

University of Reading

The Use of Objects in the
Construction, Expression and
Negotiation of Identities: A Case
Study of Maya Dolls from Mexico
and Guatemala

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Declaration: I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Signed,

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines an under-assessed and under-valued cultural text: the souvenir doll. These dolls, clothed in national, regional or ethnic dress, have often been dismissed as “kitsch” objects of little ethnographic or aesthetic significance. However, by focusing on dolls handmade for the tourist market by the Kaqchikel Maya of San Antonio Aguas Calientes, Guatemala and the Tzotzil Maya of Chamula in Chiapas, Mexico, this thesis demonstrates the importance of these dolls for the expression and construction of a range of identity categories, both for their producers and receivers.

These dolls are notable since they are dressed in the same type of handwoven textiles as the women who usually make them. By extending the life story approaches associated with Igor Kopytoff (1986) and Arjun Appadurai (1986) to the source materials that form an object, this thesis traces the production of these dolls from thread level and, in doing so, captures the profound importance of the weaving process and woven textiles for the construction and expression of Maya identities at a personal and collective level.

This thesis continues to apply a life story approach to trace the various paths the dolls may take once they have been sold. UK-based fieldwork, along with data collected in Guatemala and Mexico, shows that when the dolls are consumed they are reconfigured to meet the identity needs of the consumer. This reconfiguration, however, often simultaneously flattens or erases the local specificities and indigenous identities embodied by the dolls.

This thesis demonstrates that dolls produced by indigenous people specifically for external consumption can be read as texts that reveal important socio-political processes and effects and, more specifically, offers a unique exploration of the production and consumption of Maya dolls that is further enhanced by its comparative, cross-border scope.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- Acaparadores:*** Mediators who stand between artisans and the state in Mexico
- Artesanía:*** Handicraft
- Backstrap loom:*** A collection of loose sticks held together by the warp threads, which run lengthways. One end of the loom is strapped around the (usually female) weaver's back and the other end is tied to a tree or a support in a house
- Caciques:*** Elite Chamulas who exert authority over the *municipio*
- Cargo:*** Yearly term of office in Maya communities during which the *cargo* holder has responsibility for various community issues
- Cibaque:*** Plant that is used for various crafts, such as basket making
- Cofradía:*** Religious fellowships
- Corte:*** Skirt (Guatemala)
- Costumbre:*** Traditional means in Maya communities of celebrating or marking important events such as the cultivation of maize, and birth, marriage and death
- ELC:** Education Loan Collection at a well-established US museum
- EZLN:** Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional
- Faja:*** Narrow strip of textile used as a sash or belt to hold up *faldas/cortes* (a *traje* item)
- Falda:*** Skirt (Chiapas)
- FONART:** Fondo Nacional para el Fomento de las Artesanías
- Huipil:*** Loose-fitting tunic worn by women, usually made of two or three textile panels (a *traje* item)
- Indigenismo:*** Drive to transform the indigenous population into citizens through education, modernisation and integration
- INI:** Instituto Nacional Indigenista
- Jaspe:*** Designs produced by weaving tie-dyed threads into cloth
- Jerkail:*** Tunic worn by male civil officials in San Juan Chamula
- Kimport:** US mail-order company that imported dolls from around the world to sell to collectors
- Ladino:*** Non-indigenous Guatemalan
- Large Guatemalan dolls:** In this thesis, Maya dolls of more than approximately 15 centimetres in height, with fabric faces and attached to wooden stands. They are not marketed as worry dolls

Larger worry dolls: In this thesis, dolls of up to approximately eight centimetres in height with fabric faces and marketed as worry dolls

Manta: Rough cotton

MAP: Museo de Arte Popular

Marcador: Double-faced supplementary weft weaving (curvilinear patterns that are identical on both sides of fabric)

Mayordomía: Ceremonial role in Chamula

Mestizaje: Racial mixing

Mestizo: An individual of mixed Spanish and indigenous heritage (Mexico)

MNA: Museo Nacional de Antropología

Muñeca quitapena: Worry doll

Municipio: Municipality

Nim Po't: Large *artesanía* shopping centre in Antigua, Guatemala

PRI: Partido Revolucionario Institucional

PRONASOL: Programa Nacional de Solidaridad

Rebozo: Shawl

Selvedge: Part of a garment's construction that locks threads in place to prevent them from unravelling

Tiny dolls: Guatemalan Maya dolls of between one and two centimetres in height, with paper faces, and that are usually associated with the easing of worries

Tocoyal: Headdress (a *traje* item)

Traje: In this thesis, Maya dress

Serape: Blanket-like shawl

Vestido: Non-indigenous dress

INTRODUCTION

Any visitor to the tourist hubs of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico, and Antigua, Guatemala, cannot fail to notice the plethora of colourful Maya textiles for sale in the shops and markets. Among the bags, napkins, table runners and garments is a multitude of dolls clothed in miniature versions of the local indigenous dress. These dolls are the subject of this thesis.¹ Although seemingly innocuous souvenirs, as miniature self-representations of indigenous people often bought by international tourists, these dolls provide a means by which to investigate themes such as the movement of people and ideas, Othering, exoticisation and authenticity. Furthermore, they reveal the multiple, overlapping and sometimes contradictory identities held by their producers, receivers and intermediaries (including the state). Given the near limitless variety of forms and materials that characterises the term “doll”, the primary concern in this Introduction is to clarify exactly which dolls are under investigation before outlining how this thesis will engage with them. We start though with a little background information about the local contexts in which they are made.



Fig.1: Maya dolls on a stall in San Juan Chamula (Photograph: E. Jackson)

¹ In 2015 there was estimated to be more than one million weavers and embroiderers in Chiapas (Morris *et al*, 2015: 2) whilst, similarly, it was estimated that *artesanía* production provides an important source of income for nearly one million Guatemalans. See: https://www.centralamericadata.com/es/article/home/Artesanos_guatemaltecos_de_productos_de_lujo (accessed 20 January 2020).

The production context of the dolls

The first factor that links together the dolls from these two sites is they are examples of Maya cultural production. In the San Cristóbal area they are made by Chamula dollmakers who are members of the Tzotzil Maya group whilst in the Antigua area, the dolls are made primarily by members of the Kaqchikel Maya group.² San Cristóbal is located in the mountainous highlands of Chiapas, the most southerly state of Mexico. However, during the colonial period Chiapas formed part of the province of Guatemala. It was only in the years following independence from Spain in 1821 that the elite of Chiapas decided to join Mexico and the border between the two nation states was formalised (Nash, 1995: 29). Consequently, there has always been a certain amount of cross-border movement between Maya groups living on either side of today's border and the Maya from Mexico share more in common with the Maya in Guatemala than with Mexico's indigenous peoples living in other parts of the country (1995: 29).³

San Cristóbal and Antigua were both founded by the Spanish and both boast picturesque Spanish colonial architecture, a pleasant climate and an indigenous culture visible both in the dress of the local Maya populations and in the *artesanías* they make and sell. For these reasons both cities are popular with tourists and tourism is an important economic activity at both sites (Barboza and Trejos, 2009: 288). It is also the case in both cities that the majority of inhabitants are *mestizos* (San Cristóbal) and *ladinos* (Antigua) whilst the majority of artisans who sell their wares there are indigenous and live in surrounding villages. The Guatemalan dolls that are the focus of this thesis are generally made in San Antonio Aguas Calientes, a Kaqchikel town and *municipio* near Antigua whose inhabitants retain cultural practices such as the use of the Kaqchikel language and distinctive *traje*.⁴ Chamula

² See Appendix 3, Figure 2 and Figure 3 for maps of the area.

³ Although in Mexico there is also a significant Maya presence in the Yucatán peninsular, this thesis only investigates the Maya of Chiapas; primarily from the Tzotzil ethnic group.

⁴ Although *traje* refers to “dress” in Spanish, in the highlands of Guatemala it specifically refers to dress worn by Maya people (Hendrickson, 1995: 205). In this thesis, this understanding of the term will also apply to *traje* from Chiapas, Mexico. *Traje* can be contrasted with *vestido*, which is worn by *mestizos* and *ladinos*, and includes, often mass-produced, tailored clothing items cut from cloth, such as jeans, trousers, t-shirts, shirts, skirts, dresses and suits. In relation to the term “dress”, this thesis follows the definition utilised by Fashion Theory: ‘an assemblage of modifications of the body and/or supplements to the body’ and, therefore, includes accessories and jewellery as well as clothes

dollmakers, on the other hand, originate from the *municipio* of Chamula which comprises a number of hamlets controlled by the small town of San Juan Chamula near San Cristóbal. As a Tzotzil *municipio*, the Chamula inhabitants speak Tzotzil, wear a distinctive form of *traje* and retain their own civil and religious authorities but, in contrast to San Antonio, Chamula is renowned for being a markedly insular *municipio*.⁵

Of added significance for the San Cristóbal context is its connection to the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN). The EZLN mainly comprises members of several different Maya groups from Chiapas and was formed amidst a backdrop of their longstanding and acute marginalisation – both politically and in terms of their access to basic services. The Zapatistas first gained international attention when they rose up on 1 January 1994 – the day the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into force, the implementation of which, alongside other neo-liberal provisions, required an amendment to the Mexican constitution allowing for the privatisation of *ejidos* (communal lands). This spurred the EZLN to declare war on the Mexican government and they took military control of several major towns in Chiapas. After fighting for 10 days they accepted a truce in order to negotiate peace.

The Zapatistas initially demanded access to ‘work, land, housing, food, health care, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace’ (Vodovnik, 2004: 645) and later extended these aims to include the struggle for information and culture (2004: 668). Notably, while the Zapatistas strive for recognition of the

(Eicher and Sumberg, 1995: 298). Whilst, also in line with Fashion Theory, this thesis utilises the term “fashion” to indicate ‘a process involving change [...] acceptance, discarding, and replacement by another cultural form’, it should be noted that these boundaries are rather arbitrary since what constitutes ‘change’ and ‘another cultural form’ is clearly a subjective view that does not account for hybridity as a core element of culture (1995: 299). Finally, the term “costume” will not be used in this thesis as it is often understood to be an outfit worn for performance purposes and thus does not accurately represent *traje*.

⁵ Spanish speakers in Chiapas use “Chamula” as a generic term, with negative connotations, to refer to the diverse indigenous population of that state who, states Cruz Salazar, ‘por definición son considerados sucios, feos, pobres, tímidos, desconfiados, lentos, tontos o incivilizados’ (2014: 12). See also, Rosenbaum (1993: 15) and Gossen (1999: 196) for the use of the condescending term “Chamulita”. This thesis uses the term “Chamula” in a non-pejorative sense to mean people who live in or have links to the *municipio* of Chamula, wear *traje* styles associated with it and speak Tzotzil.

indigenous rights, including the right to autonomy and territoriality, of all Mexico's indigenous peoples (2004: 675), and they are opposed to the government's neo-liberal drive, they do not wish to separate from the Mexican state. Rather, they view the recognition of indigenous cultural practices, social organisation and governance as the means by which to achieve successful integration within the nation state (2004: 657).

The peace process that followed the uprising stalled when the government reneged on its commitment to acknowledge indigenous rights, as defined by the EZLN, in the constitution. Since then the Mexican state has conducted low-intensity warfare and encouraged the establishment of paramilitary groups. However, these counter-insurgency tactics have failed, and, given the unwillingness of the state to implement the fundamental political overhaul that the Zapatistas's demands would necessarily require, the EZLN has consolidated its autonomous forms of governance and continues to receive support among Chiapas's Maya population and beyond. Of particular importance for this thesis is that the Zapatista uprising prompted the production of Zapatista dolls; a key example of a Chamula doll that is explored in more detail throughout the following chapters.

Souvenir dolls as tasteless objects

The second factor these dolls share, as mentioned above, is their status as souvenirs and this designation has a huge impact on how they are perceived. The souvenir object – 'a thing that is kept as a reminder of a person, place, or event' – can hold great significance for people (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 1999: 1373). Countless individuals acquire souvenirs of special occasions or special places during their life. Closely associated with the souvenir is the memento; indeed, as 'an object kept as a reminder or souvenir' (1999: 889) the two terms may be regarded as synonymous (Lasusa, 2007: 275). Nevertheless, as the following quotation illustrates, souvenirs often have particularly negative connotations in everyday life:

It's certainly not 'cool' to collect souvenirs. Most of us who partake do so somewhat sheepishly, meandering the cluttered aisles of an airport gift shop in search of the least offensive made-in-China fridge magnet to

commemorate our holiday, which was almost definitely not in China (Elliott, *The Telegraph*, 2019).⁶

This distinction may be drawn because souvenirs are bought and sold in a commercial exchange, often in a tourism context, and are often widely recognisable as souvenir items (Gordon, 1986: 135; Lasusa, 2007: 275). Mementos, by contrast, tend to be associated with saved or found objects of personal significance, are recognisable only to the individual collector (Gordon, 1986: 135) and are not necessarily linked to tourism (1986: 137). The non-commoditised nature of mementos also means that they are regarded more positively than souvenirs in academic research (Swanson and Timothy, 2012: 491).

Objects that are handcrafted by indigenous people, such as Maya dolls, have, in scholarly research, been categorised as ethnographic specimens or artefacts or, alternatively, as works of art (Phillips and Steiner, 1999: 3). However, when they are made for tourist consumption, these objects are frequently omitted from this artefact/art designation on account of their overtly commodified character and, consequently, they have ‘often fallen into the ontological abyss of the inauthentic, the fake, or the crassly commercial’ (1999: 4). Several persistent misconceptions perpetuate this negative view of these objects: they are mass-produced; they are created by inexperienced craftspeople; several people are involved in the production of a single item; producers’ creativity is subordinated to consumer preferences; and the finished product is low quality and of low artistic merit (Jules-Rosette, 1984: 16, 137). These souvenirs, of which Maya dolls are seemingly an example, are referred to as “‘tourist’ arts’ by Nelson H. H. Graburn (1976: 6) and represent art objects made purely for tourist consumption by indigenous producers and that are perceived to be devoid of aesthetic merit and have neither functional value nor spiritual and ritual significance.

Handmade dolls are found all over the world and their production dates back to ancient civilisations, thereby suggesting that they resonate with human beings on a

⁶ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/arts-and-culture/history-of-holiday-souvenirs/> (accessed 16 January 2020).

profound level. Ethnographic dolls, which may be defined as those handmade examples that are used within the communities in which they are made, such as fertility dolls, *Katsina* dolls and corn dollies, have been the subject of research since at least the work of Edward Lovett (1852-1933), a leading member of the Folklore Society of Great Britain (Herdman, 1998: 4).⁷ Lovett was a pioneer in his studies on the significance of ethnographic dolls, particularly “emergent” or “slum” dolls that are created under often impoverished circumstances from any available materials, such as wooden spoons, clothes pegs and bones (1998: 6). Just as the materiality of these dolls reflect the environment of Victorian slums, those made of natural materials such as palm leaves and walrus ivory, dressed in clothing made of bark, feathers and seal skins, similarly provide key information about the flora and fauna of other dollmakers’ localities. Cloth similarly provides information about the dollmaker’s environment and, furthermore, shares a close connection to humans since the fibres are cultivated, spun and woven by hand and, as a finished material, it is tactile, soft and comforting (Edward, 1997: 5). Whether a bundle of rags or a sumptuously dressed doll of the wealthy, it is generally thought that dolls made from cloth have been created throughout the world since time immemorial (White, 1966: 40). In addition, diachronic assessments of dolls from one area reveal the introduction of materials such as plastic beads, ribbons and sequins that reflects the makers’ increasing exposure to people from beyond their locale. While the extraordinary diversity of materials from which dolls are made indicates their local specificity, the dolls’ myriad roles reflect concerns and desires experienced the world over. One of their key functions is that of play item, which is often inseparable from their role in socialising and teaching children, particularly girls, gender norms through the imitation of the gender-specific activities and behaviour of adults (McQuiston and McQuiston, 1995; Lenz, 2004). Yet they can also be regarded as ‘repositories of power’, used by shamans or by the laity in order to produce a result over matters that are beyond a person’s control, such as hunting, fertility and the weather (Lenz, 2004: 102). These functions, together with their

⁷ *Katsinas* are ancestor spirits that, for the Hopi people of the Southern US, represent every aspect of life and nature (McQuiston and McQuiston, 1995: 49-61; Lenz, 2004: 72-73, 111-115; Pearlstone, 2011). *Katsina* dolls are used to teach Hopi children, especially girls, about the numerous types of *Katsinas* (Kidwell, 2004: 14).

role in providing comfort, underline dolls' association with timeless themes of human existence.

The transformation of Chamula dolls into Zapatista dolls

It seems apt to question where dolls made for sale fit into this weighty background, especially those such as the Maya examples scrutinised in this thesis for which their "Otherness" is a key selling point. In contrast to dolls deemed to be ethnographically valuable, those produced for the tourist market have been derided from various quarters. Furthermore, these souvenir dolls – that represent people from different localities, nations, races or ethnicities through their clothing or form – have generally received scant academic analysis. However, presumably because of their ties to a political movement, Zapatista dolls have received academic assessment, albeit limited, from the scholars noted below (Figure 4).⁸ These scholars hold markedly different viewpoints about the same type of doll that not only reflect the focus of their particular academic arguments but also provide an intriguing introduction to this unusual souvenir object and, therefore, are worth describing at length.

In her work relating to Mexican folk art, Eli Bartra considers that the dolls highlight the creativity and inventiveness of craftswomen (2011). She describes how, prior to the Zapatista uprising of January 1994, the women of San Juan Chamula made dolls to sell to tourists visiting neighbouring San Cristóbal (Figure 5). However, following the uprising, the number of tourists dramatically reduced and, consequently, the Chamulas lost their source of trade. Simultaneously, San Cristóbal had a massive influx of foreign journalists who were reporting on the uprising. Bartra explains that one of these correspondents, Joaquim Ibarz, who worked for a Barcelona-based newspaper, was so tired of the Chamulas' desperate attempts to sell him a doll that he told one of the craftswomen that if she turned the dolls into Zapatistas he would buy them all (2011: 130). Consequently, the woman

⁸ Whilst there is significant coverage of Mexican popular art and Maya cultural production the minimal engagement with dolls within this treat them primarily as examples of toys rather than as having any particular significance as representations of humans (for example, see Sayer, 1977, 1990; Avaves *et al*, 2002; Flechsig, 2004).

stitched ski masks on to around 15 of her dolls and they were an immediate commercial success with the journalists. According to Ibarz these initial “proto-Zapatista dolls” were crudely made, but the Chamulas quickly honed their skills. That this development happened quickly is demonstrated by a photograph of Zapatista dolls included on the front page of the national daily paper *Excélsior* on 10 February 1994, only 5 weeks after the start of the uprising (2011: 130). The craftswomen continued to develop the dolls by adding accoutrements such as wooden guns and cartridge belts. For Bartra, therefore, they provide evidence of the ability of Chamula craftswomen to quickly adapt to the demands of the market.

The symbolic value of the dolls is highlighted by Jeff Conant (2010), whose interest centres on the communication strategies and propaganda used by the Zapatistas. Crucially, after the initial uprising, the Zapatistas have been outnumbered by the Mexican state in terms of military might and the size of their fighting force and, consequently, ‘the war of symbols’ and ‘the media war’ have been of pivotal importance (2010: 153). In particular, Conant explores the items associated with the Zapatistas – the ski masks, uniforms and guns – and shows how they have been used as symbols to represent their cause. Moreover, he argues that Zapatista dolls, which incorporate all of these markers, function as symbols that serve to ‘invoke the presence of the Zapatista warriors themselves’ (2010: 151). Therefore, the production of huge amounts of dolls that are sold in highly visible locations around San Cristóbal, represents the Zapatistas’ ‘complete infiltration’ of the area and, therefore, ‘invokes the possibility of revolution’ in people’s minds (2010: 153). Conant argues that the dolls’ effectiveness is not diminished by the unlikelihood of a successful revolution, rather, it is their presence and the fact that they represent real Zapatistas that is the key to their power (2010: 154).

Sharon Scott regards the dolls as ‘metaphorical weapons’ (n.d.: 4).⁹ She argues that for Western tourists, Zapatista dolls function through the ‘desire to possess the “noble savage”’ (n.d.: 1) and that because Mexico’s indigenous peoples are fully aware of the commercial potential of Westerners’ desire to “possess” indigenous

⁹ <http://www.zapatistadolls.com/metaphor/> (accessed 17 December 2019).

“Otherness”, they have turned to this as a means of economic survival. More specifically, driven by the economic hardship of the 1970s, Chamula women, by making dolls clothed in miniaturised versions of their own dress, began ‘selling tourist dolls of themselves’ (n.d.: 2). Scott claims that these dolls function as a ‘surrogate for the possession-desire inherited by Westerners from their imperialist ancestors’ and in creating these dolls Chamula women ‘condone the use of the indigenous doll metaphor’ (n.d.: 2). However, when Chamulas turn their dolls into Zapatista dolls by adding a ski mask, Scott argues that something of crucial importance happens: the ‘mask protects the identity of the Chamula person from the possession desire of Western tourists’ (n.d.: 2). Alternatively stated, by covering the face with a ski mask, the Chamula protect their identity and free themselves from the role of ‘plaything’ that is imposed on them by ‘global society’ (n.d.: 3). Yet for the Western consumers of these dolls, the ski mask, with its links to criminal activities, disturbs the more usual conception of tourist dolls as representing friendly, peaceful indigenous cultures. Scott argues that it is thus impossible for Westerners to reconcile these two contrasting characteristics embodied by the same doll. The inability to reconcile these two aspects prompts the question of how the dolls function successfully. Scott’s answer is that Chamula dollmakers are not linking the criminality associated with ski masks to the dolls or the indigenous people they represent but, rather, they are associating ‘criminal activity [to] a tourist market that demands [that] native people present themselves as dolls – beautiful and passive objects of adoration and possession’ (n.d.: 2). Hence her conclusion, that these dolls are ‘metaphorical weapons’ that demonstrate that the Maya are ‘intellectual warriors’ who can ‘intelligently subvert the domination and dehumanization of Western metaphors’ (n.d.: 4).

Beyond these academic conceptions of Zapatista dolls, a further example highlights a quite different function; that of “tourist attraction”. To some extent San Cristóbal’s link to the Zapatistas is a draw not only for socially and politically progressive travellers but also for more mainstream tourists. The *Insight Guide to Guatemala, Belize and The Yucatán* (Hennessy, 2008) is a travel guide containing a double-page summary of the Zapatista uprising and aftermath. Notably, this sumptuously illustrated book does not include any photographs of actual Zapatistas. Instead, the images used to represent them in the double-page spread are a drawing

of a 19th-century Yucatán village and a photograph of a collection of Zapatista dolls with an accompanying caption that reads: ‘Zapatista dolls for sale in San Cristóbal’ (2008: 269). This unusual choice of images suggests that the editor aimed to circumvent San Cristóbal’s close association with the Zapatistas; at least as a real and active political group. Alternatively put, the images perhaps function to allay the fears that tourists may have upon visiting the area by using the dolls as unthreatening and playful representations of Zapatistas rather than depicting actual armed indigenous people. Additionally, by clearly stating that the dolls are for sale, the book taps into the tourist’s desire to buy souvenirs: it clearly identifies and promotes San Cristóbal as the location where this unusual souvenir – a miniature, exotic Other from an edgy, cultural destination – can be purchased.

This variety of views provides an example of a key purpose of this thesis; that is, to demonstrate that souvenir dolls are cultural texts that embody different functions and meanings for different actors. However, rather than analysis based on scholars’ reception of these texts, the majority of data in this thesis is drawn from interviews with people who produce and acquire these dolls. Importantly, this data often challenges the academic view that souvenir dolls are primarily consumed by Western tourists driven by a fascination with the Other.¹⁰ In fact, my interviews with indigenous producers and consumers of Maya dolls problematise this perspective and instead demonstrate that their appeal can pivot on the consumer’s identification with the familiar rather than the strange, unfamiliar, foreign or exotic.

A brief history of Guatemalan dolls

In comparison with the well-documented inception of Chamula dolls in the early 1970s, there is limited information regarding the development of Guatemalan dolls produced by Maya artisans. An important resource, nevertheless, is the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford which has a collection of 98 Guatemalan dolls accumulated between 1880 and 1903 by the Harrison family during their time spent in Costa Rica. The dolls were gifts brought from Guatemala by the Harrisons’ nurse on her

¹⁰ The terms “West”/“Western” and “non-West”/“non-Western” are problematic in their reduction of heterogeneous populations to two homogenous blocks. Nevertheless, the former terms are used here to indicate those regions of the world that are often considered to be the most highly developed.

trips home. The dolls in the collection can be divided into two types. The first comprises those of between 1 and 3.5 centimetres with paper faces; for the sake of clarity, in this thesis these examples are referred to as “tiny dolls” (Figure 6). The second type consists of larger dolls of between 4.5 to 7 centimetres with fabric faces (Figure 7). This distinction of size and materiality is important since it forms the basis for the analysis of all the Guatemalan dolls in this research.¹¹

At some point, the tiny dolls became linked to the easing of worries, although the source of this association is unclear. What is certain is that they have acquired an “origin legend” that, with some variation, conforms to the following description, as featured on the website of Nim Po’t, the leading *artesanía* shop in Antigua:

The Worry Dolls (Muñeca quitapena) original Guatemalan tradition comes from a local legend about a Mayan princess named Ixmucane. The princess received a special gift from the sun god which would allow her to solve any problem a human could worry about.

In traditional and modern times, the Guatemalan Worry Dolls usually come in a box of six different small dolls. Worry dolls are mostly hand-made. In Guatemala, they are made of wire, wool and colorful textile leftovers. The dolls are then dressed in traditional Mayan style. The size of the doll can vary between ½ inch and 2.0 inches [*sic*]

The dolls would traditionally be given to troubled or sorrowful children. Before going to sleep, they would tell their dolls about their fears and worries, then hide it under their pillow during the night. After this, the child will literally sleep over the whole thing. During the night the dolls are said to absorb all of the worries that were stated. The next morning, all sorrows are said to have been taken away [...].¹²

¹¹ Some of these heights are provided by the Pitt Rivers Museum on their website, see, for example: <http://objects.prm.ox.ac.uk/pages/PRMUID92413.html> (accessed 15 January 2020). Those that are not provided on the website are based on my estimates when I saw the dolls during my visit to the museum, as detailed in Appendix 1.A.

¹² <http://www.nimpotexport.com/guatemalan-worry-dolls/> (accessed 18 January 2020).

There is, however, no mention of this association in the Pitt Rivers Accession Book for the Harrisons' dolls. Instead, Elsie McDougall, an eminent collector of textiles from Guatemala and Mexico who travelled widely in these two countries in the 1920s and 1930s, added an undated note to the book clarifying that: 'These miniatures are also used in crèches at Christmas time, when all sorts of household and country scenes are added to the crib'.¹³ It can, therefore, be suggested that, rather than the easing of worries, these dolls had quite a different association in the past.

Whatever their original function, by the early 1940s tiny dolls were being produced for the market. They were, for example, available to buy in the US through Kimport Dolls – a mail-order import company for doll collectors. Yet, even though they continued to be sold through this company until at least 1978, there is no mention in their mail-order catalogues of the term “worry dolls” or any association with the easing of worries and troubles.¹⁴ In fact, the earliest dated example that I have seen that makes this link is a set labelled as ‘Trouble Dolls’ from 1977. This set is also accompanied by a paper slip explaining the origin legend, the inclusion of which is now commonplace for the sale of these dolls.¹⁵ In sum, by at least 1977 these dolls had acquired the association with the easing of worries and were sold with a paper slip that provides this information.

As for the larger type of doll in the Pitt Rivers's collection, by the 1940s they were also being produced for the market and were available to buy both in Guatemala and in the US through Kimport.¹⁶ These newer versions were, however, nailed to wooden stands, which explicitly characterises them as collectors' items or

¹³ The information from the Accession Book was provided on a database printout given to me during my visit to the museum. For details about Elsie McDougall's time in these countries and her association with the museum, see: <https://pittrivers-photo.blogspot.com/2019/02/focus-elsie-colsell-mcdougall-1883-1961.html> (accessed 18 January 2020).

¹⁴ This claim is made on the basis of my textual analysis of the descriptions of these smaller dolls as advertised in 10 Kimport newsletters – *Doll Talk* – dated between 1944 and 1978.

¹⁵ I have a set of these dolls and the paper slip also notes the importer's details: 'Parkville Imports Inc. Scottsdale Arizona, USA 1977'.

¹⁶ A letter from a subscriber to the company describes how she had recently returned from Guatemala and bought four pairs of dolls; the implication being that dolls were readily accessible for tourists to buy in 1939 (*Doll Talk*, 1939: n.p.n.).

souvenirs rather than children's play items. In this thesis, these examples are referred to as "large dolls" (Figure 8).

Although these two types of doll are still readily available in Guatemala by, perhaps, the late-1990s there has been a convergence between the two forms.¹⁷ This has resulted in examples marketed as worry dolls and accompanied by the legend on a paper slip, but they are larger – up to around eight centimetres – than the older, tiny versions (Figure 9). Like the large dolls on stands, these newer worry dolls also have material rather than paper faces. Furthermore, some of these newer, larger worry dolls are now aimed at specific sources of anxiety, such as weight gain, studying, pregnancy, parenthood, lack of money, health and work. Even Rasta worry dolls are now available that, clearly, are completely detached from the Maya roots of these dolls. This thesis aims to unpack the meanings of these new developments that, while tapping into consumers' experiences of living in the contemporary world, can also lead to the erasure of the indigenous identities associated with the dolls.

