioned based on differences of gender, race, and other vectors of power and argue that tourism encounters are both constituted by and constitutive of broader cultural histories. Furthermore, I set forth my argument that the nations under study have utilized tourism to continue processes that were begun as programs of social transformation. To be sure, market and other forces frequently compromise intentions and outcomes, and this work will consider the deep ambivalences that can accompany tourism development.

The chapters of this book are organized into three sections. In Part 1, I offer cases from nations that have advanced social revolutionary projects that galvanized populations over sustained periods of time, fully half a century in the case of Cuba and a decade in the case of Nicaragua. Chapter 1 shows that a successful amalgamation of seemingly contradictory tourist attractions in Cuba, from architectural history to revolutionary culture and politics, rests on ambivalent desires for times past, present, and future—expressed by both hosts and visitors. Chapter 2 argues that since the time of solidarity travel two decades ago, tourists coming to Nicaragua now find the country transformed as a safe and desirable travel destination, yet memories and desires for revolution appear to be making a notable comeback.

In Part 2, I present case studies from areas that offer significant contrasts given their recent histories of uprising and conflict. Chapter 3 traces the reversal of tourism's precipitous decline in Peru that began in the 1980s as a result of the conflict between Shining Path insurgents and the military. My findings show that cultural tourism draws tourists who often know little about the violence of the recent past and are seeking instead to engage with a "timeless" indigenous heritage. Chapter 4 discusses the gradual return of tourism to Chiapas, Mexico, since the Zapatista uprising in 1994. I suggest that the romantic appeal of an indigenous revolutionary movement along with enduring "traditional" culture helps to drive both solidarity and mainstream travel in the region.

Part 3 pairs the nations under study to offer a critical, comparative perspective that builds on the chapters in Parts 1 and 2. Chapter 5 shows that tourism in Cuba and Nicaragua has more often than not disadvantaged women and racial minorities. I argue that sex and romance tourism in these two transitional societies provides economic relief but that unequal power relations may be reinscribed in these intimate encounters. Chapter 6 examines areas that, although distinct, are both regions with large indigenous populations. In Andean Peru and Chiapas, Mexico, cultural tourism produces different yet substantially gendered and racialized exchanges. In these areas “native” women are turned into the repositories of national tradition, and their active participation in society may be overlooked. I examine the outcomes for women and men, both hosts and visitors, in the tourism encounter in the two regions.

In the Conclusion, I consider the broader implications of my study of post-revolutionary and postconflict tourism and the ways in which gender, cultural identity, and national heritage are being refashioned in these transitional societies. I discuss the analytical power of the lens of tourism in assessing the often contentious struggles among tourism industry elites, local tour operators, and tourists themselves over the terms of cultural and historical representation. I consider how recent developments in Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru support or challenge my argument that tourism has taken up where social transformation left off—and I ask how long the allure of these previously off-limits areas may last. Finally, I look toward the future as I consider how well tourism may serve, both as industry and as analytical lens, to shape and interpret the experience of these Latin American nations as they make their way through periods of dramatic change in a globalized world.