Thesis structure

In sum, the key original contribution of this thesis is to focus on an under-assessed and under-valued form of cultural production: the souvenir doll. More specifically, it offers a unique exploration of the production and consumption of Maya dolls that is further enhanced by its comparative cross-border scope. Through a case study of Chamula dolls and their incarnation as Zapatista dolls, together with the various manifestations of Guatemalan dolls outlined above, this thesis contributes to the limited academic scholarship about souvenir dolls by assessing their role in the construction and expression of identities of the people and institutions that engage with these important cultural texts. This role is assessed by utilising mixed methods: material analysis, interviews, participant observation and textual analysis. More widely, the research is guided by four overriding questions:

¹⁷ This periodisation is an estimate based on my informal conversations with dollmakers in Antigua and my own knowledge as a doll collector.

- What is the role of these dolls in the construction, expression and negotiation of identities both for producers and receivers?
- What is the role of the market in the production of the dolls, both in terms of production practices and as embodied by the doll object?
- What different types of function and value are foregrounded at different points in a doll's life story?
- How useful is a life story approach to objects in answering these questions?

These questions are explored and addressed through the following chapters.

Chapter One explores the roots of the souvenir doll's status as a doubly damned¹⁸ cultural text; damned both as a souvenir and as a souvenir doll. A critical overview of art categories reveals why souvenirs are granted less value than art and cultural artefacts while an assessment of books written by doll collectors for their peers suggests why souvenir dolls are often viewed dismissively by collectors and have been rejected as a valid subject of academic scholarship. Also reviewed in this chapter are approaches to souvenirs and, in addition, research emanating from Dolls Studies relating to the Barbie doll that can help redress the partial view of souvenir dolls and offer a framework through which to assess Maya dolls. Given their centrality in this research, the second half of the chapter provides a critical review of theories relating to identities, while the final section introduces the life story approach that will form the overarching structure of this thesis. Through this structure – by tracing various possible life stories of Guatemalan and Chamula dolls – this thesis aims to explore the multitude of identities circulating around these objects.¹⁹ Whilst this theoretical framework is informed primarily by Igor

¹⁸ This phrase is borrowed from Hendrickson in relation to cloth (1995: 7).

¹⁹ I am aware of the inherent irony involved in using a subject/object approach alongside a life stories approach. However, this proved to be a fruitful and harmonious coupling, since, in line with my emphasis on everyday life and everyday practices, the majority of my interviews were conducted with participants who were not well versed in academic arguments regarding different approaches to materiality and who did differentiate between subjects and objects.

Kopytoff's (1986) "cultural biographical" approach to things, this thesis argues for its extension beyond finished products to encompass the cultural biography of their source materials. This is imperative since the dolls under discussion are often formed from fragments of clothing handwoven and worn by Maya before being repurposed by dollmakers. The life story of the dolls, therefore, commences with the weaving process and is inseparable from the fundamental importance of *traje* for Maya identities. In other words, since it is often made from repurposed clothing, the doll object is but one chapter in the life of its source textile. This approach, furthermore, provides a comprehensive picture, not only of Maya cultural production but also of souvenirs in general since, in both instances, they are usually assessed with either a focus on their production or on their reception.

The Mexican and Guatemalan contexts are provided in Chapter Two and highlight that at a national level, although markedly divergent, Mexican and Guatemalan state policies regarding the production of *artesanías* entail similar contradictory practices relating to their respective indigenous populations. This chapter also offers an overview of the fieldwork sites: San Cristóbal and San Juan Chamula in Chiapas and Antigua and San Antonio in Guatemala. Finally, it outlines the methods through which the qualitative analysis was conducted at these sites as well as in the UK.

Chapter Three blends fieldwork data and material analysis with a critical review of theory relating to *traje* in order to trace the life story from thread level up of a *huipil* from San Antonio and a *falda* from San Juan Chamula. These garments are of profound significance for the construction and expression of a Maya identity both at the level of the individual who produces or wears it and as a wider, collective identity and in this chapter it is argued that dolls formed of scraps of these garments are imbued with this same significance. Furthermore, this chapter demonstrates that assessments of the local differences and cross-border similarities in *traje* styles at the fieldwork sites can be extended to reveal differences and similarities between the dolls produced at these respective sites.

While Chapter Four continues its assessment of data collected at the Mexican and Guatemalan fieldwork sites the focus moves away from the production of the

dolls in order to explore the next stages in their life story. Although briefly touching on vending practices, the data primarily relates to the acquisition of dolls by locals and tourists at these sites. Chapter Five widens the scope of the investigation by analysing vending practices and the reception and consumption of the dolls beyond the locales in which they are produced. These two final substantive chapters are, therefore, closely connected. However, by arranging the data so that the promotion and consumption of the dolls are assessed, first of all, in spatial and temporal proximity to their production context and, subsequently, following the introduction of spatial and temporal distance, the aim is to highlight their myriad potential life stories and, thus, the multitude of different individual and social identities of those who encounter them.

These chapters are revisited in the conclusion, which underlines the idea that, although the souvenir doll has often been dismissed as being “kitsch” and of little cultural significance, by tracing the potential life stories of specific examples, it is clear that they can hold divergent meanings for different individuals and social groups. Indeed, the findings highlight the various – and often unexpected – ways in which Maya dolls have been used by diverse actors for an array of ends: as a source of income; for the purpose of constructing a national identity in museums; as markers of solidarity; for the creation of personal archives; and as collectors’ items, auction goods, memory objects and talismans, to note a small selection. Of crucial importance is that these alternative functions often entail the erasure or retention of the indigenous identities with which the dolls are associated. By identifying and exploring these different roles, it underlines that the conception of the doll object can be extended beyond that with which they are often inextricably associated; that is, play items important for the socialisation of girls. Through recognising their multifaceted character, together with a focus on the production of handmade indigenous dolls consumed by a broad spectrum of actors rather than the consumption of mass-produced dolls by Westerners, this thesis aims to contribute to the field of Dolls Studies.

The centrality of Maya dolls in this thesis is also significant for the field of Latin American Cultural Studies. Not only are they an understudied example of Maya cultural production but, in addition, the cross-border scope of the research helps to

address the lack of in-depth comparative work relating to the Maya cultural production of different *municipios* within Guatemala and Chiapas as well as *municipios* at a cross-border level. Furthermore, this comparative approach extends beyond Mexico and Guatemala through its comprehensive analysis of the consumption of Maya dolls on an international scale. In sum, this thesis will show that dolls produced by indigenous people specifically for external consumption can be read as texts that reveal important socio-political processes and effects at local, national, supranational and global levels that reach far beyond the tourist consumer.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORIES AND APPROACHES

As noted in the Introduction to this thesis, as examples of tourist art, Maya dolls are the types of souvenir that are perceived to be of limited aesthetic merit and have neither functional value nor spiritual and ritual significance. As this type of souvenir is inextricably bound to perceptions of inauthentic, tasteless objects, rather than authentic artefacts or art, it seems apt in the first part of this chapter to examine why these perceptions arose and why they persist before discussing theories relating to souvenirs and dolls that can be utilised in this thesis to redress this imbalance. The second part of this chapter will be devoted to discussing the approaches to identities and material culture that will also underpin this study. While souvenir dolls are often viewed as “inauthentic” and “tasteless” an effective investigation of these terms is best rooted in their antithetical relationship to the categories of “authentic” and “art” as explored in the following section.

Authenticity and Art: Why do Souvenirs Not Count?

Authenticity and power

Prior to the late 1960s within the field of sociology authenticity was linked to a realist viewpoint whereby it was judged to be an innate and thus fixed feature of an entity. However, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s (1967) recognition of the constructed nature of society allowed authenticity to be regarded in terms of the meaning that individuals give to something at any particular time. Despite the vital recognition within this field, by the mid-1990s significant systemic academic engagement with the issue of authenticity had been generated from Tourism Studies (Hughes, 1995: 781). Clearly, its rich seam of research and its tourism focus is particularly relevant to the assessment of souvenirs. Notions of authenticity within Tourism Studies focus on three key approaches:²⁰ objectivism, which stems from a

²⁰ Wang (1999) has produced a valuable survey of this research the majority of which has been published in the journal *Annals of Tourism Research*.

realist perspective whereby authenticity is regarded as an inherent, fixed feature of an object and its designation is based on its conformity to the appropriate traditional culture (Wang, 1999: 350-353; Poulter, 2011); postmodernism, associated with the concepts of “hyperreality” and “simulacra”, whereby the idea of “authenticity” is deconstructed by dismantling the boundaries between the real/original and the fiction/copy – the real or original are thus rendered inconsequential (Bruner, 1994: 407; Wang, 1999: 356; Rickly-Boyd, 2012: 273) and, the final approach, authenticity as a socially constructed notion, the designation of which is granted by the beholder. This latter approach thus recognises that the same object can embody multiple meanings depending on the views and beliefs of any particular person and that these views may change with any given context and may evolve with time (Wang, 1999: 351-354). Indeed, tourism research reveals how tourists’ opinions about the authenticity of souvenirs vary according to; the type of tourist (a judgement based on what type of holiday the tourist prefers) (Cohen, 1988), tourists’ ages and their level or stage of travel careers (Littrell, Anderson *et al*, 1993: 208; Collins-Kreiner and Zins, 2013) and gender (Anderson and Littrell, 1995). Evidently, then, tourists may deem an object to be authentic even though it is judged to be inauthentic from an objectivist viewpoint (Wang, 1999: 353).

Given the abundance of engagement from Tourism Studies with this slippery term, it is of crucial importance that the key point at stake is not buried beneath a plethora of academic debate. As succinctly stated by Edward M. Bruner, a critic of postmodernist approaches to authenticity: ‘The more fundamental question to ask here is not if an object or site is authentic, but rather who has the authority to authenticate, which is a matter of power’ (1994: 400). This question is best answered by recognising the socially constructed nature of the term, and herein lies the value of this approach for this thesis, for it demonstrates how the designation of authenticity operates as a social process and that selective interpretations of authenticity are privileged at the expense of others which are marginalised or even excluded. Objectivist and postmodernist approaches do not draw out the multiple and differently valued interpretations surrounding a single object and, consequently, as they do not pay sufficient attention to these power issues, they offer rather neutral analyses. Bruner’s case study focuses on a reconstructed village which was home to Abraham Lincoln in the 1830s. Thus, in his example, the

question at stake among the numerous interpretations of authenticity is: ‘Who has the authority to decide which version of history will be accepted as the correct or authentic one?’ (1994: 400-401). Otherwise put, at issue here is identifying the actors who have the power to construct authenticity and what end this serves.

Authenticity and tourist art souvenirs

Socially constructed perceptions of authenticity and processes of authentication are entangled with socially constructed perceptions of what constitutes art, artefacts and souvenirs. As Ruth Phillips and Christopher Steiner note: ‘The exotic object may variously be labeled trophy or talisman, relic or specimen, rarity or trade sample, souvenir or kitsch, art or craft’ (1999: 3). However, since the end of the Victorian era and the establishment of art history and anthropology as academic disciplines those objects perceived to be authentic expressions of creativity or a cultural practice have been categorised as “art” or “ethnographic artefact” respectively (1999: 3). By contrast, objects produced by cultural Others purely for commercial reasons – such as tourist art souvenirs – are usually deemed to be inauthentic and excluded from both of these categories (1999: 4).

Since the 1980s these categories have been destabilised. For example, Janet Wolff’s (1993) sociological study of art successfully demystifies art history notions of the individual creativity and genius of the artist by emphasising the historical, political and ideological processes that separated and elevated art from craft and that reflect the dominant values of the West, which historically have excluded the creative output of women, craftspeople (in other words, ‘workers’) and non-Western people. Wolff also reminds us that whilst the creative output of artists is the result of economic, ideological and social factors, its existence depends upon their situated, individual artistic choices. She, therefore, retains the significance of the artist – albeit in a decentralised position – and the aesthetic value of their work.

While the historical, Western construction of the categories “art” and “artefact” have been deconstructed by this type of research, Phillips and Steiner point out that discourse relating to commodities, such as tourist art souvenirs, has been more contradictory. Briefly, as the growth of tourism in the second half of the 19th

century led to increased contact between producers and consumers of different cultural groups, the creation of ‘innovative hybrid art forms’ also increased (1999: 9). However, perhaps due to their preoccupations of the inauthenticity of these commoditised objects, the fields of anthropology and art history have only recently acknowledged the speed and inventiveness of indigenous artists’ response to this changing context (1999: 9). There are two key reasons for this designation of inauthenticity. The first of these is that the objects represent a ‘stylistic hybridity’ which does not conform to essentialist ideas that particular cultures produce specific styles of art free from outside influences. This point also reflects the contradictory assessment of art and craft in that, from a Western art perspective, only an original (as opposed to a copy) is accepted as a work of art and, furthermore, high levels of innovation are valued. By contrast, a “traditional” craft item is deemed to be authentic when its form, material and function conform to a traditional model, which, consequently, constrains the expression of artistic innovations that diverge from it.

The second reason for claims of inauthenticity is that these objects are produced for external consumption. Yet, as Bennetta Jules-Rosette (1984) argues, the only difference between a Western artist building an elite clientele for patronage purposes and an artist who creates for tourists is the question of scale and the anonymity of the latter’s audience. Therefore, although the artwork created in either context could be similar, it is ‘the differentiation of the audience into mass consumers and special patrons that permit “elite” artists [...] to detach themselves from the stigma of commercialization’ (1984: 23). An associated point is the anonymity of the producers of tourist art. In the 19th century, it was a common misconception that the producers of “folk” and “primitive” art (as they were referred to then) were unknown whereas, in fact, the work of individual artists would have been instantly recognisable in their locale (Graburn, 1976: 21).²¹ This misunderstanding persists so that for Western art collectors, who associate aesthetic value with named individual artists, the perceived anonymity of non-Western artists suggests that their art is not deemed worthy of attributing to any one individual

²¹ Graburn notes that the term ‘folk’ art was constructed to apply to the artistic output of European peasants, while ‘primitive’ was the corresponding term for non-Europeans (1976: 21).

(1976: 22). In sum, it is argued here that these differentiations are important not only for a fine artist to avoid ‘the stigma of commercialization’ but for the fine art collector who would wish to avoid the stigma of acquiring commercialised art.

Approaches to tourist art souvenirs since the 1970s

Since the 1970s, scholars of anthropology and art history have increasingly acknowledged that objects produced for external markets by indigenous people can, in fact, constitute works of art. For example, Nelson Graburn’s 1976 edited collection *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expressions from the Fourth World*, was a milestone in the recognition of tourist art as a valid subject of research. In his introduction, Graburn presented his widely-influential classification of arts from the ‘Fourth World’.²² However, in contrast to his positive characterisation of other indigenous art forms, his negative definition of souvenirs is worth quoting at length:

When the profit motive or the economic competition of poverty override aesthetic standards, satisfying the consumer becomes more important than pleasing the artist. These are often called “tourist arts” or “airport arts” and may bear little relation to the traditional arts of the creator culture or to those of any other groups [...]. The rationalization of production and the standardization or simplification of design of many souvenir arts have tended to give all commercial, contemporary arts a bad name. The symbolic content is so reduced, and conforms so entirely to the consumers’ popular notions of the salient characteristics of the minority group, that we may call these items ethno-kitsch (1976: 6).

This assessment exemplifies the assumption that “inauthentic” cultural production is that which deviates from the traditional norm of a particular culture and has been modified to improve its commercial viability. Although Graburn provides a more nuanced view of souvenirs in the remainder of the introduction, this robust and

²² Graburn defines the ‘Fourth World’ as ‘the collective name for all aboriginal people or native peoples whose lands fall within the national boundaries and technobureaucratic administrations of the countries of the First, Second, and Third Worlds’ (1976: 1).

negative definition is the overriding conception of tourist art souvenirs that informs the opening of this influential book.

Whilst it is the aim here to interrogate the unequal construction of Western categories used to assess cultural production rather than to assess whether particular examples of tourist art conform to Western designations of art, Jules-Rosette (1984) provides an excellent series of case studies that demonstrates the limitations of Graburn's description. The simply carved, wooden representations of wildlife that the Kamba of Kenya produce, for instance, meet Graburn's definition of tourist art above since, rather than being a "traditional" craft item, their production was initiated in the 1920s purely to sell to tourists. It is now a large-scale, cooperative-based industry involving apprenticeship systems and the division of labour among sanders, stainers and carvers who seemingly produce low-quality, uniform designs; a context that has led to the impression of the 'conveyor-belt quality of much Kamba carving' (Jules-Rosette, 1984: 118). However, in terms of the nonconformity with the 'traditional arts of the creator culture' that Graburn notes above, Jules-Rosette emphasises that in this instance 'there is no "authentic" sculptural tradition from which to deviate' (1984: 137). Accordingly, the continuing evolution of the carvings stems from the innovation and originality of the artist who also has to adhere to the aesthetic constraints imposed by the cooperative. Thus, Jules-Rosette highlights the limitations in trying to assess 'a contemporary African artwork as a deviation from traditional forms rather than an object emerging within a new social context' (1984: 230). In short, it is clear that the entanglement of tourist art souvenirs with their perceived inauthenticity has greatly hampered the impartial analysis of these objects.

Tourist art souvenirs and kitsch

Although tourist souvenirs of all types have been and continue to be the focus of ample, insightful research from Tourism Studies, they often continue to be construed as inauthentic "tourist tat" in everyday life, as demonstrated by the article in *The Telegraph* quoted in the Introduction to this thesis.²³ It is perhaps the case

²³ There is a copious amount of research related to souvenirs in *Annals of Tourism Research*.

then, that the authority commanded by the more-traditional academic disciplines of art history and anthropology have facilitated the dissemination in everyday life of their former negative appraisals of souvenirs. While so far this chapter has focused on assessments of the production of souvenirs, the negative value with which they have been regarded also forms a commentary – in class terms – about the consumers who buy these seemingly inauthentic, kitsch objects, as explored below.

Art critic Clement Greenberg's views on aesthetic taste are famously stated in his essay *Avant-Garde and Kitsch*, first published in 1939, in which he contrasts the avant-garde of the ruling class to the kitsch of the urbanised masses. He defines 'kitsch' as 'popular, commercial art and literature' (1989: 9) which he argues are 'the epitome of all that is spurious in the life of our times' and is consumed by those 'insensible to the values of genuine culture' (1989: 10). Clearly, Greenberg's stark dichotomy of avant-garde and inauthentic kitsch simultaneously makes an unabashed elitist value judgement about – who he deems to be – the undiscerning people who consume items, such as souvenirs, which are associated with this latter category.

Similar judgements are also made in Susan Stewart's *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (1993); a work widely cited in research about tourist souvenirs. As a literary theorist, central to Stewart's work is the spoken or written narrative which she defines as 'a structure of desire, a structure that both invents and distances its objects and thereby inscribes again and again the gap between the signifier and the signified' (1993: ix). This gap ensures that the desire for origin and 'unmediated experience' that marks 'nostalgic longing' is unachievable (1993: 24). Stewart argues that souvenirs exemplify this nostalgic longing for the place of origin. They are also – through the narrative of their owner – a means by which the gap between the signifier and the signified can be closed: 'The souvenir seeks distance (the exotic in time and space), but it does so in order to transform and collapse distance into proximity to, or approximation with, the self' (1993: xii). She thus underlines that the materiality of souvenirs is of negligible significance and, instead, that they can only function through the narrative of their owner (1993: 136). Herein lies a major limitation and also an inherent contradiction of a conception of souvenirs based on nostalgic longing.

That is, Stewart's emphasis on the crucial role of narrative for the invention of objects rightly implies that an infinite number of meanings can be attached to any particular souvenir, in other words, that they are polyvalent objects. However, her overarching argument that nostalgic longing is central to these narratives excludes all other available meanings that a souvenir may acquire over its "life".

In terms of the unequal value granted to different types of souvenir, Stewart's commentary of antiques as souvenirs perhaps does not reflect standard definitions or everyday perceptions of either term (1993: 140-145).²⁴ Moreover, while her ample, positive coverage of antiques provides a conception of souvenirs so wide that the term perhaps loses its utility, kitsch objects are deemed to be "inauthentic". These objects, she states, 'serve to subjectify all of consumer culture, to institute a nostalgia of the populace' (1993: 167). This leads her to conclude that: 'Kitsch objects are not apprehended as the *souvenir proper* is apprehended, that is, on the level of the individual autobiography; rather they are apprehended on the level of collective identity. They are souvenirs of an era and not of the self' (1993: 167 *emphasis added*). Not only does this view suggest that kitsch objects cannot express an individual's identity but it also implies that the 'souvenir proper' cannot express collective identities. Furthermore, kitsch, she claims, suggests 'the imitation, the inauthentic, the impersonation. [Its] significance lies in [its] exaggerated display of the values of consumer culture' (1993: 168). Stewart, therefore, dismisses any other significance that kitsch objects may have. This problematic viewpoint perhaps stems from, and is indicative of, Stewart's tendency to privilege certain types of souvenir and certain constructions of identity over others.

The deconstruction of the categories "authentic" and "art" reveals the social processes that have constructed, disseminated and reproduced the hierarchical categories of the aesthetically valuable work of art, the ethnographically valuable artefact and the overtly commercial "inauthentic" tourist art souvenir of negligible value. In sum, as Phillips and Steiner note, '[d]espite contemporary deconstructions

²⁴ Antique is defined as 'a decorative object or piece of furniture that is valuable because of its age' and 'belonging to the distant past' (COD, 1999: 58).

of these terms, they remain operational concepts that outsider-producers have to negotiate together with the contradictions embedded in essentialist and evolutionist approaches to style and authenticity' (1999: 13). The construction and maintenance of this hierarchy ensures that certain forms of cultural production are legitimated over others, thereby perpetuating hegemonic representations of culture. Furthermore, in terms of consumption, the hierarchy retains a divide between fine art and categories such as popular art and kitsch – of which souvenirs are a key example – since this demarcation also reproduces the class positions of those who consume these divergent forms.²⁵

Redressing the balance: Re-evaluating souvenirs

Moving away from the partial assessments of souvenirs explored above and the narrow focus that often marks the case studies evaluated by Tourism Studies, it is useful at this juncture to assess a number of viewpoints that collectively provide a more comprehensive understanding of souvenirs. They explore the different functions of souvenirs by categorising them, highlight their use for identity construction and tease out the changing narratives attached to them by their owner and that go beyond Stewart's focus on nostalgia, as discussed below.

Souvenirs and extraordinary experiences

In her article, 'The Souvenir: Messenger of the Extraordinary', Beverly Gordon argues that the materiality of the souvenir 'helps locate, define, and freeze in time a fleeting, transitory experience, and bring back into ordinary experience something of the quality of an extraordinary experience' (1986: 135). The acquisition of souvenirs, she argues, thus reflects the individual's drive to 'concretize the extraordinary' (1986: 136). While Gordon's focus on the 'extraordinary' may illuminate the acquisition of some souvenirs it is perhaps overstated to apply it to all scenarios. Furthermore, her discussion is based on an uncritical use of a dichotomy that pits the "ordinary" in opposition to the "extraordinary", for what is

²⁵ See also García Canclini's discussion about the necessity of art and kitsch for the reproduction of class stratifications (1993: 107-109).

regarded as extraordinary depends on an individual's circumstances, as Graburn notes:

Obviously, what is extraordinary for some – for a rural Britisher, a trip up to London to the theater – may be an almost daily affair for others (a London suburbanite). Thus one man's excitement may be another man's boredom and threshold from which the more urbane measures his sacred (1978: 30).

Notwithstanding these points, Gordon's article is well known and influential for its introduction of a typology of souvenirs, which is useful for highlighting that different examples function in different ways, as follows:²⁶

- '*Pictorial images*'; such as postcards, photographs taken by tourists, and illustrated books about particular locations (1986: 140 *emphasis in original*).
- '*Piece-of-the-rock* souvenirs'; materials taken from the environment, such as shells or pebbles collected from a natural, non-urban context or fragments of the 'built environment', such as pieces of the Berlin Wall (1986: 141 *emphasis in original*).
- '*Symbolic shorthand* souvenirs'; objects that are usually manufactured and are suggestive of the time or location from which they were acquired (1986: 142 *emphasis in original*). These objects are often modified in scale; Gordon cites oversized *sombreros* from Mexico and 'miniaturized icons' such as the Eiffel Tower as examples of this type of souvenir (1986: 142).
- '*Markers*'; generic items that have no inherent association with an event or location but the addition of a qualifying inscription such as: "souvenir of..." provides the linkage (1986: 142 *emphasis in original*).

²⁶ Two recent examples show the continuing influence of the typology; see Potts (2018) and Elliot (2019).

- ‘*Local product*’; consumables such as food and alcohol that are produced in, and are strongly associated with, a particular location, such as tequila (1986: 142 *emphasis in original*). Gordon also includes ‘local crafts’ in this category, meaning products that are often produced by indigenous people (1986: 143).

Gordon does mention that there are overlaps between the categories and also that, rather than a fully-formed idea, the typology should serve as a springboard for further academic engagement (1986: 139-140, 144). However, the general problem with this typology is not its underdeveloped character but its implicit suggestion that souvenirs are of a fixed type, in that they have an intrinsic meaning or function and can be categorised accordingly. Consequently, it does not address the shifting meanings associated with a single souvenir that may cause it to move from one category to another or to be simultaneously placed in multiple categories depending on who is classifying it.

Souvenirs and middle-class identities

The second approach is the work of Danielle M. Lasusa, who provides a philosopher’s viewpoint on souvenir collecting by middle-class tourists who, she argues, ‘most often partake in this activity and also have the most to gain by it’ (2007: 274). She argues that taking holidays is of particular importance for the expression of a middle-class identity as it is a display of social status that marks its members out from the lower classes and reflects their aspirations to become upper-class (2007: 273).

There are three main strands to Lasusa’s argument. Firstly, she claims that ‘[t]he art of collecting souvenirs gives a tourist, quite simply, something to *do*, and thereby helps the tourist maintain a sense of identity while in an unfamiliar location’ (2007: 277 *emphasis in original*). Referring to Heidegger’s notion of *Dasein*, she suggests that individuals immerse themselves in social and cultural roles in order to avoid the ‘existential anxiety’ that results from facing their pure, authentic selves and she then applies this to those who assume the role of tourist to safeguard themselves from this angst whilst on holiday and, therefore, removed from their

everyday activities (2007: 277). Thus, Lasusa suggests that the souvenir ‘becomes a prop in role playing’ since, by shopping for them – by fulfilling the middle-class role of consumer – it helps middle-class individuals perform the role of tourist (2007: 278). The second strand of Lasusa’s argument centres on souvenirs as ‘evidence’ (2007: 279). She argues that the middle-class tourist purposefully displays souvenirs in a clear example of ‘conspicuous consumption’ and also links such displays to the acquisition of cultural capital in a Bourdieusian sense (2007: 280). In this instance, cultural capital is knowledge of the different art, traditions and cultures of other people or countries. The prominently positioned souvenir thus acts as a proclamation of an individual’s high level of cultural knowledge – gained through being widely travelled – and is indicative of middle-class attempts to increase their social status and ‘outrank their peers’ (2007: 281). The importance of souvenirs as tangible evidence is also important for the formation of personal archives, and this forms Lasusa’s final contention. Clearly, because souvenirs are physical reminders of a holiday, they ‘act as mnemonic devices’ and provide proof to the individual that they really have experienced a particular event or location (2007: 284). However, Lasusa claims that, rather than being primarily interested in rekindling the memories of past experiences, middle-class tourists instead aim to build their ‘own personal history and, by extension, his or her own sense of meaning and identity’ (2007: 285). She argues that the middle-class employee’s search for meaning is particularly pronounced given that they are ‘victim[s] of the Marxist “alienated labor”’ (2007: 285). In other words, as there is limited emotional attachment to, and limited meaning derived from, the commodities produced by their employers, employees travel to seek the ‘history and purposefulness’ that is lacking in their everyday working lives (2007: 285). In sum, therefore, Lasusa concludes that tourists acquire souvenirs in order to construct an archive of objects that constitutes their lives and as such, ‘souvenir collecting is, in fact, meaningful as a tool for the construction of the (post) modern identity’ (2007: 287).

Lasusa’s discussion recognises the multifaceted functions of souvenirs in a way that is lacking both in Stewart’s nostalgia-orientated conception and in Gordon’s assertion that they are acquired under extraordinary circumstances and have fixed, intrinsic meanings. Indeed, an inherent feature of Lasusa’s approach is that the functions of souvenirs change over time: at the point of acquisition the souvenir is

a prop and then it subsequently becomes evidence in the domestic sphere. Her arguments also move away from Stewart's focus on narratives formed by individuals and towards the recognition that narratives and meanings associated with souvenirs may be shared by social groups. However, Lasusa's approach is compromised by her claim that souvenirs are primarily collected by a very specific social group – the middle classes – for which she offers no empirical evidence. Lasusa's analysis also treats this group as a homogenous, rather than heterogeneous, mass of people which allows for no differences nor intersectionality with other social identities. In sum, while Lasusa's exclusive focus could cause her approach to be overlooked, there is potential for her argument to be extended beyond middle-class tourists to identify the role of souvenirs in the construction and expression of other individual or collective identities.

Souvenirs and changing narratives

The fluidity of meanings attached to souvenirs is highlighted once they are removed from their context of acquisition. While Lasusa's work recognises this, Nigel Morgan and Annette Pritchard's investigation is particularly effective in exploring the ways in which souvenirs are placed within the home following a holiday and are transformed into household objects, thereby absorbing 'what was once "other" into the mundane' (2005: 46). While the "domestication" of souvenirs 'provide[s] new sites of cultural production and locations for limitless narratives' (2005: 47), Lisa L. Love and Peter S. Sheldon (1998) note that the meanings associated with souvenirs also continue to develop when the significance of the location of acquisition changes. For instance, a souvenir postcard purchased in the 1990s depicting the twin towers in New York will have a different set of associations following the events of 9/11. Similarly, the meanings attached to a souvenir bought during a honeymoon will probably fluctuate in line with the usual ups and downs of married life. A further aspect is gift giving, whereby for the person who bought it the souvenir is associated with their memory of the context of acquisition and also their thoughts relating to the recipient of the gift (Graburn, 2000: xii). Yet, for the receiver, the souvenir has a different set of meanings which is based on their relationship with the gift giver and the context in which the gift was received (2000: xiv). Overall, as Bruner notes, 'with each retelling the circumstances...and the

situation of the narrator change, providing the opportunity for novel understandings and new narratives to arise' (Bruner quoted in Morgan and Pritchard, 2005: 47 *formatting in original*). Thus, approaches that can tease out the myriad meanings embodied by any specific souvenir from its inception provide a more comprehensive analysis than those that designate them a uniform function.

Souvenir dolls and kitsch

Whilst the first part of this chapter discussed how and why tourist art souvenirs have been and continue to be dismissed as kitsch items, the following section adds a further layer of negative value judgements to the assessment. More specifically, for collectors of dolls and within academic scholarship, souvenir dolls are similarly often deemed to be inauthentic kitsch. As souvenirs and as dolls these are, therefore, doubly damned objects. As with the preceding review of literature relating to souvenirs, the following section first of all seeks to understand the differential treatment of these dolls compared to other types of collectable doll, namely, antique examples, and concludes by assessing approaches that can be utilised to provide a more insightful and balanced viewpoint, thereby demonstrating the importance of these doubly marginalised cultural texts.

In the world of doll collecting there is a hierarchy whereby “serious” collectors favour antique dolls, particularly those made from bisque, (Hedrick and Machette, 1997: 6) while souvenir dolls have been disparaged (Frame, 1980: 96; Fainges, 1995: 8).²⁷ Furthermore, they have been dismissed in landmark books about dolls. Max von Boehn’s influential work, *Dolls and Puppets* (1932) should not be understated in this respect and, importantly, it is the source from which numerous doll collecting books have acquired their information about those examples produced prior to the 20th century; indeed, as Juliette Peers points out, ‘his suppositions [have] codified into fact’ (2004: 17). It is argued here that von Boehn’s work has a crucial impact in the unequal treatment of souvenir dolls. For example, his description of a collection of ‘several hundred dolls from all countries’

²⁷ One could add that Barbie dolls also inspire the enthusiasm of serious collectors, however, Barbies are not usually included in the collector books assessed in this thesis.

displayed in the ethnographical section of the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro in Paris is as follows: 'Such costume dolls have no more significance for scientific study of the folk or for the history of culture than a modern historical novel has for the study of history – that is to say, none at all' (1932: 201). It is noteworthy, therefore, that Peers, in her own important text on fashion dolls, is unequivocal in her exclusion of national costume dolls from her analysis and refers to von Boehn as an authoritative figure to perhaps justify this exclusion: 'Max von Boehn delivered harsh judgment on those unfortunate, often kitsch, national dolls' (2004: 10).

An assessment of doll collecting books

Although ethnographic dolls have been the subject of research, the most extensive source of information about dolls seems to be books written by doll collectors for their peers.²⁸ As books written for a non-academic audience, they offer an untapped scholarly resource and also reveal value judgements that privilege certain types of doll.²⁹ The following section demonstrates this tendency by assessing two very different approaches to doll collecting; that of antique, as opposed to souvenir, dolls. Furthermore, a comparison of the two approaches helps to reveal the reasons why they are judged to have unequal value.

Collector books for different types of doll are organised in contrasting ways. Those that focus on antique examples have rather standardised formats which tend to open with a chapter on dolls from antiquity (Egypt, Greece and the Roman Empire) followed by a chapter on "primitive" or "folk" dolls, which covers ethnographic examples from around the world. The subsequent chapters chart the development of primarily European dolls according to the material from which their

²⁸ Examples of research about ethnographic dolls are as follows. For African fertility dolls see; Hechter-Schul (1966), Roy (1981), Jolles (1994), Cameron (1997) and Wolff (2004). For English corn dollies see; Hillier (1968: 30-31), Eaton (1975: 168-169), Kandert (1992: 165), Herdman (1998: 18). For *Katsina* dolls see the Introduction of this thesis.

²⁹ It should be noted that a significant amount of doll collecting literature is written in German and is not included in this review.

heads are made.³⁰ Thus wood is often followed by wax and then composition, china, bisque, rubber, metal, celluloid and finally, plastic, the advent of which often marks the end of these books' period of interest (Fawcett, 1964; Hillier, 1968; Fraser, 1973; King, 1977; Goodfellow, 1993). In this way, the material specificities of dolls' bodies, the failings of certain materials over time and the subsequent innovations that introduced new materials are clearly highlighted. Dolls made for sale by non-Western indigenous people may feature sporadically throughout these chapters depending on whether the author has categorised them as primitive/folk dolls or according to their materiality. Whilst being organised by material, within these categories the books also focus on notable dollmakers and the dolls they produced, such as the Bébé Jumeau – an expensive bisque-headed Parisian fashion doll of the late 19th century.³¹

The selection of books about souvenir dolls is small compared to those relating to antique examples. An important source for collectors is Marjory Fainges's, *The Encyclopedia of Regional Dolls of the World* (1995) and in the introduction to her book she adds nuance to the term "souvenir doll" by separating this category into its different elements, as follows:

- Folk dolls: are '[o]ften a very crude rendition of what the western world looks upon as a doll [...]. They are usually made from materials on hand, and are found in Africa and some of the other underdeveloped regions of the world' (1995: 8).
- Ethnic dolls: are 'actually made and dressed in the region portrayed by the doll and its clothes' (1995: 8).

³⁰ This focus is because Europe and subsequently the US have always been the biggest commercial doll producers aside from Japan. However, the majority of Japanese dolls were produced for their domestic market.

³¹ Also see; White (1962: 192-194), Fawcett (1964: 102-122), Hillier (1968: 163-174), Fraser (1973: 58-60), Eaton (1975: 55-57), Goodfellow (1993: 58-59) and Peers (2004; 2015) on Bébé Jumeau and French fashion dolls more generally of this era.

- Regional dolls, Fainges's preferred term: are 'dressed in regional costume [that] depicts clothing worn by people belonging to an area rather than a particular country' (1995: 7).
- National dolls: are 'dressed in a particular country to portray the accepted local national or regional costumes, using dolls manufactured elsewhere' (1995: 8).
- International dolls: 'are manufactured and dressed by a firm to portray a foreign country's costume' (1995: 8).

Although the uncritical use of some terminology here reflects the non-academic status of the book, the main point to take from this typology is a concern to distinguish between different types of souvenir doll. Moreover, the subtext seems to be that the typology is a continuum with, at one end, folk dolls that meet the description of Lovett's emergent dolls and imply a pure expression of the human drive to make dolls from whatever materials are to hand; what could be viewed as "authentic" dolls. On the other end of the continuum are mass-produced international dolls, the inference being that there is no input from the people represented by them; what could be viewed as "inauthentic" dolls. In sum, Fainges's typology highlights that many of these terms are used as synonyms (particularly "national costume doll" and "souvenir doll") when, in fact, "souvenir doll" is a generic term that indiscriminately merges together a multitude of dolls that have been produced in markedly different social, political and historical contexts.

This range is often clear when comparing dolls with cloth and plastic bodies. Linda Edward argues that since cloth dolls are often self-representations, they often offer very accurate depictions of the regional or ethnic dress of their makers' locale (1997: 48).³² Consequently, for historians, these miniaturised three-dimensional

³² Edward argues that dolls made of composition, bisque, vinyl and plastic have been, and continue to be, produced in countries other than those represented while cloth dolls are often self-representations that are produced in the countries in which they are sold and purchased (1997: 48). This demarcation is due to the lack of access to the equipment and source materials required to produce these former type of doll bodies.

representations can be a crucially important permanent record of disappearing life-sized versions (Frame, 1980: 96; McQuiston and McQuiston, 1995; Lenz, 2004). A notable example is an 18th-century male Eastern Cree doll that is almost unique as a surviving representation of this type of dress (Hedrick and Machette, 1997: 6). On the other hand, in one of the few academic assessments of souvenir dolls, Valda Blundell explores how countries such as the US and Canada have appropriated indigenous forms to use as national symbols in order to foster a national identity that is different both from ‘the mother country’ in Europe and other neighbouring colonised countries (1994: 252).³³ She focuses on cheap, mass-produced Canadian souvenirs, such as dolls and culturally specific objects, that represent the country’s indigenous people yet are not made by them. By doing so, she demonstrates the ‘signifying practices’ (1994: 251) used by manufacturers, with the tacit approval of the Canadian state, such as labelling and marketing techniques, which enable these “indigenous” objects to be identified as ‘signs of Canada’ (1994: 255). These examples would clearly sit on the “inauthentic” end of Fainges’s continuum and the cultural appropriation involved with their production and marketing underlines the importance of distinguishing between different types of souvenir doll.

Unlike books about antique dolls, books about souvenir dolls are generally organised by the country or region they represent rather than their materiality. For example, *Dolls of the United Nations* (1965) by Fearn Brown features her family’s collection of dolls that represented each of the 114 countries that were members of the United Nations in 1965. The dolls are listed in alphabetical order according to the country they represent and each entry comprises a brief description of the country and the relevant doll together with its photograph. Significantly, the collection incorporates all of the types of doll in Fainges’s typology, as does Fainges’s own *Encyclopedia of Regional Dolls* (1995), including antique and contemporary examples, made from materials ranging from mass-produced plastic bodies to one made from a corn cob.³⁴ This point, together with Brown’s admission in her book’s introduction that some specimens in the collection ‘are not necessarily

³³ Katz’s (2015) work on Israeli national dolls provides a further rare example.

³⁴ Frame (1980), Judd and Judd (1994; 1995; 1997) and Hedrick and Matchette (1997) have produced books on souvenir dolls that feature a similar mix of dolls that are also ordered by country.

fine examples of dolls of those countries, but we have been unable to replace them with better examples' (1965: 13), highlights that sometimes a key motivation for collecting these dolls is to find examples that represent as many countries as possible rather than a concern with their materiality or even their quality.

Clearly then, since this type of collecting is motivated by the representation of a country, locality or ethnicity, it can encompass dolls of divergent forms, materials and functions. Of relevance in this respect is Pierre Bourdieu's analysis of class and taste, as elaborated in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (2010) in which he seeks to understand the continuing reproduction of class hierarchies. Here, he argues that economic capital is dependent on the possession of 'cultural capital' that provides people with the skills to appreciate artistic value over functionality. This appreciation is provided by a good education and privileged upbringing, thereby demonstrating the connection between class position and taste in the arts. Similarly, within the doll collecting world, collecting antique bisque dolls can be viewed as a class statement; they are expensive, made of finely crafted materials, dressed in sumptuous clothing and carry identification marks known to experts. They are a connoisseur's doll. By contrast, the stereotypical image conjured up by the term "souvenir doll" is often a cheap, plastic, mass-produced national costume doll of little aesthetic value wearing a representation of dress of dubious accuracy. Indeed, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the term "souvenir" in itself carries all kinds of negative connotations relating to its association with inauthentic kitsch. However, collecting souvenir dolls blurs these boundaries since a collection may incorporate disparate dolls, including antique bisque examples, that may seem like an undiscerning jumble. As Bourdieu argues: 'The most intolerable thing for those who regard themselves as the possessors of legitimate culture is the sacrilegious reuniting of tastes which taste dictates shall be separated' (2010: 49). Souvenir doll collections, therefore, disrupt the clear delineation between high taste and low taste in a way that is an anathema to the connoisseur.

In many ways, the unequal perception of the connoisseur's antique doll, the ethnographically significant doll and the blatantly commercial, "inauthentic" souvenir doll reflects the hierarchical categories of the aesthetically valuable work

of art, the ethnographically valuable artefact and the overtly commercial “inauthentic” tourist art souvenir and offers a similar insight into the construction and maintenance of class boundaries based on those who are considered to have good taste and those who do not. The rest of this section aims to establish a theoretical framework that can provide a more effective assessment of souvenir dolls.

Redressing the balance: Dolls Studies

As souvenir dolls represent people of different nationalities, races and ethnicities, a crucial issue is how these identities are depicted. Whilst the dolls can be self-representations they can also be Western representations of Others. In addition, there are dolls that are unambiguously produced as a collection in order to represent people of different regions, ethnicities and races and are marketed to be collected on that basis, such as Mattel’s “Dolls of the World” series of Barbies. Discussions about these types of doll need to address the problematic, stereotypical representations of Others that they sometimes entail. While recognising the “hobby” status of collector books, it is still striking that these concerns are rarely acknowledged; in fact, John Axe, referring to dolls from collector ranges that are dressed in a ‘simplified and standardized version of the most typical folk costume’ (1977: 3), is a rare voice when he recognises that: ‘Doll makers are as guilty as the uninformed of perpetuation of some of these myths and stereotyped notions’ (1977: 3). It is to the surge of academic interest in the Barbie doll that one must turn in order to assess these.

In *Dolls Studies: the Many Meanings of Girls’ Toys and Play* (2015), the study of dolls has been formalised as a subject of academic enquiry. The editors describe its emergence in the following way: ‘The foundation of Dolls Studies dates to the end of the twentieth century when [...] scholars influenced by the Second Wave of feminism, the emergence of the “new” women’s history, and the increasing legitimacy of material culture methods, analyzed dolls as historical texts’ (Forman-Brunell and Whitney, 2015: ix) and note that it has drawn scholars from backgrounds in history, English, anthropology, Women’s studies, Black studies and American studies (2015: x). The ubiquity of Barbie dolls has played a role in

generating this interest and in this section there is a focus on two assessments of Barbie dolls in the “Dolls of the World” series in order to illuminate the issues associated with stereotypical representations that are beyond the remit of doll collecting books.³⁵

The first of these assessments is *Skin Trade* (1996) by Ann DuCille, in which she examines the connections between cultural commodification, race and gender in the US and argues that in relation to Mattel’s ‘ethnic’ Barbie dolls, race and ethnicity ‘have become precious commodities for both capitalism and the academy, [and] where race intersects with gender, class, and sex, its market value climbs even higher’ (1996: 2). As an ‘icon of idealized femininity’ with a famously large chest, tiny waist, long legs, long blonde hair and blue eyes, Barbie has been the object of criticism, particularly among feminists, while others by contrast point out that her single, independent status and wide range of professional roles have replaced previous norms such as housewives, nurses and secretaries (1996: 22-23). Yet, whilst seemingly forward thinking, her ‘essential femininity’ is always present in these professional roles (1996: 24). Dr. Barbie, for example, is not only provided with a white lab coat but also a pink stethoscope, short dress and high heels (1996: 24).

When race is combined with what DuCille refers to as the ‘already grossly stereotypical and fantastically female original’ Barbie doll it offers a significant lens through which to investigate the representation of race and gender (1996: 30-31). Mattel manufactured its first black doll called Barbie in 1980 by using existing Barbie body and face moulds (1996: 34). However, for the development of its “Shani” range of black Barbie dolls, released in the early 1990s, Mattel asked for input from black parents and childhood development specialists, resulting in a doll that has a broader nose, fuller lips and wider hips (1996: 45). Yet, significantly, because market research shows that long straight, ‘combable’ hair is indispensable to the commercial success of Barbie dolls, Mattel drew the line at giving Shani shorter hair, thereby demonstrating its selectivity in the deployment of stereotypical

³⁵ For other studies relating to Barbie see; Rand (1995), Rogers (1999), Chin (1999), Schwarz (2005) and Whitney (2015).

features in its ethnic dolls depending on those deemed most potentially profitable (1996: 50-51). In any case, despite Mattel's efforts to adequately represent difference, of overarching importance is that the term 'Barbie doll' refers to the standard, white, blonde-haired, blue-eyed Barbie. Thus, black Barbies require their 'black' modifier since they are the "but also" version, which, as DuCille points out, rather mirrors black people's position in US society (1996: 47).³⁶

The "Dolls of the World" series of Barbies also highlights Mattel's attempts to 'market ethnic diversity' by reproducing stereotypical representations of difference based on race and ethnicity (DuCille, 1996: 37).³⁷ In this instance, Mattel (and other companies) circumvents the prohibitive costs involved in truly representing the world's heterogeneity by producing difference within sameness (1996: 38). As DuCille argues, '[i]t thrives on heterogeneity that is cheaply reducible to its lowest common denominator – an assembly-line or off-the-rack difference that is actually sameness mass-produced in a variety of colors, flavors, fabrics, and other interchangeable options' (1996: 43). Consequently, while adding various tints to the same moulds as the white Barbie, Mattel's ethnic dolls still look similar to her (1996: 38). Significantly, the stark material and social inequalities experienced by the people that the dolls represent are levelled by this essential sameness (1996: 43). An example from the "Dolls of the World" range highlighted by DuCille is 'Black Jamaican Barbie', who wears the outfit of a maid or peasant, contrasted with 'white English Barbie' dressed in a riding habit which, obviously, is associated with the English upper class. As DuCille notes, displayed together in a collection it produces 'an odd equality' that ignores problematic references to the 'historical relation they bear to each other as colonized and colonizer' (1996: 44). Furthermore, each doll in the series comes in a box onto which is printed brief information about the culture, history and language of those who Barbie is

³⁶ See also Rogers (1999: 55) on the uneven representations of professions given to Barbie by Mattel. For example, writing in 1999, she notes that there is no Hispanic Doctor Barbie or Hispanic Teacher Barbie, yet there are Hispanic patients and students.

³⁷ According to Mattel, although suitable for girls, these dolls are aimed primarily at the adult collector market that form a notable portion of Barbie consumers (DuCille, 1996: 42). In 1999 there were at least 250,000 collectors of Barbie dolls, worldwide (Rogers, 1999: 5).

representing.³⁸ As DuCille argues, these ‘reductive ethnographies’ help to ‘make race and ethnicity collectors’ items’ (1996: 45).

Similarly, although a huge variety of souvenir dolls comprise Brown and Fainges’s collections, the examples in their books are, nevertheless, presented using standard formatting and standard-length, generally non-political descriptions that have a levelling effect and that can also be viewed as ‘reductive ethnographies’ whereby difference is reduced to decoration (DuCille, 1996: 42). However, of more concern is that educational institutions have also subscribed to this type of representation. In 2016, I bought a pair of second-hand Guatemalan dolls that had previously been a museum exhibit. I subsequently undertook an interview with a representative of the museum to discover more about the background of the dolls and this case study, detailed below, is informed by DuCille’s work.

Guatemalan dolls as museum “exhibits”

Until around 2010 this well-established museum in a city in the east of the US had an Education Loan Collection (ELC) comprising more than 15,000 objects that were available for loan specifically as educational tools to groups in the museum’s locale, such as teachers, librarians and scout leaders.³⁹ The collection gave borrowers the opportunity to physically engage with a wide range of objects including rocks and minerals, textiles and sculptures. Of key importance for this thesis is that the collection included approximately 900 dolls, some of which were clothed in indigenous or national dress.

The ELC ceased operation primarily because it did not generate enough income to warrant its running costs and was deaccessioned via the following method. The objects were initially offered to the Education Department within the museum to continue to function as teaching aids. If the Education Department rejected them they were offered to curatorial staff for transfer to the museum’s permanent

³⁸ Also see Rogers (1999: 54-55) for analysis of the text on these boxes generally and Schwarz (2005) for a comprehensive assessment of the commentaries on Native American Barbie boxes.

³⁹ This museum, which has not waived its right to anonymity, receives financial support from both the city and state authorities in which it is based. This interview was via email, see Appendix 1 for details.

collection. If they were rejected by the curators they were sent to an auction house and the sale proceeds were ploughed back into the museum's Education Department. Some of the dolls were sold at auction to eBay sellers for resale via eBay and from this site I subsequently bought several pairs at the beginning of 2016. Implied by this trajectory is that the dolls were deemed to be of insufficient educational, ethnographic and aesthetic value to be retained by the museum's Education Department or by curatorial staff. At the final assessment they were judged to be most valuable as a commodity and sold accordingly and, thus, disrupt the more usual scenario of items passing from individual collectors to museums.

Among those I bought, the Guatemalan pair wearing *traje* shown in Figure.10 is of major significance for this thesis for two reasons. The first of these is because of the information card that formed part of the pack that borrowers received and which was still with the dolls when I bought them. The details on the card are as follows:

GUATEMALA – Costume Figures

Guatemala is an Indian country whose people are descendants of the ancient Mayas. Although a number of factories have sprung up in recent years, most of the Indians still live in their villages just as they have for centuries, and wear their native dress. Anyone who has lived there a long time can tell where any Indian comes from, for each village has its own costume.

The information card continues with descriptions of key clothing items for females and states that all 'blouses' are woven and embroidered by hand. The card then focuses on men's clothing, claiming that: 'Quite a few men have adopted two-piece suits from the United States, but many wear the colourful village costumes', which are subsequently described in more detail. The information card ends with the following statement: 'The best place to see Guatemalan costumes is at the market. These are held on different days in different towns. The people enjoy them so much that they go miles on foot carrying whatever they have for sale'.

There are problematic aspects to this description that, judging by the reference to ‘two-piece suits’ rather than the ubiquitous jeans and t-shirts of recent decades, seems to date from perhaps as early as the 1940s, which may have been the accession date of the dolls.⁴⁰ Firstly, this anachronistic description presents the majority of Guatemala’s Maya population as wearing handmade ‘costumes’ and being bounded to small villages since time immemorial. This leaves an impression of a population completely disconnected from modern life, a life that seems to be symbolised by the smart, modern two-piece suits of the US. Secondly, the notion that people ‘enjoy’ carrying, presumably heavy, loads for miles on foot is an inappropriate, romanticised description of physical hardship and implies that this method of transporting goods is a choice rather than being born of poverty. According to the last date stamp on the lending ticket, this pair of dolls and its accompanying information was lent to an elementary school in 2008. Thus, a museum – an institution a layperson would accept as providing authoritative and accurate information – used these dolls as educational tools to disseminate simplistic, decontextualised conceptions of a Guatemalan indigenous identity to US borrowers until relatively recently.

The second reason for which these two dolls are important is that they were clearly made as part of a large set. The dolls have wooden faces and limbs and stuffed material bodies and I own a pair of Mexican dolls from the same museum – purchased from eBay – that are of identical construction (Figure 11). I have also seen further numerous examples from the ELC for sale through eBay that seem to have exactly the same bodies and that represent racial and ethnic groups from other Latin American countries. The implication here is that, while local people from the groups represented may have been given the dolls to dress, the dolls’ bodies and facial features are all of standardised appearance. DuCille’s research relating to the “Dolls of the World” series of Barbies, is informative in this context. That is, differences in race and ethnicity and the socio-economic contexts experienced by

⁴⁰ Unfortunately, although the museum was able to provide me with the computerised catalogue records for the dolls I bought, the date of accession is unknown, as are any details relating to their production. However, the auction house sold the museum’s collection of dolls with the understanding that they were produced prior to the 1940s (eBay listing and email correspondence with seller of 14 January 2016).

the people represented by the dolls are levelled by this essential sameness (1996: 43). Furthermore, a similar levelling of difference is achieved by the ‘reductive ethnographies’ noted by DuCille (1996: 45), whereby the dolls are presented with a standardised, brief, apolitical summary of the culture and history of the represented people, thereby simplifying and homogenising profound differences and leading to the dissemination of a generic American indigenous identity.⁴¹

Indigenous Barbies and their babies

Erich Fox Tree’s (2015) assessment of indigenous Barbies from the Americas adds a further layer of issues. Mattel’s incentive to create the “Shani” range was partly to maximise its profits among black consumers and their concern to get it right is evident in their referral to black parents and childcare specialists. Native American Barbies, by contrast, are not particularly produced for indigenous children in the US as evident, firstly, from their placement within collector series, aimed more at adults (2015: 231) and, secondly, because Native American girls as consumers form a group too small, geographically fragmented and poor to be an important market (2015: 230). Furthermore, as the dolls are dressed in buckskins and feathers there does not seem to have been any attempt to counter stereotypical representations of Native Americans (2015: 234). Conversely, they represent, in essence, exotic Others produced for consumption by non-Native Americans. Added to this is a further problem. Fox Tree emphasises that, despite the availability of Barbie wedding dresses, the signature white Barbie has always been presented by Mattel as being single and childless; “baby” figures in the Barbie range are those specifically identified as being the children of her friends and family. It is noteworthy, therefore, that in the 1990s without any explanation Mattel released three Barbies presented with their own babies: “Peruvian Barbie” from the “Dolls of the World” collection, and the first and second edition of “American Indian” doll from the “American Stories” range.⁴² Fox Tree’s assessment focuses on the latter

⁴¹ I have seen two further ELC information cards that provide similar ‘reductive ethnographies’ relating to dolls representing indigenous people from Ecuador and Chile.

⁴² Of more than 3,500 Barbie models produced since her inception in 1959, these are only three “Barbies with babies” in wide circulation. The only other two examples were also Native American and produced in very limited numbers for distribution at a Barbie doll conference in 1983 (Fox Tree, 2015: 236).

two dolls which are part of a set of eight Barbies. The other six dolls in the collection are white and are dressed in the colonial or 19th-century dress of the US. While these white dolls are accompanied with occupational paraphernalia, such as baskets of corn (Pilgrim Barbie) and a milk container (Pioneer Barbie), the occupational accoutrement for the American Indian Barbies is a baby in a *papoose* (2015: 236). Essentially, as Fox Tree argues, this stereotypical image taps into, and reproduces, naturalised representations of indigenous women who not only are frozen in the past and bound by tradition but consist wholly of their ‘indigenous’ and ‘mother’ identity (2015: 240-245). They are, therefore, wholly excluded from the world of material pleasures and conspicuous consumption inhabited by the carefree, independent, career-orientated signature Barbie. Whilst other manufacturers may depict indigenous women with babies and, indeed, indigenous artisans may represent themselves in this manner, of central importance in this case is that the presence of the babies completely overturns the image portrayed by the white signature Barbie for whom the only forbidden role, apart from wife, is that of motherhood (2015: 236). In sum, as Fox Tree argues, the way in which gender is linked to motherhood, which is then used as a key marker of indigeneity, is indicative of wider socio-political processes that construct ‘power asymmetries between those representing and those represented, between colonizer and colonized, and between producers of popular cultural images and Native peoples’ (2015: 251).

Whilst scholarship relating to Barbie is essential in critiquing problematic representations of gender, race and ethnicity, it is important to note that, with the dolls they make indigenous dollmakers may also perpetuate problematic representations. Graburn notes that producers modify objects in order to conform to consumers’ ‘preconceptions of what is typical and appropriate’ (1976: 16). He argues that modifications can take two forms. The first of these is a requirement for the object, in this case a doll, to be understandable for someone who is unfamiliar with the producer’s culture. In other words, it needs to operate as ‘an obvious visual cross-cultural code’ (1976: 17). There is, consequently, a ‘reduction in semantic level of traditional forms [and] expansion of neo-traditional secular motifs’ (Ben-Amos quoted in Graburn, 1976: 17). Alternatively stated, it needs to appeal to the notion of difference within sameness to be commercially viable. By

contrast, the second tendency is to tap into tourists' preconceptions of the 'grotesqueness or exoticism' of the 'untamed' aura of indigenous people (1976: 18). Graburn, therefore, argues that key markers of race and ethnicity for tourists, such as 'black skin, hunting prowess [and] traditional occupations' can become distorted or exaggerated in souvenir production (1976: 19). In short, artisans may begin to produce dolls that meet tourists' expectations of an "authentic" representation of an indigenous person and, in time, this may become the dominant representation (1976: 17-19; 32).

As miniature representations of people from around the world, dolls made for sale that are clothed in national, regional or ethnic dress are a crucially important lens through which to study the representation and reproduction of identity categories such as gender, ethnicity, race, nationality and, as argued above, class. However, until the advent of Dolls Studies, these valuable cultural texts had only received negligible academic assessment. As an overarching category, "souvenir dolls" can encompass a multitude of markedly different examples, including those created as deeply felt self-expressions of indigenous identity and those that portray the most damaging of stereotypes. It is vital, therefore, to assess individual examples in order to demonstrate how they represent different identity categories. Here, the insights provided by the interdisciplinary scholarship that marks Dolls Studies are essential. By applying these insights, gained primarily from assessments of mass-produced dolls, to an analysis of dolls handmade by indigenous people for the tourist market, this thesis seeks to widen the scope of this field of inquiry. Furthermore, this research aims to incorporate the material analysis that is a major aspect of ethnographic approaches to dolls, as noted in the Introduction and as recognised in doll collecting books. The final part of this chapter establishes an overarching analytical framework through which to incorporate these insights. But first of all, missing from this chapter thus far is an evaluation of different approaches to identities. And since the main aim of this thesis is a consideration of the role of Maya dolls in the construction and expression of the identities both of their producers and consumers, this complex and contested term is discussed in the following section.

Identities and Material Culture: Theories and Approaches

Approaches to identities

Whether on a personal level (an individual's unique characteristics) or a social level (the affiliations shared by individuals) the current preoccupation with the conception and expression of identities reflects the point that they are no longer deemed to be unproblematic; they cannot be regarded as taken-for-granted as they once were. The economic, political and social changes heralded by the global shift to neo-liberalism have eroded traditional Western identities (Hobsbawm, 1996; Woodward, 1997b). On a personal or local level such changes have led, for example, to a move from heavy industry to service sector work and a concomitant shift from unionised, stable work to uncertain employment opportunities and, in turn, this has led to the perceived breakdown of communities and the undermining of traditional gender roles linked to the ideal of the nuclear family. Thus, identities, which were previously stable and class-based, have been reformulated to reflect numerous sources such as sexuality, ethnicity, lifestyle choices and alternative gender roles. The consequent potential for individuals to experience 'contradictory fragmented identities' has led to suggestions that there has been, since the late 1980s and early 1990s, a 'crisis of identity' (Woodward, 1997a: 1). On a wider scale, the increase in the reach and ease of contemporary global relations has allowed greater numbers of international migrants to maintain close links with their country of origin, which can lead to the assertion of ethnic identities for migrants who are marginalised in their host nation and, in parallel, the assertion of the national identity of the dominant, host population (Woodward, 1997b: 17). Thus, the increasing spread of people on a global level fosters identities which are, as Kathryn Woodward notes, 'shaped and located in and by different places' which can cause conflict within and between individuals and social groups (1997b: 17). In sum, as Woodward further argues, 'this is a historical period characterized by the break-up of what are reconstructed as old certainties and the production of new positionalities' (1997b: 18). In order to discuss identities in this changing context, the first part of this section provides an analysis of theoretical approaches to identity and then refers to arguments relating to contemporary Maya identities in Guatemala in order to demonstrate how these theoretical approaches operate in practice.

Section two considers why and how some identities are designated as Other, with a focus on the Maya of Guatemala.

Relational identities

Identities are often expressed through a shared set of meanings that mark difference from, or affiliation with, a group, leading Woodward to emphasise that identity is a relational notion, in that it is ‘most clearly defined by difference’; namely, ‘by what it is not’ (1997a: 2). Sameness and difference are indicated in two ways. The first way is through representational systems that use symbols and language to classify social life and by positioning themselves within these systems individuals form their identity (1997b: 14). Closely related to this process is the concept of ‘identification’ whereby individuals identify with others who they consider to be similar (1997b: 15). These classifications are often expressed as binary oppositions such as male/female, white/black and British/non-British (1997a: 2). However, rather than being neutral distinctions these categories entail a dominant and subordinate position. Thus, a more accurate way of expressing the power relations inherent in these binaries is **male**/female, **white**/black, **British**/non-British (Hall, 1997: 235). Although these stark distinctions are simplistic and reductionist since, as Stuart Hall notes utilising the example of black and white photography, ‘there is actually no pure “black” or “white”, only varying shades of grey’, it is clear that they lay the foundation for identities to be construed as a dominant “us” as opposed to a marginalised “them” (1997: 235). The second way that sameness and difference is indicated is through the social exclusion or inclusion of particular groups of people (Woodward, 1997b: 9). In other words, as Woodward states, it is the outcome of ‘how these classifications of difference are “lived out” in social relations’ in terms of the inequalities that social exclusion brings (1997b: 12).

Essentialist and social constructionist approaches to identities

Whilst a key feature of identities is this relational aspect, academic assessments often approach them as being either essential or constructed. Identities perceived as essential and fixed aspects of an individual can be objectively defined. For instance, race, gender and sexuality are often held to be biologically or genetically

determined.⁴³ Similarly, a group identity may be asserted on the grounds of a shared history or ‘kinship’ (Woodward, 1997a: 3). These essential, primordial views of identities are refuted by social constructionist arguments that view identities as the outcome of (often political) choices. Benedict Anderson’s work is an example of this viewpoint as it reveals the political processes behind the construction of a sense of fraternity amongst strangers rooted in the abstract notion of ‘nation’ – which he defines as ‘an imagined political community’ – and, in doing so, he highlights that individuals’ identification with the nation is constructed rather than a primordial feature of society (2006: 6). Anderson’s notion of “imagined communities”, together with the “invented traditions”, explored in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s (1983) edited collection, whereby traditions have been invented for the purpose of constructing national identities, demonstrate the significance of anti-essentialist approaches to identity. In turn, the limitations of these anti-essentialist approaches have been highlighted by Paul Gilroy’s (1997) focus on diaspora identities. By underlining contemporary trends of large-scale, cross-border migration, together with the speed and availability of electronic communications, Gilroy problematises the importance of identities bound by essential notions of nationality, culture, ethnicity or race and argues instead that identities are ‘trans-national’, adaptable and hybridised (1997: 323).⁴⁴ While it is crucial to avoid extreme social constructionism – whereby the body through which identities are expressed is often reduced to the status of a site waiting to be constructed or as Chris Shilling puts it: ‘The body is present as a topic of discussion, but absent as a material object of analysis’ – approaches that recognise identities as constructed rather than essential more adequately reflect their complexity (1997: 79).⁴⁵

These essential and socially constructed views are entangled with the emergence of identity politics whereby identity has become of key significance for political organisation. The pan-Maya movement in Guatemala is a particularly clear demonstration of this trend. Although comprising the majority of the Guatemalan population, the Maya have been systematically subordinated by the non-indigenous

⁴³ For further discussions see; Segal (1997), Woodward (1997c) and Wade (2010).

⁴⁴ See also, the work of Bhabha who argues for ‘a more transnational and translational sense of the hybridity of imagined communities’ (1994: 5).

⁴⁵ Shilling refers here to Foucauldian views – that highlight the power of discourse to construct individuals – that focus on the mind rather than the body as the site of construction (1997: 79).

ladinos who form the dominant political class (Vogt, 2015: 33). Since the conclusion of the peace treaty in 1996 following the end of the civil war (which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter), there has been a state-sponsored drive to either assimilate the Maya into *ladino* society, thereby absorbing their Mayanness, (Fischer, 1999: 475; Hale, 1999a: 301) or deny the authenticity of a Maya identity by arguing that Maya are, in fact, *ladinos* (Vogt, 2015: 41). This drive has also had non-state support perhaps most notably highlighted by the views of Mario Roberto Morales, a *ladino* scholar and fierce critic of pan-Mayanism, who argues that Maya culture is a notion of pure construction and, therefore, is undeserving of any special treatment (Warren, 1998: 41-47; Fischer, 1999: 474-476).⁴⁶ On the other hand, the pan-Maya movement has appealed to an essential identity based on elements of Maya culture that predate the arrival of the Spanish and are still currently in evidence in defiance of colonial and *ladino* attempts to suppress them; such as Mayan languages, Maya community leadership norms and cosmological texts which highlight Maya perceptions of history and time, such as the *Popol Vuh*, (Watanabe, 1995: 37; Warren, 1998: 39). As John M. Watanabe points out, because the Maya have never been ‘a single, self-defined people or nation’ the promotion of these cultural elements is crucial for the formation of a pan-Maya identity rooted in expressions of solidarity and the shared experiences of marginalisation and that also embraces a multitude of languages and allegiances to local communities (1995: 36).⁴⁷ In fact, he regards this as a clear case of ‘strategic essentialism’ (1995: 37); a term associated with post-colonial critic Gayatri Spivak which she defines as ‘a *strategic* use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest’ (1996: 214 *emphasis in original*). Although Spivak has since ‘given up’ on the term since she claims it has become ‘a union ticket for essentialism’ (Danius, Jonsson and Spivak, 1993: 35) assertions of identity for political ends remain a salient idea in discussions relating to the pan-Maya movement.

⁴⁶ See Warren (1998: 41-47) and Fischer (1999: 474-476) for details of the debate between Morales and Estuardo Zapeta, a Maya, scholar, pan-Maya activist and government official.

⁴⁷ Fischer is more circumspect in stating that it is not known if there was ‘a concept of pan-Mayan unity in pre-Columbian times’ (1999: 487).

There has been a notable amount of debate amongst anthropologists about the conception of Maya identities as constructed versus essential. In some cases, this has been prompted by the ease in which identities conceived as constructed can undermine the “strategic essentialism” practiced by the pan-Maya movement for political ends; a movement that many anthropologists support. For example, Edward F. Fischer – in an example of ‘anti-antiessentialism’ (1999: 474) – attempts to reconcile the essentialism of pan-Maya discourse with constructed notions of identity by arguing that while Maya culture can be viewed ‘as a historically continuous construction that adapts to changing circumstances’, it has to be rooted in a shared idea of Maya ‘cultural logic’ to be successful (1999: 488). His work has been criticised on several fronts, not least for the way in which his article pits essential and constructed approaches to identities in opposition to each other in order to attempt to reconcile them (Castañeda, 1999; Fabian, 1999; Hale, 1999b; Kapferer, 1999). As Charles Hale (1999b: 492) and Peter Hervick (2001: 356) argue, it is perhaps more useful to look beyond dualistic frameworks and the following section, therefore, provides a more nuanced approach to identities that can overcome these limitations.

Positional identities

In *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1990) Hall, like Gilroy, links diaspora identities with hybridity but in a more rooted sense. That is, he refers to the African diaspora of the Caribbean to demonstrate that cultural identity is a process ‘of “becoming” as well as of “being”’ (1990: 225). This view emphasises the fluid nature of identities in that they are ‘the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past’ (1990: 225). In Hall’s example, the past entails colonial ‘regimes of representation’ in which the African diaspora was constructed as Other and which also had the effect of the African diaspora regarding themselves in this same way (1990: 225). Identity, therefore, in Hall’s conception, is a ‘*positioning*’; an identification made, or position taken, at a particular point within a constructed historical discourse (1990: 226 *emphasis in original*). For black Caribbeans, identities are associated with two key elements; on the one hand is the shared past of removal from Africa and enslavement and, on the other hand, are the profound differences between people who were from

different geographical locations in Africa, who practised different religions and belonged to different linguistic groups. This duality of ‘similarity and difference’ continues to be of significance in the contemporary Caribbean; for example, it ‘positions Martiniquains and Jamaicans as *both* the same *and* different’ (1990: 227 *emphasis in original*). Of pivotal importance, Hall argues, is that these ‘difference[s] are continually repositioned in relation to different points of reference’ (1990: 227). Thus, a Western view may consider Martiniquains and Jamaicans to be more or less the same; namely, Caribbeans. Yet for a Martiniquain or a Jamaican these two nation states are marked by stark historical and cultural differences. As Hall points out, these different points of reference complicate oppositions such as those based on “past/present” and “them/us” because while in some contexts these binaries may hold, in other contexts they become ‘differential points along a sliding scale’ (1990: 228). In sum, the crucial significance of Hall’s conception of identity is that it is a series of ongoing positionings and never a completed project.

These repositionings often occur during social encounters when individuals have to represent themselves according to the norms of any given context. As Woodward argues, in many ways, ‘we are positioned – and we also position ourselves – according to the “fields” in which we are acting’ (1997b: 22). Yet the different facets of an individual’s identity are sometimes incompatible and require constant management and negotiation. As Woodward notes, not only may this lead to conflict with other people who may view identities such as “homosexual parent” as deviating from societal norms but it may also cause psychological conflict within the individual (1997b: 23). This conflict stems from the point that identity positions are not just related to rational choices, such as an allegiance to a social movement; it is an individual’s ‘sense of self’ – that is, their ‘subjectivity’ – that causes them to be drawn to particular identities and these can also be irrational choices (1997b: 39). In Freudian terms, this points to a conflict between the, sometimes irrational, motivations of an individual’s unconsciousness and their super-ego which is linked to the constraints of social forces (1997b: 44).

This section has argued that whilst the “essentialist versus social constructionist” dichotomy can reflect ethnic identities in Guatemala it can be a limited way of

exploring this subject. By contrast, fluid identities, frozen only in temporary positionings, is a more nuanced conceptualisation. However, it must be emphasised that these positional identities are, nevertheless, located within a capitalist context of unequal resources which limits the fluidity of some identities more than others (Rutherford, 1990: 24). Moreover, whilst individuals or groups have fluid, “positional” identities it does not change the fact that people may continue to hold a two-dimensional and fixed view of other people. Alternatively stated, there can be a disjuncture between how people identify themselves and how they are represented by other people, as discussed below.

Representations of Others

The idea of the Other can be traced back to the processes of European colonialism as explored by Edward Said in his ground-breaking study, *Orientalism*, originally published in 1978. Here, he demonstrates the invention by European colonisers of ‘the Orient’, which is defined as an essentialised and romanticised site populated by exotic, non-European Others. Not only did this construction help to define a European identity (as the opposite of the Other) but it was also vital for colonisation in the Near East since it justified the notion of European superiority and dominance over the “backward” Orient. A representational practice of central importance for the construction of this dualism is that of how the Orientalist writes about his subject or, as Said observes, ‘representing it or speaking on its behalf’ (2003: 20). Leading on from this, Les W. Field (2005) notes that because anthropologists have had an enduring interest in Maya people, anthropological notions of Maya identities have fed into how these identities are constructed. Therefore, although it is doubted that there has ever been a singular Maya nation, the notion of Maya identity and the designation of languages, *traje* and other forms of cultural production as “Maya”, have not only become standard terminology in academic research but also in tourism promotion. On the other hand, from my experience of Antigua and San Cristóbal, this usage of “Maya” does not extend to everyday interactions with locals, who self-identify as *indígenas* and are also referred to as such by *ladinos* and *mestizos*. This disjuncture, therefore, underlines the construction of a meta-narrative the subjects of which do not identify except when used strategically in

relation to, for example, the pan-Maya movement or tourism, as explored in Chapter Two.

A further representational practice of pivotal importance for the construction of the non-Other/Other dualism is the patronising, stereotypical representations of the Other as described by Hall. Perceived differences of ethnicity and race are of key significance here. Therefore, whilst difference is often expressed as binary oppositions, for Others with marked differences there is an additional level of oppositions: ‘good/bad, civilised/primitive, ugly/excessively attractive, repelling-because-different/compelling-because-strange-and-exotic’ (Hall, 1997: 229). As previously noted, Hall refers to the standardised representations of difference in any particular era as the “regime of representation” and he shows how the racialised binary oppositions above have operated through these regimes (1997: 242-249). These stereotypical representations of Others centre on these perceived characteristics and consider them to be innate, thereby reducing Others to their essence. In sum, by naturalising these perceived characteristics, regimes of representation also fix this difference.

Many scholarly works cite the binary Maya/*ladino* opposition on which each of these respective groups form their identity.⁴⁸ Watanabe (1995: 30) explains how stereotypes of *ladinos* – as the ‘Hispanicised progeny of the Spanish conquerors’ – and Maya stem from the earliest days of the Spanish conquest:

To Maya, Ladinos, whatever their status or background, are by nature imperious, lazy, untrustworthy, dangerous; to Ladinos, Maya, regardless of what Maya language they speak or the distinct local communities to which they belong, remain forever *indios* – brutish, uncivilised, fit only to toil and obey (1995: 30).

Although *ladinos* as well as Maya are subject to stereotyping in this quotation, the dominant regime of representation of any era of post-conquest Guatemala privileges negative views of Maya. While everyday relations between *ladinos* and

⁴⁸ For example, see; Watanabe (1995), Nelson (2001: 326-327) and Vogt (2015: 33).

Maya are not as unambiguous, these stereotypical representations have a profound influence on Guatemalan life. For instance, a significant aspect of *ladinos*' perceptions of Maya is the unfounded fear of an imminent Maya uprising. The "insurrectionary Indian" – the vengeful, backward Indian capable of collective rebellion – is an image explored at length by Charles Hale (2006) who argues that it is always present just beneath the surface of Guatemalan social relations and it comes to the fore when *ladinos* feel that the assumed link between *ladino* culture and national culture is under threat.

By the mid-1990s, Guatemalan Maya intellectuals and activists started to try and reclaim their identity narratives from anthropologists and, furthermore, Watanabe notes that there have been 'Maya challenges to anthropology as neocolonialist expropriation of their heritage' (1995: 40). While power imbalances are intrinsic to anthropology since, as Watanabe states, 'anthropologists write authoritatively about cultural otherness' addressing this imbalance is perhaps hindered by scholarly judgements of whether examples of Maya strategic essentialism are legitimate and, therefore, defensible (1995: 28). As Peter Wade points out, these decisions can have 'patronising overtones' since designations of "good" and "bad" essentialisms are based on the judgement of academics rather than pan-Maya activists (2010: 158).⁴⁹

In line with Hall, in this thesis identities, rather than being fixed, will be considered to be positional; an ongoing process, punctuated with 'arbitrary stop[s]' or "positionings" (1990: 230). However, as Kay Warren argues, '[d]ue to powerful economic, cultural, and political constraints on individual and collective action, identity formation is not a free market of personal options for self-definition' (1998: 72). The collective identity "Maya" perhaps can be viewed as an outcome of representational practices of any number of actors such as: the state (first, colonialism, then state-sponsored racism and latterly, post-war nation building), anthropologists and other scholars, the tourism industry and tourists, the pan-Maya movement and *ladinos*. (It should also be borne in mind that these groups are not

⁴⁹ See also, Hale (1999b: 492).

monolithic structures and, therefore, also involve differently construed notions of a Maya identity.) In sum, while individuals may conceive of themselves in terms of multiple identities linked to, for example, race, ethnicity, familial ties, occupations, religion, gender, nationality and educational achievement, other actors may construct and impose identities for different ends which, in turn, may become the salient identity linked to, and opposed by, that individual or group. Thus, identities are not only based on a series of ongoing positionings, but they are also based on complex, ongoing negotiations between those represented and those who represent.

Identities and objects

As the doll object plays the central role in this thesis, the final aim of this chapter is to bring to the fore different ways of assessing material culture. But, before evaluating these, Daniel Miller is a prominent proponent of the view that objects help to construct and express identities and his work is useful in explaining how this works in practice. Miller argues that objects are ‘peripheral to our vision and yet determinant of our behaviour and identity’ (2005: 5).⁵⁰ His standpoint stems from Bourdieu’s work which highlights the role of objects in conditioning individuals, particularly through the suitable behaviour required for the membership of specific social groups. This behaviour is fostered by what individuals learn from their involvement with everyday objects – such as the ways in which they are ordered and categorised – and, in turn, this reproduces social hierarchies (Bourdieu, 1977: 87-95). This perspective, Miller argues, constitutes a ‘theory of objects’ (2005: 7) central to which is the limited, colloquial usage of the term “material”; that is, ‘the most obvious and most mundane expression of what the term *material* might convey – artifacts’ (2005: 4 *emphasis in original*). By contrast, a more far-reaching theory of materiality, which locates material culture within an overarching idea of culture, is that of “objectification” (2005: 4). Although this notion stems from the work of Hegel, Miller usefully encapsulates the essence of its meaning when he notes that ‘we cannot know who we are, or become what we are, except by looking in a material mirror, which is the historical

⁵⁰ As the consumption of some material culture is needs based, it is not argued in this thesis that in every context objects have an equally significant role in the formation, expression and reproduction of identities.

world created by those who lived before us. This world confronts us as material culture and continues to evolve through us' (2005: 8). As such, Miller argues that there are 'no pre-objectified forms' because all things appear to individuals via a process of objectification whereby form is created (2005: 10). Miller, therefore, notes that because individuals use these forms in specific ways, subjects as well as objects are created through the process of objectification (2005: 38). More specifically, and of direct relevance to this thesis, it is the consumption of objects that allows the creation and expression of individual and collective identities since it entails the selection of objects that expresses difference from, or belonging to, social groups.⁵¹

The 'Social Life' approach to things

In his introduction to *The Social Life of Things* (1986), Arjun Appadurai focuses on the exchange of commodities in social life and suggests that rather than it being the case that things are exchanged because they are valuable it is instead the action of economic exchange that imbues them with value. By focusing on items that are exchanged rather than the processes of exchange *per se* Appadurai is able to reveal how the circulation of commodities is strategically managed, either by institutions or individuals, in a way that both creates value and also 'constitutes relations of privilege and social control' (1986: 57). Such strategies lead Appadurai to conclude that politics – which he defines broadly as the 'relations, assumptions, and contests pertaining to power' – creates the connection between exchange and value (1986: 57) and this point allows him to assert that 'commodities, like persons, have social lives' (1986: 3). While Appadurai agrees that commodities can be regarded as objects with economic value, he broadens this conception by arguing that all things

⁵¹ As objectification is a dialectical process whereby individuals 'both produce and are the products of these historical processes' (Miller, 2005: 9), an equal relationship between individuals and things is maintained (2005: 38). This equality addresses the ongoing 'problematic dualism' between subjects and objects (2005: 41). Latour (2005) and Gell (1998) are associated with applying notions of agency to things which blurs this dualism. However, while such philosophical engagement enlightens academic enquiry into materiality, it has limited utility when faced with anthropological ethnographies that are conducted among people who do distinguish between subjects and objects, as Miller notes (2005: 41). This thesis, therefore, follows Miller's lead by utilising the terms "objects" and "subjects" in line with their everyday meaning (2005: 45). Following the same rationale, the terms "things" and "objects" are used interchangeably, as in everyday usage, rather than following Brown (2001) and distinguishing between them.

have the potential to become commodities during their social lives whether they were produced for that purpose or not.⁵² Accordingly, he uses the term “commodity” to indicate ‘things that at a certain *phase* in their careers and in a particular *context*, meet the requirements of commodity candidacy’ (1986: 16). The ‘candidacy’ Appadurai refers to here are ‘the standards and criteria [...] that define the exchangeability of things in any particular social and historical context’ (1986: 14).

As Appadurai recognises, although a specific cultural context may define whether a thing meets the criteria of commodity candidacy, there are added complexities when exchanges are intercultural, in that they take place ‘across cultural boundaries’ or, alternatively, ‘intracultural’, whereby shared social understandings do not extend to a specific exchange situation (1986: 14).⁵³ This prompts him to use the term ‘*regimes of value*’ to recognise that exchanges may involve different levels of value depending on specific situations and specific commodities (1986: 4 *emphasis in original*). Furthermore, Appadurai notes the key role in these exchanges of knowledge, which can be related both to the production of a commodity, such as the requisite technical expertise, or to the consumption of the commodity. As the distance – in terms of time, space and cultural contexts – between the producer and the commodity increases, the knowledge relating to that commodity becomes increasingly ‘partial, contradictory, and differentiated’ (1986: 56). This widening knowledge gap is often bridged by middlemen and traders who have knowledge of the market and, in the West, it encourages notions such as authenticity and connoisseurship as indicators of social status among consumers, thereby forming ‘part of the political economy of taste’ (1986: 45). Since the production and consumption of Maya dolls often involve intercultural exchange Appadurai’s approach can help in identifying the circulation of knowledge about them and how different regimes of value are manifested in particular contexts. In sum, the value of Appadurai’s approach lies in its focus of circulating commodities

⁵² As this thesis follows Appadurai’s argument that all objects have the capacity to become commodities, the traditional opposition between commodities and gifts – the subject of much anthropological discussion – is not pursued here.

⁵³ Appadurai’s understanding of ‘culture’, ‘as a bounded and localized system of meanings’ is rather simplistic (1986: 15). See Thomas who criticises such bounded notions and instead, emphasises the entangled relations between peoples (1991: 3).

and the recognition that their commodity status is a fluid rather than fixed quality and, therefore, underlines that although ‘from a *theoretical* point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a *methodological* point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context’ (1986: 5 *emphasis in original*).

Cultural biographical approaches to things

Igor Kopytoff’s (1986) cultural biographical approach to things builds on Appadurai’s social life approach by understanding that objects have life histories of which commodity phases form only part. Utilising Kopytoff’s terminology, the shifting commodity status of a thing entails a circular process of ‘commoditization’, followed by ‘singularization’ (in other words, ‘decommoditization’) and subsequent ‘recommoditization’ (1986: 65). By ‘singularization’ Kopytoff refers to a process whereby in any given society certain things are defined as ‘singular’ and distinct markers of a particular culture and are either barred from being commoditised or are withdrawn from the commodity domain. This may be a collective endorsement based on cultural ideas or it may be a state policy enforced to protect state or elite interests. However, singularisation can also occur once an individual has acquired a commodity and, as a consequence, it is temporarily removed from economic circulation. These singularisations determined at the level of an individual are informal and reclassifications can be based on idiosyncratic decisions that may contradict collective and state-promoted categorisations. For example, many people would regard a car as a temporarily decommoditised commodity, as it usually will be recommoditised when it is traded in for a newer model. Yet, for another individual it could be an object of sentimental significance that they will never sell. Furthermore, notwithstanding this individual’s view of their singularised car, a second-hand car dealer would continue to conceive of it as a commodity, thereby highlighting that a single object can simultaneously be regarded as singular and a commodity according to different individuals’ viewpoints. Significantly, as Kopytoff points out, the more complex the society, the more chance there is for the following scenario:

publicly recognised commoditization operates side by side with innumerable schemes of valuation and singularization devised by individuals, social categories, and groups, and these schemes stand in unresolvable conflict with public commoditization as well as with one another (1986: 79).

This leads Kopytoff to argue that in complex societies individuals experience a significant amount of internal friction relating to designations of commoditisation and singularisation (1986: 82) and, furthermore, he notes a correlation in this respect between an individual's numerous categorisations and re-categorisations of particular objects, and an individual's multiple but often conflicting social identities (1986: 89). In sum, Kopytoff's cultural biographical approach considers an object 'as a culturally constructed entity, endowed with culturally specific meanings and classified and reclassified into culturally constituted categories'; it is, therefore, the object's cultural context that determines whether it is exchangeable (1986: 68). Tracing an object's cultural biography thus highlights that rather than embodying one permanent identity it can instead carry multiple meanings and identities that are foregrounded at different points in its life.

Objects and materials

Among the various arguments raised in this chapter, two key points have been discussed: firstly, the social construction of art categories and notions of authenticity and the consequences of this process for perceptions of tourist art souvenirs – more particularly, souvenir dolls – and, secondly, identities and how these are intertwined with objects. However, a weakness of these approaches lies in a tendency to allow the specificity of individual objects to become subsumed into a web of social relations to the extent that the object itself becomes marginalised. Tim Ingold's strident arguments oppose this tendency and draw attention to the lack of engagement in anthropological and archaeological scholarship both with source materials and how they are transformed during production processes. In fact, it leads him to question: 'What academic perversion leads us to speak not of *materials and their properties* but of *the meanings of objects*?' (2007a: 3 *emphasis in*

original).⁵⁴ Thus, in contrast to product-orientated approaches that focus on finished objects, Ingold proposes a process-orientated approach, noting that even in “finished” articles, ‘the materials are still there and continue to mingle and react as they have always done, forever threatening the things they comprise with dissolution or even “dematerialization”’ (2007a: 9). This acknowledgement is vital for the study of Maya dolls because the time invested in sourcing natural materials and the process through which they are transformed is a significant aspect of the dolls’ production, marketing and reception. Furthermore, it highlights a limitation of tracing an object’s biography purely through its temporal and spatial movement through social networks, as it recognises that source materials have a life story prior to their incorporation into an object and may continue to develop even though the object is subject to no further spatial movement.

Yet, as Christopher Tilley states, a problematic feature of Ingold’s argument is its dualism between the idea of materiality and the study of materials (2007a: 16). As Tilley notes, Ingold’s unwavering dedication to the study of materials does not sufficiently address the social context within which the material is embedded; in fact, the material is in danger of being completely decontextualised. It is crucial, therefore, that an over-emphasis on objects’ roles in social relations and as carriers of meanings is not corrected by reversing this approach, thereby perpetuating the same dichotomy. Instead, as Tilly states, ‘[t]he concept of materiality is one that needfully addresses the “social lives” of [materials] in relation to the social lives of persons’ and elucidates why particular materials, or bundles of materials that are fashioned into objects, become significant to particular individuals and social groups (2007: 17). It is perhaps clear that parallels can be drawn here with Janet Wolff’s approach to cultural production that acknowledges both its socially constituted nature and the importance of the aesthetic choices of the creator since it is the qualities of specific objects that allow individuals to construct an opinion about them. This thesis will, therefore, combine an assessment of the role of Maya dolls in identity formation and the social context underpinning their production and

⁵⁴ The sensory aspect of objects is a further omission from approaches that instead highlight their social context. See Howes’s (2005) edited collection, *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader* (2005) and Edwards *et al*’s edited volume, *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture* (2006), which are part of a body of work that addresses this omission.

circulation with an assessment of their source materials and the way these materials are transformed both by production processes and the creativity of the producer.

Conclusion

In sum, Kopytoff's cultural biography of things utilised in conjunction with Appadurai's focus on the circulation of objects in social life, alongside a comprehensive analysis of the source materials and production processes that form an object, is the useful departure point from which to fully analyse Maya dolls. There are two principal reasons for this. Firstly, investigating the life story of objects reveals the multitude of meanings, values and identities that can be attached to the same object in different spatial and temporal contexts. Therefore, using this general framework does not exclude the other approaches outlined throughout this chapter but rather it allows their incorporation. For example, if a Maya doll is consumed by an individual for the purposes of identity construction or alternatively it is acquired by a museum for public display, then the work of Lasusa and DuCille respectively offers valuable insights relating to these junctures of the doll's life story. The second useful aspect of a life story approach is the relationship between specific objects and the wider class of objects to which they belong. Indeed, Appadurai highlights the crucial distinction between the cultural biographies of objects and the 'social history of things' (1986: 37). That is to say, rather than the micro focus of cultural biographies, social history perspectives present a wider context since they assess the 'longer-term shifts (often in demand) and larger-scale dynamics that transcend the biographies of particular members of that class or type' (1986: 34). For instance, a specific Maya doll will have a particular biography; but the category of objects known as 'Maya dolls' will have a wider historical context that will include the impact of ethnic relations in Mexico and Guatemala and the reasons why indigenous people started to make dolls for the tourist market. The key point here is that, although distinct, these two approaches are also intertwined since biographies of objects are constrained by their position within established commodity patterns. However, small incremental developments in the cultural biographies of things can eventually influence the social history of things (1986: 36). Crucially, therefore, generally held meanings and accepted regimes of value will be revealed through a social history approach to exploring the trajectories of

types of objects, whereas personally held meanings and allocations of value will only be evident through a biographical assessment of specific examples. By extension, it seems plausible to suggest that the biography of a specific Maya doll may illuminate its role in the construction and expression of the multiple identities of the owner, whilst the social history of Maya dolls as a class of objects could reveal the construction and expression of the social identities associated with that individual. In sum, this seems to be a productive way of teasing out the complex negotiations at play for individuals when they use a specific object to express multiple, and often contradictory, personal and social identities. A final but equally important reason why both of these life story trajectories should be taken into account is that a single object's unique qualities are not fully revealed unless it is compared to others of an apparently similar type. Chapter Two addresses these larger-scale dynamics – the social, historical and political contexts – that have informed indigenous cultural production in Mexico and Guatemala and – by extension – have informed, and continue to inform, the production of Maya dolls.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MEXICAN AND GUATEMALAN CONTEXT

Since the Spanish invasion in the 16th century, the Maya population of present-day Mexico and Guatemala has been dominated politically, economically and socially, first by Spanish colonisers and, following independence, by the state and the non-indigenous elite. Even though this marginalisation continues, Maya cultural production is, nevertheless, utilised by the state: in Mexico's case, as part of a corpus of ethnically and regionally specific crafts that are reconfigured to represent a national identity and, in Guatemala's case, as the key symbol of national identity.⁵⁵ This chapter examines how *artesanías* have been used for this end with a particular focus on female Maya *traje*, the process of weaving on a backstrap loom and woven textiles.⁵⁶ However, an analysis of this topic first needs to discuss the historical relations between the Mexican and Guatemalan state and the ruling non-indigenous elite on the one hand and, on the other, the indigenous populations of these countries, since only by doing so can the contentious and contradictory character of these respective states' strategies be underlined.⁵⁷ This chapter also introduces the fieldwork sites in Mexico and Guatemala and, in the final section, discusses the methods by which this thesis aims to answer key research questions.

In the 19th century across Spanish America, independence leaders underlined the equality between indigenous and non-indigenous men and in doing so emphasised the divergence of the new republican states from their former Spanish governance; colonial racial categories were also discarded (Earle, 2007: 176-177).

⁵⁵ In Mexico, in 2005, indigenous people comprised approximately 10 percent of the population, see: http://www.cdi.gob.mx/cedulas/sintesis_resultados_2005.pdf (accessed 16 February 2020). In Guatemala, the census figures of 2018 show that Maya people comprise approximately 41 percent of the population, while *ladinos* comprise approximately 56 percent; see: <https://www.censopoblacion.gt/explorador> (accessed 27 December 2019). In addition to the 21 Maya groups in Guatemala there are 2 other indigenous groups; the Garifuna and the Xinca. However, this thesis focuses solely on Maya ethnic groups since they specifically feature in the promotion of tourism and a national identity.

⁵⁶ A backstrap loom comprises a collection of loose sticks held together by the warp threads, which run lengthways. Weaving with a backstrap loom entails the weaver kneeling on the ground or floor with one end of the loom strapped around their back and the other end tied to a tree or a support in a house. As it has no permanent parts, it is cheap to construct and portable since it can be rolled up.

⁵⁷ Because in Guatemala and Mexico, "indigenous" is not synonymous with "Maya", this thesis follows each source's usage to ensure against mistakenly applying generalisations to either category.

Yet, while legal definitions of citizenship were no longer couched in racial terms, elites doubted the capacity of indigenous men to understand the obligations of citizenship or conduct themselves as citizens (2007: 177). Associated with this negative view of indigenous people is the “Indian Problem”, which Rebecca Earle defines as the belief held by 19th-century elites: ‘that a large indigenous population weakened the state and impeded the development of national identity’ (2007: 163). This, she argues, was in part because contemporary indigenous people were viewed as being debased and uncivilised and, therefore, incapable of participation in the civic life of the post-independence nations of Spanish America.⁵⁸ It was believed that the acquisition of Spanish language skills and the adoption of, for example, a non-indigenous diet and dress forms would help to civilise the indigenous population; in other words, as Earle states, ‘that they ceased being Indians’ (2007: 173). While contemporary indigenous people were regarded in a negative light, the liberal elite in several Latin American countries, including Mexico and Guatemala, held that, by contrast, pre-Columbian indigenous people were civilised; a past which only the elite were able to value and appreciate (2007: 164).⁵⁹ As Earle explains, during the latter part of the 19th century there was a ‘generalized idea of “heritage” that allowed elites to view the preconquest epoch as part of the nation’s past at the same time as they insisted their own ancestry was fundamentally Iberian’ (2007: 183). In sum, she adds, ‘preconquest Indians were good to build nations with, but contemporary Indians were not’ (2007: 183): a distinction that still reverberates today, as discussed later in this chapter.

The Construction and Promotion of a Mexican National Identity

Moving into the 20th century and to Mexico more specifically, General Porfirio Díaz’s long presidency, which combined liberalism with a large dose of

⁵⁸ As Earle points out, “civilisation” is slippery term that, even though it was omnipresent in the 19th century, was hard to define (2007: 164). However, it can be regarded as a relational construct formed in opposition to Spanish America’s indigenous populations and their lifestyles (2007: 165).

⁵⁹ Some conservatives did not believe that the position of indigenous populations had declined following the conquest as they never held the view that pre-Columbian civilisations were civilised. They believed instead that the condition of indigenous people had deteriorated through ‘liberal misgovernance’, following independence (Earle, 2007: 166).

authoritarianism, was ended by revolution in 1911 (Beezley, 1987: 125).⁶⁰ At this time, it has been argued, Mexico was ‘less a nation than a geographical expression, a mosaic of regions and communities, introverted and jealous, ethnically and physically fragmented, and lacking common national sentiments’ (Knight quoted in Vaughan and Lewis, 2006: 7).⁶¹ These deep divisions persisted after 10 years of warfare, thereby prompting the emergent leaders of the period to attempt to foster a sense of Mexican national identity – *mexicanidad* – to unify this diverse population. A way of achieving this, that would also differentiate Mexico from other Latin American states, was to recognise the value of the country’s indigenous population. This political and cultural movement, that was driven by non-indigenous intellectuals, was referred to as *indigenismo*⁶² and by the mid-1920s it had become an important component of postrevolutionary⁶³ Mexican nationalism (Gutiérrez, 1999; López, 2002, 2006, 2010; Appelbaum *et al*, 2003; Alonso, 2004; Lewis, 2006; Vaughan and Lewis, 2006; Earle, 2007). Despite this re-evaluation of Mexico’s indigenous peoples, it was deemed that the key to unifying the population and thus securing the state’s future success as a more integrated, modern nation, lay in *mestizaje*. Indeed, as Earle notes, ‘by the mid 1930s the mestizo had been enthroned as the cultural icon of the Mexican Revolution [...]. Mestizos, the heirs to both European and indigenous culture, were the true Mexicans’ (2007: 205). José Vasconcelos was the prominent advocate of *mestizaje* as famously promoted in his 1925 essay *La raza cósmica*. However, as Rick López observes, Vasconcelos ‘endorsed indigenous culture *only* on the spiritual level, not in terms of grounded practices’ since alongside his celebration of race mixture was an expectation that the indigenous population would adapt to modernity and consequently would be integrated into the *mestizo* population both by becoming Spanish speakers and losing their “backward” cultural practices (2010: 134

⁶⁰ Porfirio Díaz’s presidency commenced in 1876 and was unbroken with the exception of a short break between 1881-1883 (Garner, 2011: 297).

⁶¹ Currently, 7 million Mexicans speak one of 60 indigenous languages, see: <http://www.coha.org/the-last-of-the-mayans-preserving-chiapas-indigenous-languages-in-the-21st-century/> (accessed 27 December 2019).

⁶² The discourses of *indigenismo* and *mestizaje* were not necessarily mutually exclusive because the essential aim for both was to transform the indigenous population into citizens through education, modernisation and integration (Appelbaum *et al*, 2003: 8).

⁶³ It is debateable at what date the revolution ended (Joseph and Nugent, 1994: 5). Therefore, as López notes, the term ‘postrevolutionary’ is more usefully defined a ‘historical moment’ describing ‘the sometimes-radical reformulation of pre-Revolutionary objectives’ rather than a judgement indicating the end of the revolution (2010: 6).

emphasis in original). Thus, when the Ministry of Education was created in 1921 with Vasconcelos as its first head, he implemented an integrationist educational policy that established schools throughout Mexico that inculcated students with ‘the Hispanic ideals’ of the Mexican elite and middle classes (2010: 134) and deemed that the language of instruction should be limited to Spanish, thereby furthering the problematic project of integrating the indigenous population into “mainstream” society (Lewis, 2006: 179-180).⁶⁴

In all, the Ministry promoted a national culture not only through education and the arts – including the large-scale murals that cover many public buildings in Mexico – but through music, crafts, history and, via archaeology and museums, the preservation of Mexico’s historical heritage. This promotion was extended to cinema and radio, newspapers, comic books and tourism in the 1930s, and to dance and television in the 1950s.⁶⁵ In sum, Mary Kay Vaughan notes that ‘[i]n the twentieth century, no other state in the Western Hemisphere invested as much in the creation and promotion of a national culture as the Mexican central government’ (2001: 471). The following sections focus on the role of *artesanías* within this drive. However, rather than providing an exhaustive survey of policies and numerous cultural institutions, examples that demonstrate key trends are highlighted.⁶⁶

***Artesanía* production and the Mexican national identity**

While there is a significant body of research that assesses Mexican *artesanías*, it does not tend to focus on their role in creating a national identity. This perhaps highlights the limitations of romantic approaches (whereby instinctive creative

⁶⁴ See Lewis (2006) for a good summary of integrationist education policies and Gutiérrez (1999) for a more exhaustive exploration. Knight (1994) provides a useful overview of state strategies that aimed to foster Mexico’s development into a modern nation and inculcate a sense of national identity and highlights that although there were continuities from the Porfirian regime, these took place under a significantly different postrevolutionary context.

⁶⁵ For examples of this extensive literature see; Hayes (2006), Hershfield (2006) and Rochford (2006) for a focus on the 1920s to 1950s and the following for a post 1940s focus, Fein (2001), Mraz (2001), Rubenstein (2001), Sargoza (2001), Schmidt (2001) and Zolov (2001). For research on visual culture that spans longer time periods, see Segre (2007) and Mraz (2009).

⁶⁶ In 1993 Mexico had more than 50 official agencies and institutions for the promotion of popular art (Kaplan, 1993: 114).

expressions of “the people” are regarded as ‘the true essence of the nation’) and positivist approaches (studies that, although empirically rigorous, decontextualise the object of study) to assessing popular culture that have dominated research on Latin American crafts (García Canclini, 1993: 22). Thus, although such research has provided detailed case studies of specific cultural forms, its limited focus, often centring on a specific locale, fails to contextualise cultural production within the wider social structure and consequently leads to accounts that do not adequately emphasise the power relationships present within cultural production and circulation (1993: 23; 1995: 151).

An exception to these two tendencies is López’s comprehensive and thoroughly researched monograph, *Crafting Mexico: Intellectuals, Artisans, and the State after the Revolution* (2010). From a historian’s viewpoint López assesses the nationalist drive by the state and the elite to incorporate previously derided features of indigenous and folk culture – in this case, *artesanías* – into the national culture in order to highlight Mexico’s distinctive and inclusive national character; a strategy he refers to as ‘ethnicizing the national identity’ (2010: 9). Nationalists, including artists and scholars such as Gerardo Murrillo (known as Doctor Atl), sought to redirect the aesthetic alignment of Mexico’s elite and middle classes away from Europe and towards Mexican popular art by mediating its production and promotion and, furthermore, they played a role in forming the state’s policies that would lead to the ‘ethnicization of Mexican identity’ (2010: 16). López’s central argument, however, is that the successful formation of a national identity was due not only to the nationalist project of the Mexican state but also the way in which ‘diverse cultural projects intersected with economic and political developments’ (2010: 7). He demonstrates this through a diachronic analysis focusing on the period from the 1920s to the 1970s which, firstly, charts how various cultural projects initiated by a diverse array of Mexican intellectuals, artists and transnational patrons were institutionalised by the state and, secondly, highlights friction between, on the one hand, intellectuals and, on the other hand, the state and the market. These two trends, which are examined below, reveal the complex relationships between the actors involved in the drive towards an ‘ethnicized nationalistic aesthetic’ (2010: 23).

Las Artes Populares en México was a hugely significant exhibition held in 1921 as part of the centennial celebrations and it was in this context that the importance of what was referred to as “popular art” was acknowledged by the state for the first time (García Canclini, 1993: 44).⁶⁷ This *artesanía* exhibition, officially opened by Álvaro Obregón, the president of Mexico, aimed to promote the folkloric creations of contemporary rural indigenous culture rather than that influenced by European or pre-Columbian aesthetics and, therefore, provides a stark contrast to the 1910 centennial celebrations organised under the Porfirio Díaz administration that only included the indigenous population as represented by images of the pre-Columbian past. Notably, the cultural expressions of *campesinos* and arts rooted in urban, *mestizo* and Spanish origins were also merged into this category, thereby revealing the struggle for intellectuals and state officials to try and define the contemporary indigenous Mexican (Lewis, 2006: 177; López, 2010: 68, 94). At the same time, however, López argues that the state and elite allowed ‘constant slippage and strategic ambiguity’ between the categorisations of ‘Indian, mestizo and *campesino*’ since this flexibility allowed them to apply different definitions of Indianness depending on which best served their interests in any given context (2010: 10). As López states, this point is significant for evaluating cultural policies in postrevolutionary Mexico because recognising the historical fluidity of these categories allows for the interrogation of how, and for what purpose, this slippage has been applied in order to construct ‘structures of hegemony’ (2010: 12).

Through Las Artes Populares en México the organisers, which included Doctor Atl, disseminated their view of popular art as ‘the ultimate expression of primordial *mexicanidad*’ (López, 2010: 76). With the exhibition they aimed to inspire the urban elite and middle classes to appreciate and consequently covet similar ‘markers of *mexicanidad*’ which would not only benefit the economic position of the producers but also create a shared understanding – a national unity – between the producers and consumers (2010: 79). In addition, by displaying popular art collected from all areas of the country they aimed to create a sense of a national aesthetic uniformity. The exhibition space was, therefore, organised according to

⁶⁷ López notes that contemporary ‘art historians, collectors, *indigenistas*, and nationalists’ still consider this exhibition to be one of the most significant in Mexican history (2010: 76).

category of *artesanía*, such as lacquerware, toys, weaving and leatherwork. Importantly, broadly speaking, this still influences the presentation of popular art in Mexico's state institutions as will be demonstrated later in this chapter (2010: 86). The exhibition also subsequently spawned Doctor Atl's *Las artes populares en México* (1922) a 448-page illustrated book, in which he encouraged a market for popular art whilst simultaneously denouncing its production solely for sale since the nationalist discourse promoted by the exhibition maintained that artisans, rather than producing commodities, produced their *artesanías* to meet their everyday requirements 'out of a native impulse toward artistic creation' (López, 2010: 85). In sum, as López argues, although the exhibition created a market for popular arts, this definition was delimited by the organisers' ideas of 'authentic *mexicanidad* and indigenusness', thus it denied any agency for artisans to 'define themselves, their art, or their destinies' (2010: 94).

The institutionalisation of the nation-building project

The diverse nation-building projects of intellectuals and artists that emerged in the 1920s were institutionalised in the 1930s by the newly formed Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR) which was created in 1929 and which would eventually become the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). This led, López argues, to friction between intellectuals, on the one hand, and the state and the market, on the other. Whilst this demarcation involves some generalisation, essentially, the former argued that market involvement in artisan production corrupted the authenticity of the *artesanías* produced whilst it was the impetus of the latter that *artesanía* output should be subject to market forces and economic development. For example, following the state's introduction in 1932 of a 90 percent export duty on *artesanías*, state officials advised *acaparadores* – the mediators who stood between the artisans and the state – that, rather than being borne by consumers, this cost should be met by lowering the payments made to artisans for their goods; thus, artisans would be forced to seek cheaper raw materials, cut production times by making simpler items and create new *artesanías* that were more "gaudy" in order to appeal to the tourist market (2010: 163). The rationalisation necessitated by such measures resulted in a spilt between the slowing market for expensive handicrafts and the expanding market for cheap crafts. However, as these simpler crafts lacked distinctive,

detailed features, they became the target of mass-produced copies by Chinese and Japanese firms that exported them to the US marked with ““Viva México” or “Hecho en México”” and sold them at a fraction of the price of Mexican-produced crafts (2010: 168). In response, the Cárdenas administration of 1934-1940 supported an unmitigated push to undercut the prices of these foreign imports, which was to be achieved by further reducing labour costs by the use of production lines, still cheaper materials and even lower income for the artisans (2010: 169). Thus, his administration promoted the expansion of the market for *artesanías* for economic ends and at the expense both of artisans’ standard of living and the protection of Mexico’s cultural heritage (2010: 162).

In the same period, a pivotal moment for Mexico’s indigenous *artesanías* came in 1940 when the first *indigenista* conference approved measures on ‘protecting Indian popular arts through national organizations’ (quoted in García Canclini, 1993: 44).⁶⁸ Consequently, when the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI) was established under the terms of the conference it led in 1951 to the establishment of the Museo Nacional de Artes e Industrias Populares (MNAIP) (López, 2010: 181). In contrast to the 1920s and 1930s when *artesanías* were viewed as facilitating an integrated nation, the MNAIP had the more mundane aim of managing – through collecting, researching and exhibiting – Mexico’s cultural patrimony (2010: 182). The state’s inconsistent policy is, therefore, highlighted whereby it sanctioned various cultural institutions whilst simultaneously supporting policies that aimed to increase the production of low-quality, cheap *artesanías* (2010: 185). Meanwhile, criticism gathered during the 1940s and 1950s from intellectuals who baulked at state policy both in terms of the low quality that now marked Mexico’s *artesanías* and because of the poorer standard of living for the artisans (2010: 177-179).

In 1960, influenced by the recommendations of INAH (Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia) and INI, the state sought at last to establish a congressional commission to help form a wide-ranging and consistent policy to recover the position of *artesanías* as cultural patrimony. This eventually led, after various

⁶⁸ García Canclini does not state the source of the quote but one assumes that it is the conference recommendations.

manifestations, to the establishment of the Fondo Nacional para el Fomento de las Artesanías (FONART) in 1974 under President Echeverría (López, 2010: 175). FONART did not initially limit its interest to *artesanía* production as it also engaged with the wider socio-economic context of the communities in which the artisans were based. Thus, schools, drinking water, university bursaries and, occasionally, roads were provided by FONART and in doing so encouraged support for the PRI at a time of increasing rural disquiet linked to a Marxist *guerrilla* insurgency (2010: 191-192). Also of crucial importance was that FONART officials dealt with artisans directly, without the mediation of *acaparadores*. With these politically opportunist strategies the Echeverría administration gained the loyalty of the artisans (2010: 192). Although these more far-reaching improvements to artisans' standard of living had ceased by the close of the 1970s, FONART is still the key way through which artisans are connected to the state. As well as offering financial advice and guidance on profitable craft techniques, of central importance is their chain of shops that provide an outlet for items produced by artisan cooperatives.⁶⁹ In sum, it took until the early 1970s for the state to establish what López regards as 'a suitable balance between capitalist interests and national patrimony, as well as between artisan agency and top-down nationalism' and the role of FONART within this negotiation was of pivotal importance (2010: 192).

López's diachronic analysis ends in the 1970s on this optimistic note but, since then, there have been at least three key trends that affect the more recent context in Mexico; increased funding for the arts from the private sector, the increase in the scale and intensity of transnational relations that weaken the cohesion of nation states and, finally, the state's recognition of its multicultural character. It is worth examining these three trends in greater detail. Firstly, by the end of the 1970s, and particularly since 1982 when Mexico experienced financial crisis, the shrinking of the state and the conversion to neo-liberal policies has resulted in a shift summarised by Néstor García Canclini as 'one type of hegemony – based on subordinating different classes to the nationalist unification of the state – [being]

⁶⁹ Details of these services are available on FONART's website: <https://www.gob.mx/fonart#acciones> (accessed 16 February 2020).

replaced by another, in which private companies appear as promoters of the culture of all sectors of society' (1995: 61). Most of MNAIP's collection, for example, was destroyed by a fire in 1988 and it did not re-open. However, the National Bank of Mexico – Banamex – which has been part of Citigroup since 2001, has helped support the establishment of the Museo de Arte Popular (MAP) which opened in 2006 and has helped replace MNAIP's role (López, 2010: 296). Secondly, with the notions of 'deterritorialization and reterritorialization' García Canclini also emphasises that the nation state itself is not as defined as it may once have seemed to be (1995: 228-229). These terms refer to the following two processes: 'the loss of the "natural" relation of culture to geographical and social territories and, at the same time, certain relative, partial territorial relocalizations of old and new symbolic productions' (1995: 229). In other words, the transnational movement of people, ideas and symbolic products blurs their association with any singular nation state and consequently problematises, for instance, the production of *artesanías* that are perceived to be "distinctly Mexican". Simultaneously, this context informs "hybrid" cultural production that is influenced by exposure to a multitude of diverse cultural forms, practices and symbols.

The third development affecting the recent context in Mexico is the emergence of indigenous movements in the 1970s that prompted a pivotal reformulation of *indigenismo*, from policies of 'Mexicanization to recognition of plurality' (Gutiérrez, 1999: 110).⁷⁰ This has been expressed not only by the Zapatista uprisings but by the state's implementation of a substantial raft of changes since the 1990s, including a revision in 2001 to Article 2 of the Mexican Constitution, that now 'recognizes and enforces the right of indigenous people and communities to self determination' (2005: n.p.n.).⁷¹ Thus, the state now promotes the revitalisation of indigenous languages and encourages other forms of multiethnicity. This

⁷⁰ The INI ceased to operate in 2012 and eventually was partly replaced by the Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas.

⁷¹ See: <http://historico.juridicas.unam.mx/infjur/leg/constmex/pdf/consting.pdf> (accessed 12 December 2015).

Other advances are: becoming a signatory to Convention 169 of the International Labor Organisation Convention (1990) and the UN declaration on the 'Rights of Indigenous Peoples' (2007) and the introduction of the *Ley General de Derechos Lingüísticos de los Pueblos Indígenas* (2003) which guarantees equality of all languages, see: http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/257_200618.pdf (accessed 27 December 2019).

development, however, should be regarded with caution. As Natividad Gutiérrez notes in relation to indigenous enterprises, whilst apparently encouraging indigenous cultural forms and practices, the state also seeks to limit the possibility of truly autonomous ‘indigenous cultural initiatives’ (1999: 134). This is achieved by the recruitment of state mediators to help “support”, and eventually dominate, these initiatives with what Gutiérrez describes as the ‘all-embracing corporatism that characterizes the exercise of power in Mexico and by the bureaucracy’s self-appointed roles as “protector” and “administrator” of the nation’s cultural heritage’ (1999: 136).

***Artesanías* and nation-building processes**

López situates his work in the body of research that investigates the strengthening of a nationalist aesthetic. Within this, García Canclini’s research is particularly enlightening since his analyses are excellent for clarifying the actual processes – the specific practices – through which craft objects have been used by the state and elite to help form a national identity, an aspect that is not extensively explored in López’s work. Briefly, in *Transforming Modernity: Popular Culture in Mexico* (1993) García Canclini demonstrates how in a capitalist system the cohesion of subordinate classes is ruptured by the dominant classes in order to reconfigure it in a way that reproduces their hegemony. For indigenous artisans, he explains, hegemony is maintained over them by rupturing the cohesion between the artisan and their communities as well as the items they create (1993: 55-68). Importantly for this thesis, these processes of fragmentation and reconfiguration overlap with the aim of the Mexican state to project a unified national identity. García Canclini notes, for instance, the process through which a craft object is transformed into a “Mexican handicraft” (1993: 65-66). More specifically, particular villages and towns are often associated with the production of a specific form of *artesanía* that is of a recognisable style, such as Olinalá lacquerware and Chamula textiles. However, once sent to cities and larger towns for sale these crafts become disassociated from the particular indigenous group that produced them and associated instead with the state within which the village lies; they become, for example, “crafts from Chiapas”. In turn, in major tourist centres such as Cancún these *artesanías*, displayed alongside items from around the country, lose their

association with a particular state and become, instead, “Mexican crafts” (1993: 65).

This reconfiguration is found not only in commercial business but also in state institutions. FONART stores and the gift shops at the MAP and Museo Nacional de Antropología (MNA) in Mexico City, for instance, provide scant or inconsistent information at best about the origins of their huge array of stock and there is no explanation of the objects’ cultural meaning for the communities where they are produced. The selection of dolls for sale at the Galería Reforma branch of FONART upon my visit there in June 2017 is a good illustration of this strategy. Those that I could identify included examples from: Zinacantán (labelled as ‘Zinacantán’), Ceboya (labelled as ‘*muñeca de carton*’) and Querétaro (labelled as ‘Otomí’) as well as Tehuanas from Tehuantepec and *china poblanas* from Puebla (both labelled as ‘*muñeca regional*’). These labels – that highlight place of origin, materiality, indigenous group and an undisclosed region, respectively – are confusing when taken as a whole and diminish the ethnic and local identities associated with the dolls. Overall, with their high-quality *artesanías* from around the country, the two FONART branches I visited exude an air of Mexican national identity at the expense of the country’s composite identities. Even away from these commercial contexts, as exhibits at the MAP, the identities associated with locally specific dolls – including a Chamula example – are erased and reconfigured to represent a Mexican identity. That is, while doll exhibits were individually labelled with the maker’s name where known and the place and state of origin, by contrast, the indigenous or ethnic group of the artisan was not stated.⁷² Therefore, in the display of popular art forms, ethnic and indigenous difference is reduced to the names of places and the states within which they lie. Clearly, once cultural production is reduced to state names the foundation is laid for constructing a Mexican national identity. As García Canclini argues, state-sponsored or state-controlled spaces that display or sell *artesanías* in this manner unify disparate culturally specific practices whilst retaining ‘the attraction of the exotic’ and, in doing so, ‘dilute [...] the specificity of each village or town, not into the common denominator of the ethnic and the Indian but into the (political) unity of the state –

⁷² This was the case upon my visit in June 2017.

Michoacán, Veracruz – and each state into the political unity of the nation’ (1993: 65). More accurately stated, this ‘dissolution of the ethnic into the national’ is, in fact, ‘a reduction of the ethnic to the typical’ (1993: 65). Alternatively put, it entails the homogenisation and ‘subordination of features peculiar to each community to a common *type*’ (1993: 66 *emphasis in original*). The *true* national culture, by contrast, which can entail conflicts and gross inequalities between the different groups it comprises, is hidden from visitors/consumers by this apolitical homogenisation.

García Canclini also assesses how museums decontextualise the *artesanías* of indigenous people from their practical and ceremonial use and reconfigure their meaning by presenting them in accordance with ‘the internal syntax of the museum’ (1993: 79). Of crucial significance here, is that the ‘internal syntax’ of state museums often involves the utilisation of indigenous objects for nation-building purposes. As García Canclini argues in *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (1995), the museum is the key institution in which patrimony ‘is kept and celebrated, where the semiotic regime with which hegemonic groups organized it is reproduced’ (1995: 115). He demonstrates how this is achieved at the MNA (1995: 120-132) through the curating practice of ‘*historical and anthropological ritualization*’ (1995: 118 *emphasis in original*). Of all Mexico’s national museums, the MNA is the one that best represents ‘Mexicanness’ and, in addition, it receives the most visitors, the majority of whom are Mexican (1995: 132). According to García Canclini, the key aim of the museum is to display Mexico’s ‘ethnic cultures as part of the modern project represented in the building of the nation’ (1995: 130). This aim is achieved in two ways of relevance for this thesis, and are as follows. Firstly, although the history of Mexico’s various indigenous groups is presented in the two wings of the building, the central hall that joins these two sections together is the focal point of the museum. This central section, which contains a huge sunstone, presents the pre-Columbian Mexica culture of central Mexico, where Mexico City is now located. As García Canclini states, not only ‘does the museum represent the unification established by political nationalism in contemporary Mexico, but also [...] it brings together original pieces from all regions of the country in the city that is the seat of

power' (1995: 123).⁷³ Secondly, although the MNA delivers the message that the roots of Mexican national culture lie in its indigenous population, it simultaneously demarcates the boundaries of this population, thereby reflecting contemporary social relations. For example, pre-Columbian culture is separated from contemporary indigenous life by defining the former as archaeology and the latter as ethnography. Furthermore, whilst pre-Columbian items are displayed on the ground floor, contemporary indigenous cultural practices are the focus of displays on the upper floor which receives far less visitors due to lack of time. Here, contemporary indigenous people are presented devoid of any aspects of modern life. Overall then, García Canclini argues, it is a “pure” and unified cultural patrimony under the sign of Mexicanness’ that is disseminated in the museum (1995: 130).

The Chamula and Zapatista dolls on display at the MNA epitomise García Canclini’s arguments. In fact, when I visited the MNA in June 2017 there were about 100 indigenous dolls displayed in the ethnographic section of the museum which comprised 10 rooms – each dedicated to a different geographical region within Mexico and their respective indigenous peoples. Although there was variation in the curatorial style of each room, there was an absence of labels detailing dates, ethnic group or *municipio* of origin for specific exhibits. Thus, the Chamula dolls and Zapatista dolls that were displayed in the ‘Pueblos mayas de las montañas’ exhibition room were unlabelled and were housed in two cabinets containing children’s clothing and toys from at least three ethnic groups and six *municipios* in Chiapas. However, due to the absence of interpretive labels this would not have been evident to a layperson. Consequently, the local and ethnic identities associated with these exhibits were homogenised into a generic Maya identity. As one of 10 rooms that similarly flattened local difference, an overarching indigenous Mexican identity was, therefore, disseminated in the ethnographic section of the museum. Furthermore, the lack of dates for the exhibits

⁷³ Gutiérrez’s (1999) analysis based on school textbooks demonstrates that Mexican nation building has disseminated the notion that it is specifically Aztec or Mexica culture that has formed the continuity to a pre-Hispanic heritage and, therefore, the Aztecs were ‘the cultural ancestors of present Mexicans’ (1999: 75). Thus, Aztec ‘cultural symbols’ are usually privileged over those of other ethnic groups who are, essentially, excluded (1999: 10).

in the two cabinets implied that indigenous children currently use such items. Yet, the *huipils* on display clearly demonstrated this misrepresentation for those with knowledge of Tzotzil *traje*, as it was possible to deduce that they dated from the early 1970s onwards. Essentially, as García Canclini argues more generally, the two showcases projected a vision of a homogenous Chiapas indigenous identity and, through the display of anachronistic garments, one that is timeless and detached from modern life.⁷⁴

In their different ways López and García Canclini provide essential assessments of the macro-level policies implemented by the state and elite actors to utilise *artesanías* to engender and disseminate a national identity in Mexico and beyond. However, in Part Two of *Crafting Mexico*, López charts how these macro-level policies were negotiated at the micro level by the artisans who produce lacquered boxes and gourds in the town of Olinalá. The 1921 Las Artes Populares en México exhibition, discussed previously, dedicated a whole room to the display of Olinaltecan lacquerware (2010: 84) and the artisans of Olinalá have had extensive engagement with collectors, dealers and intellectuals since at least that time. Although not López's intention, by highlighting how Olinalá *laqueros* became intertwined with state policies and, consequently, 'became integrated into an ethnicized national identity' (2010: 24), albeit unequally, his account simultaneously reveals the extent to which these national policies were implemented unevenly in different localities. Of crucial importance for this thesis, therefore, is the divergent example provided by the following examination of textile production in Chiapas – and, more specifically, Chamula – that both highlights the federal government's relative neglect of the region's *artesanía* production prior to the 1970s and also the relevance of local specificities when implementing national projects.

The Mexican Fieldwork Sites: San Juan Chamula and San Cristóbal

⁷⁴ Similarly, at the MAP, apart from a sign stating the exhibition title – '*Albores del siglo XXI: Dawn of the XXI Century*' – the exhibits were undated. Thus, the Chamula doll and other *artesanías* on display were presented as static art forms.

As noted in the Introduction, Chamula is a *municipio* of 93 hamlets controlled by Chamula Centre (also known as San Juan Chamula) (Rus and Collier, 2003: 54).⁷⁵ The population comprises Tzotzil Maya known not only for their locally specific dress and retention of Tzotzil language usage, but also for their longstanding practices relating to gender-specific roles. Weaving is an example of such a role and it is still common for girls and boys to learn the weaving process at around nine years of age, although boys do not continue to weave into adulthood as this task is replaced by agricultural work.⁷⁶ For adults, then, the duties associated with married women in San Juan Chamula are mainly related to domestic work and raising a family and, furthermore, social norms require them to be submissive in character (Rosenbaum, 1993; Cruz Salazar, 2014). By contrast, men have a more public role than women and *cargo* holders in particular have a high social status. Although gender roles are complementary they are also unequal and research underlines the difficulties that women can face in rural Chamula communities in which polygamy and a husband's infidelity are not unusual and where male drunkenness often leads to domestic violence (Rosenbaum, 1993; Speed *et al*, 2006: 5-14; Cruz Salazar, 2014, Rus and Rus, 2014). Apart from these cultural practices, Chamula is also known for its poverty, adherence to a locally specific "traditionalist" form of Catholicism and for being a bastion of PRI support and, therefore, anti-Zapatista. However, the strands of this context are intertwined and this apparent political allegiance is complex. A closer examination of the *municipio's* history demonstrates the corporatist policies through which the Mexican state achieved and maintains its hegemony over the population, and an apt example of this relates to Chamula's weavers, as described below.

From the 1890s to the late-1960s, the economic base of the highland's Tzotzil communities was the seasonal labour undertaken at the large plantations of the lowlands. While initially, the workers were ensnared into labour by various means, their continuing lack of resources resulted in their continuing dependency on this source of work (Rosenbaum, 1993; Rus and Collier, 2003; Lewis, 2012; Olivera,

⁷⁵ At the last census in 2010, the population of the *municipio* was 76,941, of which 3,329 lived in San Juan Chamula:
<http://www.microrregiones.gob.mx/catloc/LocdeMun.aspx?tipo=clave&campo=loc&ent=07&mun=023> (accessed 27 December 2019).

⁷⁶ As per my informal conversation with a Chamula teenage girl in Chamula Centre (07 July 2017).

2012; Chojnacki, 2016). By the 1950s, the INI commenced operations in Chiapas and through the Centro Coordinador Indigenista Tzeltal-Tzotzil it sought to train and install local cultural promoters/educators in *municipios* such as Chamula (Lewis, 2012; Olivera, 2012). However, by the 1960s and 1970s the state, through the INI, exerted control over the community by co-opting a small number of *caciques* (elite Chamulas). These authority figures, with whom the local population voluntarily comply, gained teaching and government positions and land and grants which did not filter down to local people. Consequently, there was a widening gap both in terms of inequalities and traditional relations in the Chamula economic and social hierarchy (Rus and Collier, 2003; Lewis, 2012; Olivera, 2012).

In terms of the agricultural labour system on which the majority of Chamula men depended, the 1970s and 1980s brought a series of devastating set-backs, including the 1976 peso devaluation which affected corn prices, changes in farming processes and land usage, the 1982 world crash of oil prices which led to a government austerity program and the 1989 crashes of world coffee prices, all of which led to the collapse in the need for indigenous labour on plantations (Rus and Collier, 2003: 40-43). The impoverished conditions resulting from the men's loss of income led women to extend their weaving output beyond that required to clothe their families. In fact, 60 percent of women in Chamula became engaged in producing woven goods for the tourist market to supplement their reduced family incomes (2003: 44). It was this context that fostered the creation of Chamula dolls.

Unfortunately, weaving for the market was not straightforward for the women, as highlighted by Jan Rus and George A. Collier's (2003) incisive summary of the corporatist relations with the PRI that have marked Chamulas' engagement with *artesanía* production. By the early 1980s, to enable joint childminding and the bulk buying of source materials, Chamula women began to form independent cooperatives, thereby facilitating the production of *artesanías* for sale in Chamula Centre and San Cristóbal (2003: 47). In 1983, they merged with other informal indigenous cooperatives in order to promote their products beyond the highlands (2003: 47). For Chamula's *caciques*, this level of autonomous activity – whereby women were collaborating profitably with people from different *municipios*, some of whom were Protestants and non-traditional Catholics – was deemed to

undermine both their authority and that of the state (2003: 47-48). Consequently, in 1987, the Chamula authorities tried to intimidate the women by demanding their presence in Chamula Centre for questioning. Whilst it seems there was no further action, the authorities implied the women were subversives and connected to independent political organisations which could threaten the elite's position in Chamula (2003: 48).

Almost contemporaneously, in 1988, the newly elected president, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, responding to fears that the government's austerity measures had weakened the PRI's ties to the rural poor, bolstered the dependency of indigenous communities on the state by trying to block independent cooperatives and transferring their membership to state-controlled organisations (Rus and Collier, 2003: 48). In practice, this was facilitated by the governor of Chiapas who distributed federal funds from the Programa Nacional de Solidaridad (PRONASOL) only to groups allied to government-controlled organisations (2003: 49). Chamula's weavers first encountered PRONASOL at the beginning of 1989 when they received loans from one such organisation; an arrangement that required the women to comply with the following demands: 'to purchase state-provided raw materials, heed state-dictated production styles, and rely on state agencies to market their goods on consignment' (2003: 49). Unfortunately, this arrangement did not convert into sales and 15 months later, unable to repay the loans, the cooperative failed (2003: 49). This state policy had, therefore, achieved its aim of crushing an indigenous initiative that, in this case, the women had been developing for several years. In sum, for most Chamulas in the *municipio* their impoverished, precarious circumstances still continue and they eke out a living through a mix of day labour, small scale *artesanía* production and, sometimes, migration – both to other parts of Chiapas and to the US (Olivera, 2012; Rus and Rus, 2014).

Despite the Zapatista uprising that offered hope to the many Chamulas experiencing the effects of increasingly unequal relations during the early 1990s, the *municipio* support for the PRI apparently remained solid.⁷⁷ The PRI won the

⁷⁷ Electoral support in Chamula for the PRI was around 99 percent towards the wane of its domination (Newdick, 2005: 85).

1994 elections in Mexico, and also won both the governorship of Chiapas and the *municipio* of Chamula. While there were many people in Chamula who had voted against the PRI, presumed electoral fraud meant their votes did not count (Rus and Collier, 2003: 53). More sinister was that the voting information identified clusters of dissenters to the Chamula authorities, who subsequently withdrew government aid to the offending hamlets as punishment for their non-conformity (2003: 53). After this, and armed incursions funded by Chamula's PRI, political non-conformity within the *municipio* dropped (2003: 54).

Although only seven miles south of San Juan Chamula, San Cristóbal is a different world in terms of relative affluence and ethnic heterogeneity.⁷⁸ Not only is it a destination for national and international tourists, but it is a space which its *mestizo* population shares with an increasing indigenous population.⁷⁹ Whilst poverty has driven the migration of indigenous people from throughout the highlands into the city, a further cause has been the expulsion of religious dissidents from Chamula. Starting from the 1970s, in what has been viewed as a “land grab” rather than an act of religious zeal, the religious conversion of some Chamulas to either Protestantism or new forms of Catholicism caused the *caciques* to eject around 15,000 converts from the *municipio* (Rosenbaum, 1993: 179-190; Nash, 1994; Gossen, 1999; Kovic, 2005). These displaced people, who Pierre L. van den Berghe regards as ‘internal refugees’ (1994: 43), have formed ‘squatter settlements’ that circle San Cristóbal (Rosenbaum, 1993: 179). While this displaced population has retained its use of the Tzotzil language along with many of its cultural practices, there are generational differences between young Chamulas and their parents – and this is also true to an extent within Chamula *municipio*. For instance, there is less parental involvement in marriage arrangements, the delaying of marriage in order to pursue further education and a career, and more scope for platonic social

⁷⁸ The income per capita in the city of San Cristóbal is four times greater than that of an average Chiapas indigenous community, see: <http://www.coha.org/the-last-of-the-mayans-preserving-chiapas-indigenous-languages-in-the-21st-century/> (accessed 27 December 2019).

⁷⁹ During the 1980s and 1990s the population of San Cristóbal rose from 60,000 to 130,000 – and indigenous people from the Chiapas highlands accounted for more than half of this increase (Rus and Collier, 2003: 46). At the last census in 2010, the *municipio* had a population of 185,917 of which 158,027 lived in the city, see: <http://www.microrregiones.gob.mx/catloc/LocdeMun.aspx?tipo=clave&campo=loc&ent=07&mun=078> (accessed 27 December 2019).

interactions between male and female teenagers.⁸⁰ Younger female migrants are also less likely to learn how to spin wool and weave *faldas*, since they prefer to weave unsophisticated items for the tourist market (Eber and Rosenbaum, 1993: 165; Rosenbaum, 1993: 181; Cruz Salazar, 2014: 88-93). In short, for these young women there is a tension between the traditional indigenous views of womanhood held by the older generation within their families and the constructions of *mestiza* womanhood they are exposed to in San Cristóbal (Cruz Salazar, 2014: 93).

Textile production in Chiapas

Because of its remote location, Chiapas did not experience a significant tourism trade until after many other areas of Mexico (Nash, 1993a: 11; Stephen, 1993: 38). Furthermore, as noted above, it was only in the 1970s that indigenous weavers started to produce textiles for sale. Perhaps because of these reasons Chiapas was also isolated from federal policies relating to *artesanías* until 1972 when the INI held a fair and competition in San Cristóbal for the local weavers (Morris, 1996: 409). 2 years later a FONART office opened in San Cristóbal and established production groups comprising 3,000 weavers in 18 communities, provided credit and material at cost price and purchased huge amounts of pottery and textiles which were distributed for sale in FONART shops across Mexico (1996: 410-411). Unfortunately, these developments did not give artisans reliable support or the opportunity to trade directly with the market and the production groups soon failed. However, 1977 saw the founding of Sna Jolobil ('Weaver's House' in Tzotzil Maya). This cooperative and shop located in San Cristóbal developed from an independent artisans' group that was initiated by non-indigenous organisers and that had subsequently been taken over by around 50 members of the failing FONART production groups (1996: 411). By 1999 it had around 800 members the majority of whom were indigenous women drawn from various highland *municipios*, including Chamula (Vargas Cetina, 2005: 242). Walter Morris (1996) had worked at the FONART office and, following his research into designs and textile production techniques, he prompted the weavers of Sna Jolobil to revive

⁸⁰ For courtship and marriage practices in San Juan Chamula, which are often still arranged, see Gossen (1984: 167-168), Rosenbaum (1993: 89-120, 184) and Cruz Salazar (2014).

almost forgotten designs and natural dyeing techniques and to focus on producing items using these “authentic” processes to guard against the degradation of their crafts in the face of the increasing commodification involved with weaving for a tourist market. While other cooperatives have failed, Sna Jolobil has flourished since Morris has helped cultivate demand from a high-end collector market – by promoting the textiles as “art” rather than crafts – that will readily pay a fair price for textiles created on a backstrap loom that can take many weeks to produce.⁸¹

Weaving for a cooperative not only generates household income but, since it is an activity that takes place in the home, it allows women to continue to fulfil their traditional familial duties; although, as Vargas Cetina points out, this arrangement does entail a dual workload for women (1999: 313). Furthermore, cooperative membership involves attending meetings which also provide a social space beyond the domestic sphere where members can share concerns about alcohol abuse, health issues and other similar matters (Eber and Rosenbaum, 1993). Membership also increases women’s self-confidence and, since they learn how to cost materials and working hours, it helps them to understand the true value, in monetary terms, of their weaving (Rovira, 2000: 128-129). These factors do not, however, alter the unequal position of women within the family or wider community (Nash, 1993a, 1993b; Brumfiel, 2007: 28). The majority of cooperative leaders, for example, are men, which reflects the general consensus among members that they are more suitable than women for these roles (Eber and Rosenbaum, 1993: 170). Moreover, because females who weave for cooperatives earn their own income and are increasingly independent, they have been viewed as transgressing their prescribed gender roles and, in turn, this can exacerbate tensions between spouses. Indeed, initially, Chamula women’s involvement in cooperatives in some cases led to them being beaten by their husbands (1993: 172). More recently, spouses have adapted to this new context since men now accompany their wives when they go to San Cristóbal on cooperative business and, with their better Spanish language skills, act as their wives’ intermediaries (1993: 172).

⁸¹ See Vargas Cetina (1999, 2002, 2005) and Morris (1996) for a thorough explanation of the history and policies of Sna Jolobil. Vargas Cetina notes that as it has a strong leader and administrative body, it stretches the concept of a traditional “grassroots” cooperative.

In providing a diachronic account from the 1920s to the 1970s, López's approach reveals significant trends and incremental changes in the state's cultural policies that straddle several presidencies and shows that rather than an 'institutional monolith' (Schmidt, 2001: 41), the postrevolutionary Mexican state is better viewed as 'an ensemble of practices, institutions, and ideologies of rule' intertwined with Mexican society in highly divergent ways (Coronil quoted in Schmidt, 2001: 41).⁸² Within this, there have been relationships – marked both with cooperation and discord – between numerous actors, including intellectuals from Mexico and beyond, the state, the market and, most importantly, the artisans themselves. Furthermore, even a brief comparison between *artesanía* production in Olinalá and Chamula/San Cristóbal has shown the uneven impact of state policies among different regions and highlights that artisans have been, and continue to be, active rather than passive actors in these processes. Equally, by underlining the fragmentation and the reconfiguration that inform the production, circulation and consumption of *artesanías*, García Canclini's approach not only demonstrates how the state fosters a national identity both within and beyond Mexico, but it also recognises that meaning is a fluid, rather than inherent, aspect of an object. Yet, the objects themselves are of secondary importance in his evaluation, particularly when compared to López's detailed material analysis, that traces how the effects of the market and of nation-building strategies are embodied by Olinalá lacquerware. An assessment of the role of *artesanías* in the construction of identities would, therefore, benefit from being informed by both of these valuable approaches.

The Construction and Promotion of a Guatemalan National Identity

The focus of this chapter now moves from Mexico to Guatemala in order to provide the national context that informs the final fieldwork locations in this thesis: Antigua and San Antonio. The 1870s were a period of Liberal reform which aimed to modernise Guatemala through improvements in infrastructure and, in what would be of crucial significance for the indigenous population, the introduction of the

⁸² Coronil is referring to Venezuela in this quotation but as Schmidt notes it can be usefully applied to contemporary Mexico.

largescale cultivation and export of coffee. Thus, as with the Mexican and, more specifically, the Chiapas context, post-independence policies focused on export production enabled by indigenous labour. In Guatemala's case, coffee production was facilitated by the implementation of labour laws which, Richard N. Adams argues, guaranteed the 'virtual enslavement' of the indigenous population (1990: 141). These laws constituted a system of debt peonage known as *habilitación* and the labour it supplied kept pace with the demand for coffee until it was outstripped by the expansion of the export market in the 1920s. Thus, by 1936 it was necessary for President Jorge Ubico and his Progressive Liberal government to replace *habilitación* with vagrancy laws (1990: 141). These new laws defined as vagrants those indigenous people who did not own the title to a particular area of farmland and who, therefore, had to spend a specific number of days every year working on farms, the majority of which produced coffee. Although the end of debt peonage was portrayed in the media as an act of benevolence Adams argues that, with the vagrancy laws that replaced it, Ubico, in effect, 'nationalized control of the Indian labor force, removing it from the control of the farmers and *habilitadores*, but guaranteeing the labor necessary for coffee cultivation and harvesting' (1990: 142). Ubico's rule ran from 1931 to 1944 when he was forced to resign by a movement involving the growing urban middle classes. After the overthrow of his successor, Federico Ponce Vaides, Juan José Arévalo was elected to power (Handy, 1990; Montejó, 1999).

Although there were significant social reforms introduced by Arévalo's administration – the most important of which was the abolition of Ubico's vagrancy laws (Handy, 1990: 167) – Adams notes that '[t]he Guatemalan reform period of 1944-1954 has long been recognized as essentially a bourgeois revolution' and, although reformers, the Arevalistas 'were a liberal bourgeoisie whose views generally reflected the indigenista view' (Adams, 1990: 155); in other words, the indigenous population was deemed to be of value but in need of civilising through education (Adams, 1990: 143; Handy, 1990).⁸³ Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán replaced

⁸³ Adams provides an indication of these views through his textual analysis of editorials and articles from 4 Guatemalan newspapers dated between 1944 and 1945 in which the *ladino* writers espoused 'an indigenista rhetoric that seeks to deplore, but rationalize, the condition of the Indians as being something that can be corrected without fundamentally endangering the liberal approach' (1990: 148).

Arévalo in 1951 and, more left-leaning than his predecessor, he implemented the Agrarian Reform Law which expropriated state and private land and distributed it among landless *campesinos*; the law, therefore, treated all *campesinos* as a single class, whatever their ethnicity (Handy, 1990: 168-169; Montejo, 1999: 38). Ultimately, the significant policies that were introduced by Arévalo and Árbenz between 1944 and 1954 to address the situation of poor *campesinos*, led to the overthrow of the Árbenz government in 1954; an action supported by the army, landowners and the CIA and justified by invoking the spectre of communism (Montejo, 1999: 38). Many of these reforms were then reversed by the Castillo Armas regime that followed and by 1963 the military had essentially taken control of the country (Adams, 1990: 158; Montejo, 1999: 39; Grandin, 2000: 198-219).

By the mid-1970s, the military was enmeshed in all key national institutions, the general population started to protest about their impoverishment, insurgency groups gained a foothold and military repression increased in the highlands of the country (Montejo, 1999: 40-41). By the early 1980s, the scorched earth policy of General Efraín Ríos Montt's dictatorship targeted civilians who, in the military's view, were 'indistinguishable from guerrillas' (1999: 43). However, due to the specific targeting of Maya communities in some instances, this policy was later recognised as genocide by La Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico (*Guatemala memoria del silencio*, n.d.: 39-42).⁸⁴ By the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996, over 200,000 people had been killed or disappeared during the conflict of which 83 percent were Maya and 17 percent were *ladino*; violations for which the state was responsible in 93 percent of the cases (n.d.: 17, 34). Given this turbulent history and, in particular, the state's treatment of its Maya population, it is ironic that the Maya have played, and continue to play, the key role in the state's promotion of tourism and a national identity, as discussed in the following sections.

Traje and the Guatemalan national identity

⁸⁴ See Sanford (2003) for a particularly useful (and moving) investigation of the genocide and its aftermath as experienced by survivors.

Greg Grandin explains how, at the end of the 1800s, the figure of ‘the urban artisan’ began to be promoted by liberals ‘as the national archetype’ (2000: 193). They promoted the establishment of societies for workers and artisans that ran schools, promoted liberal working methods and helped to foster a national identity by, for example, encouraging members to celebrate national holidays (2000: 193-194). Significantly, as Grandin summarises, ‘[f]or liberals, the ideal national craftsman was stripped of ethnic content and hence Ladino by default’ (2000: 194).⁸⁵ Indeed, Ubico demanded increasing displays of ‘civil loyalty’ from societies and clubs and, furthermore, nationalised some schools when, in the early 1930s, the global depression took its toll on coffee prices (2000: 195). At the same time, Grandin suggests that as a result of the drive for alternative revenues other than from coffee, the state started ‘to promote indigenous culture as a tourist attraction’ (2000: 194). While Grandin’s research assesses how this played out at a local level in Quetzaltenango, Walter Little’s research explores this development at a national level.

Little analyses the Guatemalan national fairs that were held during Ubico’s dictatorship and which were an early example of the state’s use of representations of Maya for its own end. Furthermore, he highlights that at the same time as Ubico advocated ‘the cultural and economic assimilation of Mayas’ he promoted representations of them that conveyed their essentialness; a contradictory stance that continues today (2008a: 633). Although there had been previous national fairs, the first to include members of Guatemala’s Maya population, the *Fería de Agosto*, took place in Guatemala City in August 1932 (2000: 165, 2008a: 634). The aim of the fair was to encourage international investment in Guatemalan businesses and to present Guatemala as a modern nation. While the role of Maya within this was to stimulate international tourism and help forge a sense of Guatemalan national identity there was no aim to increase their economic opportunities (2000: 166, 2008a). Maya from villages around the country were incorporated into the *Fería* through the *Pueblo Indígena*, an area comprising specially constructed thatched huts, where they lived for the duration of the event (Wood and Osbourne, 1966: 27;

⁸⁵ The schools in Grandin’s research included indigenous founders who superficially complied with ‘this artisan identity’ (2000: 194).

Pettersen, 1976: 251; Little, 2000: 165). The Pueblo was the site of the first organised performances of Maya domestic activities whereby men and women carried out gender-specific tasks and performed rituals, dances and music and it attracted more visitors, including national and international tourists, than any other exhibit (2000: 165). Maya by contrast, did not attend as visitors and those who participated were ordered to do so by Ubico, thereby highlighting their unequal position within the nation state (2008a: 639).

Accompanying the exhibition were promotional picture books in English, Spanish and German featuring images of Maya women weaving with a backstrap loom (Little, 2000: 166). Little, therefore, argues that the Pueblo can be viewed as the start point more generally for the production and reproduction of images of Maya in guidebooks, newspapers and postcards (2008a: 638). Significantly, the image of the *mujer maya* – the indigenous woman dressed in *traje*, often with her baby strapped to her back or weaving with a backstrap loom – which is now taken for granted as the symbol of Guatemalan national identity was, in the 1930s, simply one of many different depictions of Maya (2008a: 634). That she came to represent the nation was in part, speculates Little, due to the tastes of the writers and international readership of two types of sources from the late 1930s and early 1940s; travelogues by non-Guatemalans and books about Maya weaving (2008a: 650). Unlike guidebooks published in Guatemala, which emphasised the attractions of Guatemala City and elite *ladino* society, central to these two types of sources are the rural areas of the country and its Maya population (2008a: 650). More specifically, travelogues by writers such as Aldous Huxley note *ladinos*' disdain of Maya and instead write with fascination about them, especially the women, while books about weaving include photographs of Maya women, often in the process of weaving, and also feature descriptions of weaving techniques and designs. These images, both written and photographic, were disseminated internationally and, Little argues, not only 'played an instrumental part in constructing Mayas for foreigners' (2008a: 653) but may also have affected 'Mayas' self-conceptualizations of identity', the legacy of which continues today, as discussed later in this chapter (2008a: 654). Furthermore, he suggests that these images, together with those disseminated by the tourism industry, helped to create the pivotal role of the "Maya woman" and was perhaps consolidated by the fact that by

the 1970s the everyday use of *traje* by men had almost ceased in many areas of the country as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three (2008a: 655).

The image of the *mujer maya* and its deployment by different actors is more thoroughly discussed by Diane Nelson. She notes that because Maya men effectively become invisible – that is to say, they blend into the *ladino* population – when they abandon their *traje*, it has instead become ‘almost isomorphic with the Mayan woman who weaves it and wears it’ (1999: 171). Consequently, *traje*, she argues, ‘brings with it the weight of tradition in general, condensing a whole range of affect-laden meanings about spirituality, community, food, language, children, the nation, and the past onto this fantasy construct of the *mujer maya*’ (1999: 171). She uses the term *mujer maya* to differentiate the smiling, stereotypical images seen in tourism materials from actual Maya women who live in the real world marked by conflicting demands and poverty. On a more profound level, Nelson argues that Guatemalan, *ladino* and Maya identities are mutually constitutive and yet incomplete and, therefore, need the construct of the *mujer maya* as a ‘prosthetic’ to prop them up (2001: 314). The prosthetic value of the *mujer maya* is both symbolic and real and works through all levels of Guatemalan society. For the nation, then, the image of the *mujer maya* in promotional business and tourism materials, beauty competitions and other international arenas, gives the appearance of Maya inclusion in, rather than exclusion from, the nation state and, in addition, creates a distinct and recognisable national identity (2001: 320-321). Alternatively, *ladinos* need the prosthetic support of the *mujer maya* as an identity against which to define themselves; ‘as national and modern’ (2001: 326) as opposed to ‘ethnic and nonmodern’ (2001: 327). In addition, for *ladinos*, class status forms part of their difference to Maya. Nelson argues that ‘[t]he *mujer Maya* as domestic prosthetic’ enables *ladinos* to express a ‘petit bourgeois’ identity since even those of very limited means often employ Maya women as domestic helps (2001: 329). The pan-Maya movement, by contrast, needs the *mujer maya* to continue to ‘represent tradition’, thereby releasing the men in the movement to ‘take on the signs of modernity’ – such as engaging with state officials and cutting-edge information technology – that are required for effective activism (2001: 332). Finally, as more Maya women leave their communities to pursue professional careers, higher education and activist work and, therefore, lack the time to maintain laborious

cultural practices, such as weaving their own *traje*, they instead may ‘lean on the labor of other mujeres Mayas to be both modern and traditional’ (2001: 338-339). In sum, Nelson’s work highlights that by recognising the centrality of gender, as “‘both structuring and structured by the wide set of social relations’”, the crucial role of Maya women for national progress is revealed (Sangari and Vaid quoted in Nelson, 2001: 342).

***Traje* and nation-building processes**

Guatemala lacks the show-stopping, state-sponsored national museums of Mexico. Thus, the best way to understand processes of nation building is by assessing images disseminated by the state’s Institute of Tourism (INGUAT). INGUAT was founded in 1967 with an aim to recognise and develop the country’s tourist industry by promoting its natural beauty, culture, archaeology, *artesanías* and other similar attractions. Promoting a Guatemalan national identity also seems to be a key aim within this tourism development and of relevance here is how Maya *traje*, weaving and textiles are used in two ways to this effect; in tourism materials and beauty contests, as discussed below.⁸⁶

INGUAT produces promotional travel material such as brochures and short films in which Maya feature as national symbols along with ‘volcanos, mountain lakes, ancient ruins, colonial architecture, and weavings’ (Hendrickson, 1995: 83).⁸⁷ Carol Hendrickson assesses two types of image within this material that serve two different functions. First, are close-up shots of Maya looking straight at the camera and mid-range shots of artisans, vendors and entertainers such as dancers and musicians, all of which indicate the openness of Maya people and their readiness to interact with tourists and the wider world (1995: 83-85). *Traje* marks people as being Maya in these promotional films and textiles for sale and weavers all play a central part within them. Significantly, whilst it is Maya who are presented as welcoming, friendly and happy, this representation is in effect extended to include

⁸⁶ See INGUAT’s website for its aims: <http://www.inguat.gob.gt/index.php/inguat-guatemala/ley-organica-del-inguat-documento> (accessed 31 December 2019).

⁸⁷ See, for example, the following two INGUAT films: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbJu6DT55zI> (accessed 20 August 2016) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rO5Yd5YRPY> (accessed 20 August 2016).

all Guatemalans since, as Hendrickson notes, ‘the image of the Indian [acts] as [a] symbol for all that is Guatemalan – both Indian and non-Indian’ (1995: 84). By contrast, the second type of image instead presents Maya participating in culturally specific celebrations, forms of worship and ceremonies and, therefore, as fundamentally distinct from non-indigenous Guatemalans. The Maya subject is disconnected from the viewer, either by their lack of eye contact with the camera, through long shots, or by multiple people populating the scene. As Hendrickson states, this type of depiction ‘is meant to be viewed from afar, like some awesome scenery that is admired but little comprehended’, thereby reinforcing the image of Maya as being separate from the wider world and as exotic people frozen in the past; in other words, as tourist attractions (1995: 85). The contradictory way in which the state treats Maya is thus demonstrated by the way in which they are simultaneously presented as being representative of all Guatemalans whilst being located in a traditional, autonomous space outside of the Guatemalan state.

Maya *traje* is also used to present ‘the image of Guatemalan national identity’ in the annual Miss Universe contest (Hendrickson, 1995: 79 *emphasis in original*). Here, *traje* is worn as the national costume by Miss Guatemala, who is selected through a national competition which has been sponsored by INGUAT and who is invariably a *ladina* (1995: 79).⁸⁸ Criticisms of the use of *traje* by Miss Guatemala have been stated in the strongest terms by, for example, the Guatemalan *Consejo Maya* which objected to the highly inappropriate competition outfit for 2011 which was based on the male *cofradía traje* of Chichicastenango and which is of profound ceremonial importance for that community (*El Universal*, 2011).⁸⁹ More broadly, in June 2016, INGUAT was criticised by representatives from the Asociación Femenina para el Desarrollo de Sacatepéquez at a hearing at the Constitutional Court in Guatemala City in which they demanded that the state recognises *traje* and textile designs as the intellectual property of the indigenous population and also that weavers should receive a percentage of taxes generated by tourism since as

⁸⁸ While it is unclear whether INGUAT still sponsors the national competition, it still has close links to it. For example, Miss Guatemala participants of the Miss Universe competitions of 2016 and 2017 were both named “Embajadora de Turismo” by INGUAT. See: <http://revistaviatori.com/noticias/virginia-argueta-embajadora-turismo/> (accessed 23 January 2020).

⁸⁹ <http://m.eluniversal.com.co/cartagena/gente-y-tv/indigenas-critican-uso-de-traje-maya-de-miss-guatemala-41864> (accessed 16 August 2016).

Angelina Aspuac, a weaver and coordinator with the group, notes: ‘El Inguat vende a Guatemala como rostro maya en el extranjero, explota nuestros textiles y no nos reconocen el esfuerzo’ (*Prensa Libre*, 2016).⁹⁰ These two examples demonstrate how different Maya groups have objected to the state’s exploitation and co-option of their material culture.

In sum, *traje* is variously used and abused by the state and some *ladinos* depending on the context or, as Hendrickson puts it, ‘the money-making situation’ (1995: 89). That is, in a tourist setting or for presenting a national identity *traje* is valued but in a non-tourism environment it is viewed negatively as unsophisticated and anachronistic, particularly when worn by men (Hendrickson, 1995: 89; Otzoy, 1996: 144). Furthermore, as Little argues, although Maya weavers and vendors have been used ‘primarily as props’ to help promote tourism, it is the state and *ladino* businesses such as hotels, restaurants, tour companies and transport providers, rather than Maya, that reap most of the resulting financial benefits (2008b: 88).⁹¹ By contrast, state support for weavers on a practical level appears to have been limited and, at times, even dangerous (Berlo, 1996: 455). For example, during the civil war, weaving cooperatives, as groups that encourage the economic independence of indigenous people, were targeted by the state for being subversive organisations, as highlighted by Krystyna Deuss’s stark comment: ‘[a]lthough village co-operatives are officially sponsored, their members are nevertheless frequently assassinated’ (1981: 70). Consequently, references to weaving production in Guatemala cite the support of, often international, NGOs and other private actors rather than the Guatemalan state (Ehlers, 1993; Nash, 1993a: 8; Asturias de Barrios, 1997: 83; Schevill, 1997; Dickson and Littrell, 1998; Demaray *et al*, 2005).⁹² A focus on San Antonio and Antigua – the two Guatemalan fieldwork sites – reveals the contradictory and often unhelpful attitudes of *municipio* and state authorities towards Maya weavers and vendors of textiles.

⁹⁰ <http://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/sacatepequez/tejedoras-exigen-ley-sobre-textiles-artesanales> (accessed 16 August 2016).

⁹¹ Little’s comments relate to the Mundo Maya project; a joint venture coordinated by the governments of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador, together with private tourism enterprises, but they equally apply to tourism in Guatemala more generally (2008b).

⁹² For example, Museo Ixchel Del Traje Indígena, in Guatemala City is one of the most important museums in the country and certainly the best source relating to *traje* and is privately run; see <http://www.museoixchel.org/> (accessed 20 August 2016).

The Guatemalan Fieldwork Sites: San Antonio and Antigua

In order to understand the specific case of weavers and textiles, it is necessary to provide a broader historical and political introduction to the sites. In comparison to the complicated and rather depressing picture presented by the Chamula context, San Antonio has had a comparatively straightforward recent history.⁹³ It was left ‘relatively unscathed’ by the civil war (Annis, 1987: 3) and, more generally, Sheldon Annis notes that ‘[t]he town has been an economic “success” for over four hundred years’ (1987: 21). This relative affluence partly has an agricultural basis and the town’s farmers not only produce an abundance of vegetable crops but also act as intermediaries supplying produce to wholesale markets in Antigua and beyond (1987: 21). However, San Antonio is best known for its high quality and unique weaving and *traje*, for which it has achieved UNESCO recognition. Since at least the early 1900s the town has been outward-looking and has attracted tourists and been known for its *traje* (Little, 2000: 163). Indeed, Little states that, ‘[t]ourism has grown to be a part of the lives of nearly every person in San Antonio’ (2000: 164). Women’s engagement with the tourist market as weavers and vendors has reconfigured familial gender relations so that in some instances they become the main breadwinner and dictate how the household income is used (2000: 174). Women are also more likely than in the past to choose their own husbands and decide when to marry (2000: 174). These changing gender roles have not caused the familial tensions to the extent shown in Chamula and there is a certain amount of pride among the men for the national and international acclaim the women have achieved for their weaving (2000: 176). In contrast to the Chamula context, San Antonio’s *municipio* authorities also recognise and support the women’s achievements (2000: 175-176). San Antonio is also notable for its well-established bilingualism in Kaqchikel and Spanish, although many younger people now favour Spanish (Annis, 1987: 27). Furthermore, a large plaque in the town square celebrates the *municipio*’s achievement of being declared the first in the Department

⁹³ According to the 2018 census figures, San Antonio has a population of 11,347 of which 9,988 are Kaqchikel. See ‘Cuadro A5’ at the following link: <https://www.censopoblacion.gt/explorador> (accessed 27 December 2019).

of Sacatepéquez to be free of illiteracy; an exceptional feat for any community, whether *ladino* or indigenous.

An aspect San Antonio and Chamula do share, beyond their retention of culturally specific practices, is the repercussions of religious conversion. San Antonio was one of the first indigenous towns in Guatemala to be missionised by Protestants, a process that reportedly started in the 1870s (Little, 2000: 163). In contrast to the intolerance of the Chamula authorities who expelled religious converts, San Antonio's population now comprises both Protestants and Catholics. There was, however, a more-subtle impact that had repercussions on the town's weaving practices. More specifically, Annis's (1987) research in San Antonio shows how conversion from Catholicism to Protestantism, whereby community-based ritual is replaced by an individual's relationship with God, has caused a divergence in women's motivations to weave. That is, for the Catholic weaver, since 'the *huipil* expresses and celebrates the fusion of self and community', the time and effort she invests in weaving her *huipil* receives community-level recognition; described by Annis as 'a kind of social currency expendable only in the local economy' (1987: 123). Conversely, as the *municipio* loses its centrality for the Protestant weaver, the social currency afforded by *traje* is of no consequence. Her motivation is, instead, the profit generated by selling the item and thus, to maximise profits, she invests a minimal amount of time in weaving each item. Although the resulting differences between these two versions of *huipil* would not be evident to the layperson, they are obvious to the weavers of San Antonio and, furthermore, as Annis argues, 'express the deeper underlying changes in communal values and self-identity' (1987: 124).

Antigua, six miles west of San Antonio, is, as stated in the Introduction to this thesis, a *ladino* city and, particularly since 1944 when it was designated by government decree the status of National Monument, it has been a prime tourist destination in Guatemala (Little, 2004a: 71).⁹⁴ As with San Cristóbal, the city is a cosmopolitan hub attracting national and international tourists and offers a

⁹⁴ According to the 2018 census figures, Antigua has a population of 46,054 of which 40,191 is *ladino*. See 'Cuadro A5' at the following link: <https://www.censopoblacion.gt/explorador> (accessed 27 December 2019).

combination of colonial architecture and modern amenities. A further notable aspect is Antigua's large number of Spanish schools. In fact, Little claims that studying Spanish is a key reason for visiting the city for the majority of independent tourists from the US (2004a: 78). Although Maya travel into the city to sell their goods and their presence adds appeal for visitors, Little's research highlights the unequal way they are often treated by the *municipio* authorities, as explored below.

In *Mayas in the Marketplace: Tourism, Globalization, and Cultural Identity* (2004a), Little focuses on Kaqchikel *artesanía* vendors in Antigua and San Antonio.⁹⁵ His research is of crucial importance for this thesis not only because of the coincidence of the fieldwork sites but because of his conception of identities as fluid, rather than fixed, and marked by a continual process of re-positionings. Little's approach builds on Stuart Hall's work as discussed in Chapter One, since he underlines that, whilst a continual process, identities are constructed through the social relations present in any given context. In contrast to weavers, who produce items for middlemen and cooperatives and who are more often the focus of ethnographic research, vendors have a wide range of social interactions with a variety of actors including government representatives, *municipio* authorities, national and international tourists, tour leaders and vendors from other ethnic groups (2004a: 15). As the focus of Little's case study, Kaqchikel vendors highlight a key theme of his investigation; that is, the identity strategies they use in order to improve their economic situation in 'different, overlapping fields of social interaction' including the Guatemalan state, their hometown, the artisan market, the city of Antigua and their family. Two examples of these strategies are evident, firstly, in their dealings with *municipio* authorities in Antigua and, secondly, in the way they promote themselves and their merchandise to tourists.

The first example not only reveals the vendors' strategic deployment of a non-Maya identity in their interactions with Antigua's *municipio* administration but also highlights the *municipio*'s contrary policies towards Maya vendors; that is, on the

⁹⁵ Little refers to vendors as those people, often women, who sell a variety of textile items; some woven by themselves, others woven by their extended family and community members, and 'generic items' produced on a larger scale by weaving companies (2004b: 45). Less than five percent of the vendors in Antigua are *ladino* the rest are Maya (2004b: 48).

one hand, their presence and their *artesanías* is a major tourist attraction yet, on the other hand, Antigua's authorities have repeatedly put obstacles in the way of vendors working in the city (Little, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2008b). In more detail, Little explains how non-ambulatory vendors tried to negotiate with the authorities in order to legitimise their informal artisans' market, which would have led to its invaluable inclusion on INGUAT's promotional maps and in literature for tourists. Significantly, in their petitions to the authorities they were careful to avoid references to their Maya identity and instead presented themselves as an ethnically neutral artisan association: the Asociación de Artesanos de la Compañía de Jesús. Although Maya individuals hold key roles within the association they prefer to 'remain anonymous' (2004b: 48) and, instead, '[l]adino figureheads are elected with the expectation that the municipal government and non-Maya business people will be more receptive to one of their own' (2005: 90). Little notes that, more specifically, approaching *municipio* authorities as Maya does not work since *ladinos* stereotype them as being 'backward, uneducated, [and] ignorant' (2004b: 50). As for the artisan market – eventually, by 2003, all vendors who utilised public land were ordered to move to Antigua's official artisan market which, essentially, entailed the relocation of the vendors from their informal, centrally located and atmospheric site in the grounds of a ruined monastery to an unattractive plot next to a grimy bus station on the edge of the city. To rent a stall at the official market is expensive and requires a significant down-payment and, therefore, ambulatory vendors, who cannot afford this payment, have been subjected to police harassment which at its worse, includes the levying of fines, the confiscation of merchandise and arrest (2004a: 273; 2005: 94).

The second example both reveals the Guatemalan state's notions of what constitutes "authentic" Maya cultural practices and how, in contrast to the previous example whereby an ethnically neutral identity was promoted, vendors strategically use a Maya identity. Here, it is specifically the identity of the *mujer maya* that is emphasised during touristic "performances". That is, in order for tourists to experience "authentic" Maya domestic life, vendors in San Antonio invite them into their homes and provide traditional food and weaving demonstrations in the hope

of maximising sales (Little, 2000, 2004a).⁹⁶ To prepare their homes for these performances, the vendors hide all signs of modern life, such as electrical appliances; instead, examples that symbolise Maya culture, such as textiles and bags of maize, are placed in prominent positions. Male members of the household absent themselves since they do not wear *traje* and the female hosts downplay their Spanish fluency and literacy and, importantly, project a Maya, rather than their preferred Kaqchikel or *indígena* identity. All these steps are taken to ensure that the domestic environment meets tourists' expectations of authenticity, thereby demonstrating not only that these Kaqchikel vendors have a thorough understanding of tourists' conceptions of "Mayanness" but also that they are willing to conform to them in order to secure sales. Whilst this adherence to stereotypical representations can be viewed as problematic, of crucial importance is that unlike the appropriation of Maya cultural production by the state and *ladinos*, in this instance the vendors are in control of their own image and, crucially, reap the rewards through extra sales (2000, 2004a, 2008b). Yet, the López family's efforts to have their domestic performance endorsed by INGUAT reveal the stringent expectations of the Guatemalan state in terms of representations of "authentic" Maya cultural practices. Although one of the INGUAT officials assessed the family's performance as the "best portrayal of Indígena life" he had seen', there was to be no INGUAT endorsement (2000: 177). The town of San Antonio itself, where the family's house was located, was the problem since it did not meet the criteria for a "traditional" Maya town: not only were the buildings made from unacceptable materials but more residents would be required to speak Kaqchikel and wear *traje* (2000: 177). The officials, therefore, suggested that the family should discuss the required changes with their neighbours; a suggestion that, unsurprisingly, the family found to be 'unreasonable and impractical' (2000: 177).

In sum, the contradictory strategy, whereby in their dealings with tourists vendors emphasise a Maya identity but avoid it in their dealings with local officials, highlights the vendors' profound understanding of how to foreground different

⁹⁶ While the strategic use of a Maya identity for this type of "performance" is noted here, the concept of performativity more generally is not a focus of this thesis. However, see Little for other ways in which female Kaqchikel vendors "perform" a *mujer maya* identity in order to meet tourists' expectations that leads to increased sales (2000, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2008b).

aspects of their identity to serve their own ends. Although Little acknowledges the significance of difference – in terms of *Maya/ladino*, *Kaqchikel/K'iche*,⁹⁷ and other similar ‘identity juxtapositions’ – which is often evoked in relation to Guatemalans, the pivotal point is that among the vendors in his case study these ‘differences and similarities reconfigure according to context and are never universal or constant’ (2004a: 101). Thus, as he notes, ‘vendors engage in multiple identities and have others ascribed to them. They can be *Kaqchikel*, Guatemalan, a vendor, a buyer, a sales clerk, a small business entrepreneur, a spouse, and a tourist attraction all in the same day’ but the prominent identity conveyed by or imposed upon the vendor at any given moment depends on the social interaction involved in a specific context (2004a: 149). Aside from underlining the processual character of identity formation, Little’s research also reveals the extent of contradictory official policies relating to these *Kaqchikel* vendors who, by downplaying their *Maya* identity, achieve success, albeit limited, in gaining an official artisan market in Antigua but, on the other hand, are not “*Maya enough*” to conform to INGUAT’s exacting requirements.

Filling the gap: Museums in San Antonio and Antigua

In the seeming absence of a state drive both to support weavers and to engage with the country’s *Maya* textile traditions on a more meaningful level, a brief overview of the area’s two *traje* museums further shows how *Maya* people have taken matters into their own hands.

Museo del Traje Típico, San Antonio⁹⁸

This museum occupies a room within the artisans’ market hall which is situated on the main square in San Antonio and, when I visited in May 2017, the key exhibits were 22 examples of *traje* from various Guatemalan locations. Paola and Adriana, who are both *Kaqchikel*⁹⁹ vendor/weavers with stalls there explained that although

⁹⁷ The *K'iche* form the largest of the *Maya* ethnic groups in Guatemala.

⁹⁸ These participants waived their right to protect the museum’s anonymity. However, the individuals’ names have been anonymised.

⁹⁹ Although they did not specifically state this, the fact that they were wearing San Antonio *traje* can be taken as an overt expression of their *Kaqchikel* identity.

the *municipio* of San Antonio provided the funds to establish the market, the idea to dedicate part of the space for a museum was initiated by a board of six people, including themselves. The *municipio* was supportive of the idea and, in fact, following a fire the previous year, it also offered the museum some old, valuable *traje* items to add to its exhibits. The existing exhibits, however, were provided by the individuals connected to the museum, including Paola and Adriana, who each sourced and paid for an example of *traje* from a different region of the country, thus requiring a significant outlay of time and money. Although the vendor/weavers in the market hall have presumably benefitted from increased sales generated by visitors to the museum (which was free to enter) a key aim is to disseminate to international tourists knowledge about Guatemalan *traje* and also to highlight its diversity. Importantly, this aim extends to their fellow Guatemalans for the following reason: ‘para que conozcan todo lo de Guatemala. Porque incluso a veces los que somos de Guatemala no conocen muchas cosas así como los trajes, por ejemplo los que son ladinos no conocen mucho sobre los... las telas, no saben valorar a veces esas cosas’. This point was also raised by two *ladino* participants in Antigua, one of whom – Alonso – accompanied me on one of my visits to the museum. They admitted that, although they could identify the place of origin of some forms of *traje*, there had been a lack of education at school relating to *traje* and other forms of Maya cultural production. Alonso, therefore, thought that the museum was a good idea not only for the benefit of international tourists but also to educate Guatemalans.

Museo Casa del Tejido, Antigua¹⁰⁰

The museum was founded in 1998 by Alida Pérez, a Kaqchikel women from San Antonio.¹⁰¹ It comprised several exhibition spaces and rooms in which were displayed an assortment of *traje* items – clearly labelled with their place of origin – from *municipios* throughout Guatemala, albeit with those from San Antonio forming a sizable component. Weaving classes were also held in the museum. Señora Pérez’s impetus to establish the museum was: ‘[p]ara la conservacion (de

¹⁰⁰ Señora Pérez waived her right to protect the museum’s anonymity.

¹⁰¹ The Pérez family’s dominance over San Antonio’s *artesanía* trade is documented by Little (2000).

tradiciones) (promocion de nuestra cultura) y ayuda a las mujeres indígenas Mayas'.¹⁰² While it shared this pan-Guatemalan approach with the Museo de Traje Típico in San Antonio, the museum in Antigua differed in its pronounced dissemination of a Maya identity, as demonstrated in the following excerpt from its publicity leaflet that was distributed at various sites in the city:

Come and visit the only place in Guatemala where you can see, learn and purchase Textiles and handicrafts from the Mayan people. The experience begins with a tour through the Museum, Where Mayan Costumes and Textiles From around the Country are displayed in a typical atmosphere. You can also see the manufacture process; Mayan weavers Are demonstrating the technique of back strap Loom & foot loom (*formatting in original*).

Thus, in marked contrast to Paola and Adriana at the Museo del Traje Típico who made no reference to the fact that *traje* and weaving are forms of indigenous cultural production, the Museo Casa del Tejido repeatedly underlined a Guatemalan pan-Maya identity. The use of the term “Maya” rather than “*indígena*” or “Kaqchikel” seems to be an example of the strategic use of identities noted by Little that aimed to tap into the tourist market in Antigua.

Significantly, after nearly 20 years at its site in Antigua, in autumn 2017 the museum closed and in February 2018 it relocated to San Antonio. Through informal conversations I heard that a rent increase precipitated the relocation. Notably, in contrast to the supportive *municipio* authorities in San Antonio, the Museo Casa del Tejido had never received any support from the *municipio* authorities in Antigua. The museum speculated that this was due to the following reason: ‘[p]or el mal manejo de fondos (fondos dedicados para apoyar la cultura)’. Although it is unclear, and certainly doubtful, whether the museum approached the *municipio* for help it is surprising that, given the city’s status as a vitally important tourist destination – and one that is inextricably associated with weaving and

¹⁰² Although I was not able to speak to Señora Pérez directly, she kindly authorised written responses to my questions about the museum. In line with these written responses, the quotations lack accents.

artesanías – Antigua now lacks a museum dedicated to weaving and textiles.¹⁰³ This absence seems to reflect the *municipio*'s ambivalent attitude to indigenous cultural production that Little emphasised in his fieldwork.¹⁰⁴

Although relating to state-driven attempts to form a Mexican national identity, I was expecting to observe curating practices in Guatemalan museums that conform to García Canclini's arguments noted previously, whereby local differences are incrementally subsumed under an overarching national identity. In other words, that small local museums, such as the Museo del Traje Típico in San Antonio, would display local cultural production; that museums in Departmental capitals, such as the Museo Casa del Tejido in Antigua, would feature displays from the wider region, in this case, Sacatepéquez; and that museums in Guatemala City would exhibit items from throughout the country. However, whilst the Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena and the Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología¹⁰⁵ in Guatemala City both conformed to this model, which is to be expected since they are nationally orientated museums, the museums in San Antonio and Antigua did not. In both cases, although *traje* items from San Antonio did indeed feature prominently, there were also ample examples from various other regions in Guatemala. Thus, rather than simply expressing local pride linked to ethnic group, *municipio* or Department, the museums also presented a composite yet overarching Maya Guatemalan identity. Of crucial importance is that, rather than being mediated by *ladino* or state actors, both of these museums were initiated and curated by Kaqchikels. It seems, therefore, that these particular museums have taken the initiative in disseminating knowledge about their cultural production to *ladinos* and international visitors in the absence of meaningful state engagement with the Maya weaving and *traje* that form such a notable part of Guatemala's national identity.

¹⁰³ When I returned to Antigua in January 2018 the building was vacant with a '*se vende*' sign in the windows.

¹⁰⁴ At a national level, however, the Pérez family was successful in gaining INGUAT endorsement for the touristic performance given at its home on the outskirts of San Antonio (Little, 2000).

¹⁰⁵ The latter is a state-run museum that clearly states in its publicity leaflet that the strengthening of a Guatemalan identity, both nationally and internationally, is one of its aims (Undated complimentary leaflet distributed by the museum in 2017).

Since the Peace Accords were signed in 1996 that marked the end of the civil war, there has been recognition of indigenous rights, bilingual education, the increased presence of Maya in key government positions and other similar advances. However, at least one state official has acknowledged that while these changes have been prompted partly by the demands of indigenous groups, it is also because there is increasing recognition that Maya culture ‘is a “productive resource.” “The major money maker for Guatemala now is tourism... Our cultural heritage could be our entry into the global economy.”’ (quoted in Nelson, 1999: 357). This statement still provides no indication that Maya people will reap any significant economic rewards for their role in this or will have any state-level input into tourism policies. Although Maya are not passive actors here and may find spaces in which to use their identities strategically this is, as Little notes, ““making do” in a world where they do not have political or economic hegemony’ (2008b: 90); in fact, they remain the subjects of tourism and the carriers of national identity for a tourism industry and nation state from which they continue to be marginalised or excluded.¹⁰⁶

Whilst there has been and continues to be stark differences in the level of state involvement in the promotion of a national identity in Mexico and Guatemala, in both contexts Maya textiles are used to this end. In the case of Mexico items are stripped of their locally specific identity and reconfigured as part of a national identity whilst in Guatemala, Maya *traje* is represented as the embodiment of national identity. As Jesús Martín-Barbero succinctly observes, a strategy of nation building that requires the inclusion of all sections of society is one ‘of abstract inclusion and concrete exclusion’ (quoted in García Canclini, 1995: 147). Indeed, *indigenismo* tried through various strategies to integrate the indigenous population into the nation state whilst, simultaneously, selective aspects of indigenous cultural production were appropriated and celebrated as distinctly “Mexican” or “Guatemalan”. Although indigenous rights are now enshrined in Mexican and Guatemalan laws and policies (although it is highly questionable how effective these are in practical terms) what is without question is that selective examples of indigenous cultural production continue to be appropriated for state and elite

¹⁰⁶ Little’s use of the term “making do” is informed by de Certeau’s work (Little, 2008b).

projects from which the indigenous populations of these two countries continue to be marginalised.

Research Questions and Research Methods

As previously noted in the Introduction, this research is guided by four overriding questions, central to which are the following themes: the role of Maya dolls in the construction and expression of identities; the role of the market in the production of the dolls; the different types of function and value that are foregrounded at different points in a doll's life story; and the effectiveness of a life story approach to objects in answering these questions.

While a life story approach underpins this thesis, in practice there are limited opportunities to trace the entire life history of specific doll objects from their source materials to their eventual demise. However, focusing on the object type of "Maya doll" in different contexts reveals the wide variety of potential biographies that different examples can embody. As also noted in the Introduction, in order to engage with Maya dolls at different points of their "lives", my research utilises mixed methods: material analysis, interviews, participant observation and textual analysis. These methods of data collection are explained in more detail in the following sections.

Interviews

The majority of data is drawn from semi-structured interviews that took place in Guatemala, Mexico, the UK and online between November 2016 and July 2017. These interviews were conducted either face-to-face and audio recorded or via email. The participants form three cohorts:

1. Weavers/producers of dolls

The first cohort, unsurprisingly, are the weavers and dollmakers who mark the beginning chapters of the dolls' life stories. The aim here was to capture the

participants' thoughts and feelings about the dolls and/or textiles they produce. This was the most challenging cohort to access, partly because of trust issues and partly because of language issues. In Antigua, as I was unsure whether a legacy of the civil war would be a hesitancy on the part of participants in signing Consent Forms I arranged weaving lessons with a Kaqchikel weaver from San Antonio and over the four weeks I spent under her tutelage I built up enough trust to have an in-depth interview with her. By contrast I had to enlist the help of staff from the Spanish school I attended to secure an interview with a local dollmaker. This interview underlined the potential difficulties of obtaining Consent and a recorded conversation in the absence of a personal relationship, as the dollmaker was initially pensive about signing the Consent Form and I think it was only because a representative from my school was with me, who acted as an informal mediator, that she agreed.¹⁰⁷

In San Juan Chamula and San Cristóbal I was unable to find a Chamula weaving teacher with whom I could take classes and develop a personal relationship. In addition, the women who make dolls and weave are more likely to be older and, therefore, speak primarily Tzotzil.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, the head of the Spanish school I attended organised an interview with a dollmaker/weaver in San Juan Chamula who was willing to talk to me, and her grandson agreed to interpret between Tzotzil and Spanish.

2. People who are from, or have visited Mexico or Guatemala

The second group comprises people who are from, or have visited, Mexico or Guatemala and, therefore, moves away from the production aspect and instead investigates the thoughts and feelings of consumers of these dolls. This cohort has

¹⁰⁷ The issue of Consent and confidentiality for local participants came to the fore when a Kaqchikel business woman and organiser of weavers approached me as she had heard about my research. During an emotional three-hour conversation, I gained an incredible insight into her life as a vendor of hand woven textiles and, more generally, as an indigenous woman in Guatemala, but she preferred that I did not use this information in my research.

¹⁰⁸ 34 percent of Chiapas's indigenous language speakers are monolingual – the highest rate in Mexico: <http://www.coha.org/the-last-of-the-mayans-preserving-chiapas-indigenous-languages-in-the-21st-century/> (accessed 27 December 2019). However, there is an added gender dimension in that less indigenous females than males speak Spanish (Bazak, 2016: 4).

two sub groups. The first of these is formed of Mexicans and Guatemalans who are familiar with the dolls as examples of cultural production from their own respective countries. The second sub group consists of visitors to either of these countries who, in most cases, encounter these dolls as souvenirs.

In terms of recruitment, at both fieldwork sites I stayed with local *ladino/mestizo* families and also attended Spanish language classes. In Antigua, as previously noted, I also had weaving lessons. Participants were drawn from the families with whom I stayed, fellow guests, students, staff and teachers at the Spanish language schools and my weaving classes.¹⁰⁹ In the UK, by distributing invitations (see Appendix 1) I recruited Mexican students at the University of Nottingham and the University of Reading. Visitors to Mexico and Guatemala were also recruited through invitations distributed at Language Tuition Nottingham and through work colleagues, friends and acquaintances.

3. Collectors or purchasers of dolls which are dressed in national or indigenous dress

Finally, the third cohort comprises doll collectors, some of whom had acquired Maya dolls as second-hand items without having visited Mexico or Guatemala. This context, consequently, marks a further stage in the dolls' life story. The participants were mainly recruited through a well-known collector of national and regional dress dolls who I contacted through her doll collecting website. She subsequently circulated my invitation via social media and her website and also wrote emails on my behalf to several of her personal contacts who are noteworthy collectors.¹¹⁰ As all but one of these interviews were conducted via email, this cohort comprised participants from several different countries.

¹⁰⁹ In Antigua I had expected to have the opportunity to interview more participants since, when I did a reconnaissance there in 2012, the Spanish school was attended by between 15 and 20 students at any one time and there was, therefore, 15 and 20 teachers. However, on this occasion during the month I attended the school, it was unusually quiet with never more than three students including myself and, consequently, only three teachers. The school in San Cristóbal was also quiet and during my three weeks staying with the family, I was the only homestay guest.

¹¹⁰ These included a Mexican collector who I hoped would act as a facilitator for interviews with other collectors in Mexico. However, she did not respond.

Although some participants straddled multiple cohorts, this differentiation was necessary to utilise divergent recruitment methods and ask targeted questions.¹¹¹ All participants, however, were interviewed on the basis that they were interested either in Mexican or Guatemalan souvenirs/*artesanías* or dolls clothed in national, regional or ethnic dress. All participants were also shown at least one photograph of a doll from a selection of three that I had carefully chosen for the following reasons:¹¹²

- Example A is a Zapatista doll made by Chamulas. I chose this example since ‘EZLN’ is clearly written on its “gun” and so for those who are familiar with this group, there is no ambiguity about what the doll represents.
- Example B is a standard Chamula doll without the addition of Zapatista paraphernalia. I chose this example because it would be instantly recognisable to a participant already familiar with such dolls.
- Example C is a generic, Maya doll from Guatemala. In contrast to the first two examples, it is very difficult to determine exactly where it was made as it has no association with a specific location within the country. Indeed, not only are these dolls widely available in Guatemala, but I have also seen them for sale in various places in Mexico and Belize with labels that mark their provenance as such. On the one hand, I selected this unlabelled example because I wanted to establish if any participants associate them with locations other than Guatemala. On the other hand, the doll’s size is important as it is small enough to be identified by some participants as a worry doll, thereby potentially linking it to a further level of interactions and associations, while, for others, it is too big to be a worry doll, thus potentially embodying a different set of meanings. In sum, its ambiguity allows participants to imbue it with multiple meanings and functions.

¹¹¹ Ethics approval was also granted on the basis of these different cohorts.

¹¹² See Appendix 1 for photographs.

The interview questions for all three groups (see Appendix 1) started with “ice breakers” to establish a little background information about the participant, before moving on to targeted questions depending on the cohort, and based on the themes detailed below:

- Weavers/dollmakers: their thoughts and feelings about their *artesanía* production.
- Mexicans and Guatemalans: their views about *artesanías*. (Although not synonyms, the usage of *artesanías* as opposed to souvenirs was to reflect the most likely usage by participants. Alternatively put, as the dolls are handmade crafts from their own countries, the Mexican and Guatemalan participants may or may not regard them as souvenirs.)
- Visitors to Mexico or Guatemala: their opinions about souvenirs.
- Doll collectors: their thoughts and feelings about dolls in national or regional dress.

The final set of questions for all participants focused on the dolls in the three photographs, noted above, to establish whether they were familiar with them – or, better still, owned one – and their thoughts about them. Before the interview commenced, the participants agreed to a Consent Form (see Appendix 1) and also completed a short questionnaire requesting their personal details (see Appendix 1).

I recognised from the onset of this project that the time constraints of my fieldwork based in Mexico and Guatemala (approximately one month in each location) would preclude the collection of large data sets and, therefore, the formation of generalised conclusions based on collective or shared identities was an unrealistic aim. However, being freed from this expectation allowed me to conduct a smaller number of interviews with participants who, in several cases, I had formed some level of companionship with. This was important since the trust

this engendered resulted in far-reaching and insightful interviews that I doubt would have been otherwise achieved.

Although these interviews formed the primary method of data collection, the research was augmented in four ways. Firstly, in order to understand how the source materials and production methods relating to the dolls have changed over time I undertook a diachronic material analysis of doll forms based on my collection of around 90 dolls from Guatemala and Chiapas which date from the 1930s to 2018. Secondly, regarding the vending and consumption of the dolls, I carried out participant observation at a selection of *artesanía* vending sites to assess the profile of the vendors and consumers. These sites included 2 markets in both San Cristóbal and Antigua and at least 15 shops in both of these locations, many of which I visited on multiple occasions. In addition, I visited the *artesanía* markets in San Antonio and San Juan Chamula on several occasions. I also carried out participant observation in all of the museums I visited in Guatemala and Mexico with the aim of collecting information about visitors interested in *artesanías* and indigenous cultural production. Thirdly, to analyse how Maya dolls function as exhibits, I visited several museums in Mexico, Guatemala and the UK. In five instances I bolstered this research with face-to-face or online interviews with representatives of the museums.¹¹³ The fourth and final type of additional data collection regarded the vending of, often second-hand, Maya dolls. Here, I carried out the textual analysis of keywords used by eBay sellers to auction Chamula, Zapatista and Guatemalan dolls. In sum, these additional methods help to provide a comprehensive assessment of the different life paths the dolls can travel.

This chapter has provided an account of the social, political and historical baggage embedded in the production of Maya textiles and *traje* in Mexico and Guatemala. It also, therefore, offers a first glimpse of the meanings embodied by the Maya dolls formed of these same textiles. At the level of the individual, Little's recognition of identities as a continual process, constructed through the social

¹¹³ I also had planned to assess the Museo de la Muñeca in Amealco de Bonfil, Querétaro, Mexico. This museum, which receives support from the municipal authority, is dedicated to exhibiting dolls from throughout Mexico. However, the museum was temporarily closed at the time of my fieldwork.

relations present in any particular context, show how Maya vendors negotiate a path through the often contradictory policies of the state and local authorities. In terms of reception, the examples provided by the display of dolls in two different types of museum show how they have been put to work as educational tools to disseminate in the public arena very specific ideas about Maya identities. The dolls in the US museum assessed in Chapter One offer essentialised, stereotypical conceptions of a Guatemalan Maya identity whilst simultaneously flattening regional differences of race, ethnicity and national context in order to present a generic American indigenous identity. In this chapter, García Canclini's approach has been utilized to demonstrate how state-sponsored national institutions in Mexico also erase the local specificities associated with Maya dolls, in this case, examples from Chamula, in order to reconfigure them as examples of a homogenised Mexican indigenous identity overlaid with an overarching Mexican national identity. These examples merely hint at the potential functions and meanings that can be attached to these dolls that reach far beyond their conception as "tasteless tourist souvenir". This thesis now shifts from a focus on how national and local government policies have affected textile production to focus more concretely on how these dolls function at the level of individuals involved in their production.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PRODUCTION OF MAYA TEXTILES AND DOLLS

Textiles, as a mode of self-presentation, assert personal, ethnic, religious, and economic identities. Textiles are eloquent texts, encoding history, change, appropriation, oppression, and endurance, as well as personal and cultural creative visions (Berlo, 1996: 439).

As Janet Berlo's statement underlines, rather than being mere fabric, textiles are of pivotal importance for the construction and expression of identities. Accordingly, the central concern of this chapter is to highlight the crucially significant role of weaving and *traje* for the construction and expression of a Maya identity, both in individual and collective terms, and how this relates to the production of dolls dressed in this same handwoven *traje*. In fact, this thesis insists that understanding *traje* is essential for the interpretation of the dolls. A failure to discuss and underline its vital importance would lead only to a superficial analysis of the dolls as readymade objects and erase the weight of provenance with which they are so intrinsically bound. Thus, as *traje* is the start point – both in real terms as the source material and in figurative terms as the 'real-life' incarnation of the doll object – this chapter traces the life story of a *huipil* from San Antonio and a *falda* from San Juan Chamula from thread level to finished garment and then investigates the differential ways in which these textiles are utilised in the production of a sample of dolls from these two respective locations.¹¹⁴ By engaging with weavers and dollmakers at various points of this process, this chapter reveals the multiplicity of identities that circulate around the production of the doll object and its raw materials. Furthermore, although care is taken in the chapter to avoid using these two case studies to make generalisations about Maya cultural production from throughout Guatemala and Chiapas it is striking that a diachronic analysis of dress forms and dolls from these two markedly different *municipios* reveals not only differences that point to local contexts and local identities but also similarities that indicate regional-

¹¹⁴ Spanish, rather than Kaqchikel or Tzotzil, weaving and clothing terms will be used throughout this thesis to ease the comparison of different *traje* terms.

level contexts and suggest a collective Maya identity that transcends nation-state borders.

Approaches to Weaving and Traje

Maya and scholars of the topic generally concur that Maya identity in Chiapas and Guatemala is linked, rather than to any physical distinction, to the following cultural practices: *costumbre*; traditional¹¹⁵ public duties such as the office of *cargo* and membership of *cofradías*; and the use of *traje* and *lengua*.¹¹⁶ These culturally specific Maya practices are, however, further marked by *municipio*-specific differences. Although *municipios* were a Spanish imposition,¹¹⁷ they still function as state-recognised administrative units and are considered, again both by their residents and in academia, to be ethnically discrete as distinguished by their *costumbre*, *lengua* and *traje*.¹¹⁸ Influential in this respect is the 1930s research of anthropologist Sol Tax, in which he emphasised ‘municipios as self-conscious social and cultural independent groups’ (1937: 444). Consequently, since Tax’s research, anthropological studies that focus on Maya have generally used the *municipio* to delimit their fieldwork. However, unlike older research, which treated these units as isolated from the wider national context, more recent research highlights extra-community links.¹¹⁹

In comparison to the other cultural practices noted above, scholarly analysis of *traje* has lagged behind. It was partly with the advance of feminist theories that cloth – ‘a doubly damned subject: a “craft” and what is often seen as a product of “women’s work”’ – has been deemed to be of academic value and, therefore,

¹¹⁵ This thesis utilises Hendrickson’s definition of “traditional”: ‘a long history in the indigenous community’ (1995: 120).

¹¹⁶ For *costumbre* in Chamula communities, see Rosenbaum (1993), Gossen (1999) and Cruz Salazar (2014); for San Antonio, see Annis (1987).

¹¹⁷ This is not clear-cut, however, since some scholarship has suggested that communities now defined as *municipios* were in existence before the conquest (Smith, 1990: 28).

¹¹⁸ It has been suggested that the first documentary evidence that links different *traje* to specific *municipios* refers to an incident in Tecpán in 1759 (Hill, 1989: 195). Pancake states that, prior to the late 1970s, there were over 120 Maya communities in Guatemala with specific forms of *traje* (1996: 46).

¹¹⁹ For example, see Hendrickson (1995), Gossen (1999) and Fischer and Hendrickson (2002).

worthy of assessment (Hendrickson, 1995: 7).¹²⁰ Despite this lag, sources that do refer to Maya dress and weaving can broadly be divided into several types:¹²¹

- Anthropological studies in which dress is not the main focus and which, therefore, only briefly mention the significance of *traje* as a key marker of Maya identity.¹²²
- “Overview” books and catalogues of *traje* from different *municipios* that are often profusely illustrated and provide a basic outline of the historical and contemporary context of the Maya, together with information on design motifs, dyes, fibres and the technical process of weaving.¹²³ These studies – mainly written by collectors, curators, non-Maya weavers and artists – that focus on the physical object, provide the majority of published work on *traje*.¹²⁴
- Ethnographies that, by providing a diachronic assessment of *traje* from a specific area, highlight continuities and changes in its form and production.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ See also Berlo on this point, particularly in relation to indigenous women and textiles (1996: 437-438).

¹²¹ The delineations drawn in this survey are informed by those provided by Hendrickson (1995) and Oztzy (1996) in their respective and very useful, literature reviews.

¹²² For example, for Chiapas see Gossen (1984) and Rosenbaum (1993).

¹²³ For example, for Guatemala see Start (1948), Osborne (1965), Wood and Osborne (1966), Pettersen (1976), Bierregaard (1977), Deuss (1981), Vecchiato (1989), Bertrand and Magne (1991), Altman and West (1992), Hecht (2001a, 2001b), Odland (2006), Chandler *et al* (2015) and Girard de Marroquín (2017); for Chiapas see Morris *et al* (2014). Three other works should be noted that include Maya *traje* as part of a wider investigation of indigenous dress in Mexico: Cordry and Cordry (1968) and Sayer (1985, 2002).

¹²⁴ The exception to this is the work of Chandler *et al* (2015) which, although it provides an overview, also includes interviews with weavers and other textile artisans.

¹²⁵ For example, for Guatemala see Carlsen and Wenger (1996); for Chiapas see Morris (1986) and Morris *et al* (2015).

- Sources that focus on Maya textiles as commodities and explore textile entrepreneurship and marketing¹²⁶ and, in addition, ethnographies that link these concerns to religion¹²⁷ and gender.¹²⁸
- Research that links weaving to a Maya worldview.¹²⁹
- Sources that blend all of the above elements in order to provide penetrating insights into the role of *traje* that are intertwined with politics and identity concerns, such as gender, race and ethnicity, and that also balance out the tendency, found in some of the other sources noted above, to privilege an assessment of the woven article over the individual who weaves or wears it.¹³⁰

Since they are closely concerned with the central themes explored in this thesis the academic sources from this latter group will augment my fieldwork data in this chapter.

On a slightly different note, Berlo remarks that the majority of ethnographic research relating to Maya in Mexico and Guatemala focuses on individual communities and the resulting lack of comparative studies means that similarities and differences between communities, whether within or beyond nation-state borders, are unclear (1996: 464). Furthermore, since they have specific contexts, Berlo also notes that it should not be assumed that arguments relating to one community can be extended to others (1996: 464). This relative lack of comparative analysis extends to research on *traje* and weaving. Yet, although a rare example, the value of a comparative approach is demonstrated by Elizabeth M. Brumfiel's (2007) assessment of three similar images of Mesoamerican women weaving with a backstrap loom. These images of a pre-Hispanic Maya, an Aztec shortly after the

¹²⁶ For example, for Guatemala see Ehlers (1993) and Dickson and Littrell (1998); for Chiapas see Morris (1996).

¹²⁷ For example, for Guatemala see Annis (1987).

¹²⁸ For example, for Chiapas see Eber and Rosenbaum (1993).

¹²⁹ For example, for Guatemala see Tedlock and Tedlock (1985) and Prechtel and Carlsen (1988).

¹³⁰ For Guatemala see Hendrickson (1991, 1995, 1996b) and Otzoy (1996); for Chiapas see Cruz Salazar (2014).

Spanish Conquest and a late 20th-century Maya from Guatemala, show that although the practice of weaving could be construed as remaining unchanged through time, it is instead linked primarily to class, gender and ethnicity in these respective contexts.¹³¹ Clearly then, to avoid generalisations that lead to stereotypical representations of Maya weavers and weaving as frozen in the past and separate from the modern world, it is important that specific temporal and spatial contexts are taken into account, thereby revealing changes and continuities as well as differences and similarities between them. In sum, Brumfiel's comparative analysis shows the following:

[L]as culturas indígenas contemporáneas pueden ser reconocidas como el resultado de sus propios esfuerzos por sobrevivir como comunidades social y culturalmente distintivas, ayudadas por una herencia cultural que ellas – como sus antepasados – utilizaron de formas flexibles y beneficiosas (2007: 31).

In addition, although case studies that identify how *traje* has been deployed and adapted at specific times and locations are essential, it is only by comparing the development of *traje* from two markedly divergent contexts that the scale of adaptive ingenuity is revealed.¹³² These two dimensions, as applied both to *traje* and dolls formed from its fragments, constitute a key aim of what follows in this chapter.

San Antonio: Weaving, *Traje* and Dolls

The weaving process from thread to *huipil*

¹³¹ Hendon (2006) also explores representations of female weavers from these same three time periods in order to explore textile production as a craft occupation rather than as a domestic role.

¹³² Although Schevill *et al's* (1996) edited collection includes chapters that assess the *traje* and weaving production of Maya in either Chiapas or Guatemala respectively, there are no chapters that aim to provide a comparative assessment *per se*. Schevill and Foxx's (1997) edited collection also provides cross-border comparisons; however, the information is generalised and aimed more at a non-academic readership.

Although *traje* refers to a complete ensemble of clothing rather than individual garments, this section focuses on a San Antonio *huipil* woven on a backstrap loom since it is the item for which this site is renowned and thus is highly significant in terms of a *municipio* identity (Figure 12). By following the journey from thread to finished *huipil* the aim here is to underline the time and skill involved in the production of such garments and which is an integral part of dolls formed from their fragments. Obviously, then, their life story starts with the raw materials. In San Antonio, *huipils* are made from cotton, both cultivated and transformed into thread by large-scale Guatemalan enterprises (Hendrickson, 1995: 46). Smaller workshops may subsequently mercerise or dye the thread to adapt it for the local market (1995: 48).¹³³ Once the weaver has bought their thread and set up a backstrap loom – a complicated and tedious process that can take more than two days – they are ready to start weaving (Asturias de Barrios, 1997: 73).¹³⁴ San Antonio *huipils* are brocaded, whereby designs are woven into the cloth, as contrasted with embroidery, whereby designs are sewn onto finished cloth. The physical process of brocading not only involves the repetitive backwards and forwards bending of the weaver’s body in order to increase and release the tension of the loom but, in addition, requires good eyesight and flexible hands and fingers. From my short experience of weaving, it is clear that also required is the ability to weave patterns from memory and to envisage how designs and colour combinations will look as a finished item of clothing, together with a good level of mental arithmetic and high levels of concentration.¹³⁵ Furthermore, these skills need to be supplemented with local cultural knowledge about the colours and the designs appropriate for a particular *municipio*. In San Antonio’s case, the issue of colour involves a balanced selection of “hot” and “cold” colours, a concept that is difficult for weavers to define for people from beyond the community.¹³⁶ In terms of designs, there are two key features. The first of these comprises rows of brocaded,

¹³³ Mercerised thread is that which has been treated with chemicals to increase its strength and lustre. See Hendrickson’s (1995) description of the production of a Tecpán *huipil* which explains the production of Guatemalan thread in more detail.

¹³⁴ This process includes winding the skeins of thread into balls and forming the warp on a warping board.

¹³⁵ See also Hendrickson (1995) and Asturias de Barrios (1997) who provide details about the various skills required to weave.

¹³⁶ See Annis for an indication of what constitutes “hot” and “cold” in textile colours and in other aspects of everyday life in San Antonio (1987: 166-177).

geometric patterns which are woven from memory and visible on only one side of the textile (Schevill, 1986: 56).¹³⁷ The second feature consists of curvilinear *marcador* representations of flora and fauna based on cross-stitch patterns of European origin (Deuss, 1981: 55; Altman and West, 1992: 177; Hecht, 2001a: 57). Of central significance, and the reason for which San Antonio *traje* is renowned throughout Guatemala, is that the *marcador* designs are identical on both sides of the textile.¹³⁸ Not only are these designs very complicated and laborious to weave, but they are also expensive since they require more thread. San Antonio *huipils* comprise two brocaded panels of approximately the same size that are whipstitched together, leaving a space in the middle for the head to fit through (Figure 13). The final stage is to fold this fabric in half and sew up two sides, leaving spaces for armholes (Figure 14). All told, depending on the specific style, it can take between four and six weeks, working six days each week for eight hours per day, to weave a *huipil* (Asturias de Barrios, 1997: 83). However, San Antonio *huipils* that are covered entirely in *marcador* designs can take up to a year to weave (Chandler *et al*, 2015: 27).

The newly made pristine *huipil*, worn for special occasions, gradually becomes a workaday item: a process marked by wear rather than changing fashions (Hendrickson, 1995: 178).¹³⁹ But of crucial importance is that the robust materiality of cotton means that the fabric is sufficiently resilient to outlast its “life” as an increasingly worn-out *huipil*. Hendrickson’s cultural biography of a *huipil* from Tecpán, Guatemala, provides a selection of possible subsequent stages in a *huipil*’s

¹³⁷ The technical name for this technique is “single-faced supplementary weft brocading”. See Osborne (1965: 95-100) and Altman and West (1992: 97-98) on the symbolism of San Antonio designs, upon which, however, the weavers themselves do not seem to place significance (Schevill, 1993: 6). See Hendrickson (1995: 159) for similar observations in relation to Tecpán and Morris *et al* (2015: 30) in relation to Chiapas.

¹³⁸ The technical term for this technique is “double-faced supplementary weft weaving”. For a more technical description of San Antonio weaving see Hecht (2001a: 57-60). For illustrations of San Antonio *traje* see Deuss (1981: 16 photo d, 48 photo b), Schevill (1986: 56-59), Annis (1987: 111), Altman and West (1992: 128, 172), Schevill (1997: 158), Hecht (2001a: 93), Chandler *et al* (2015: 27-31) and Girard de Marroquín (2017: 51-53).

¹³⁹ My informal conversations with 3 San Antonio weavers aged from their mid-20s to early 30s, who wore *traje* habitually, revealed that they owned 2, 3 and 5 *huipils* respectively, which they looked after carefully. Estrella, for instance, washes her *huipil* inside out and dries it indoors so that the sun does not fade the bright colours. A weaver from San Antonio featured in the research of Chandler *et al* claimed that a well-looked after *huipil* could last for 40 years (2017: 27).

life story (1995: 179-181).¹⁴⁰ For example, once completely worn out, *traje* items may be cut up in order to patch other items of clothing and may eventually become rags for domestic use.¹⁴¹ Alternatively, used *traje* items may be sold in their unadulterated, well-worn state in tourist centres such as Antigua where such pieces, because they have been worn by an indigenous person, are of particular interest to those tourists seeking an “authentic” clothing item. Old, fine examples are regarded as collectors’ items and are sold via middlemen in the antique or art world and, as a consequence, the weavers are only paid a negligible portion of the eventual selling price. In addition, *traje* items may be cut up and made into items such as bags, wallets, cushions and, crucially for this thesis, one can add to this list, dolls, for the tourist market. Ultimately, though, the money received by the weavers for their used *traje* items often enables them to buy thread in order to weave new pieces, and so the cycle begins again.

Weaving, *traje* and the construction and expression of Maya identities

The above account captures the importance of the material properties of a *huipil*, along with the skill and huge amount of time involved for an individual to transform a bundle of raw materials into an item of clothing that is recognisable as emanating from San Antonio. Of key importance is that utilising a life story approach underlines how this labour, expertise and place-specific identity is embodied by dolls formed of these textiles. Yet, the above account only scratches the surface of the complexity and range of identities conveyed by the *huipil*, *corte* and *faja* that form the core components of a female’s *traje*. Rather than being uniform, subtle variations in the form and design elements of *traje* in fact provide a wealth of information about the identity of the individual who wears it, beyond their *municipio* affiliation. For example, scholars have shown how San Antonio *huipils* can indicate from which specific *barrio*, *canton* and *aldea* (the units that comprise a *municipio*) and even family group an individual originates (Annis, 1987: 119; Pancake, 1996: 48-49, 53). In addition, economic class, age, social status and

¹⁴⁰ In common with this thesis, Hendrickson’s assessment of the life story of a Tecpán *huipil* is informed by Kopytoff’s cultural biographical approach to things.

¹⁴¹ See Altman and West who describe the various ways in which *huipils* can be reconstructed in order to extend their life (1992: 56).

religion can be discerned from San Antonio's *traje* and accessories such as jewellery.¹⁴² Furthermore, although there is conformity to a community's criteria of acceptable *traje* forms and designs, there is still scope for an individual who weaves or wears *traje* to express their propensity towards what Cherry Pancake expresses as 'progressiveness or conservatism, innovativeness, notions of aesthetics, and self-expressiveness' (1996: 53). Overall, while not evident to the layperson, rather than forming a homogenous mass those who wear *traje* convey a multitude of meanings and identities.

Weaving, *traje* and the construction and expression of Maya identities: Gender and *traje*

However, of crucial importance is that only females wear *traje* in San Antonio; by 1987, only 'a handful of very old men' from the *municipio* were still wearing the traditional *gabón* – a woollen tunic, which is worn over trousers of white *manta* (Annis, 1987: 110. See Figure 12). This is also the case for the majority of indigenous men in many areas of Guatemala (Hendrickson, 1995: 26, 88). Indeed, although the Guatemalan state celebrates *traje* as a tourist attraction and symbol of national identity as discussed in Chapter Two, it does not retain this "positive" status in everyday life in which *ladinos* are the dominant group. Here, by contrast, *traje* functions as an indicator of the subordinate identity of the wearer, both in terms of class and ethnicity (1995: 88). Maya men in Guatemala have often attributed their infrequent use of *traje* to, what Irma Otzoy expresses as, 'the social, economic, and cultural pressure exerted by Ladino society' (1996: 146). The roots of this pressure reach as far back as 1836 when, for Maya men, participation in local administrative or political roles entailed relinquishing *traje* as per a state order of that year which declared: 'no Indian may hold the office of *regidor*, *alcalde*, *síndico*, nor any other parish position, without wearing shoes or boots, a shirt with a collar, long trouser, a jacket or coat, and a hat that is not made from straw or palm leaf' (Carillo Ramírez quoted in Otzoy, 1996: 146-147). Furthermore, in the context of the civil war, it was often a pragmatic decision for men to conceal their

¹⁴² For variations in *traje* see the following: in terms of age, see Schevill (1986:56); for socio-political status and religion see Schevill (1986: 56), Annis (1987), Mayén (1996: 89), Knoke de Arathoon (2017: 13) and Girard de Marroquín, (2017: 52).

ethnic identity in order to avoid being forcibly recruited into the army (1995: 119). More recently, Maya men speak of work-based discrimination that is only exacerbated by wearing *traje* (Hendrickson, 1995: 88).

Yet, Hendrickson suggests a more profound reason for the relative rarity of male wearers of *traje*: namely, because of the transgression of Western gender norms that male *traje* entails. More specifically, women's *traje*, comprising colourful, intricate, often handwoven items, expresses femininity in conformity with non-indigenous beauty norms (1995: 89). Conversely, male *traje* does not in any way conform to what Hendrickson describes as: 'the sartorial expression of masculinity according to the fashion hierarchy of *vestido*' (1995: 89). Indeed, male *traje*, which may include: pedal-pusher-length trousers; short jackets embellished with pink flowers and edged with pink and lilac tassels; and vibrant, multi-coloured tassel-fringed cloths worn around the head, could be viewed as an inversion of the non-indigenous masculine dress norms of jeans, shirts, t-shirts and baseball caps. As Hendrickson argues: '[t]he effect, then, is not only to label a man in *traje* as "Indian" but also to see him as one who is less masculine (even less adult) in a world dominated by non-Maya values' (1995: 89).¹⁴³

Maya men and women, meanwhile, suggest the reason for women's retention of *traje*, in not dissimilar social contexts to that of men, is because they are braver than men: brave enough to demonstrate their Maya identity through a highly visible act of 'cultural resistance' (Otzoy, 1996: 147). This explanation, Otzoy argues, indicates the extent to which 'Maya women feel the strongest sense of cultural responsibility to transmit their values to future generations' (1996: 147). By transmitting these values, the fundamental importance of *traje* for the construction and expression of a Maya identity extends beyond the individual female who weaves or wears it. That is, weaving usually takes place in the domestic sphere in conjunction with child rearing, cooking and other duties and, as Hendrickson points out, 'Maya women's productive activities and re-productive powers are central in defining them as the embodiment of Maya culture and Maya community' (1995:

¹⁴³ For example, Ehlers refers to a Kaqchikel man from San Antonio Palopó, who explained that 'he abandoned his *traje* because he grew tired of ladinos calling him *mujer* (woman) when he traveled to the coast' (1993: 192).

131). In addition, as well as perpetuating Maya values in future generations, women who weave also form a direct link with the pre-Hispanic past through the association with Ixchel, the moon goddess and patroness of fertility and weaving (1995: 151). Furthermore, by the very act of weaving, women, as Berlo argues, ‘translate these ephemeral [Maya cultural] values into material objects’ (1996: 440). In sum, it is Maya women who are, as Hendrickson states, ‘[the] guardians of Maya values’ and of crucial importance for the reproduction of Maya culture (1995: 151). Ultimately, therefore, although men no longer wear *traje* in San Antonio, its omnipresence there ensures that it plays a key role in the construction of an indigenous social identity generally within the *municipio*.

A Kaqchikel weaver’s story: Weaving, *traje* and the construction and expression of Maya identities

Whilst the previous section emphasised how identities linked to *municipio*, age and other similar factors, can be conveyed to others by a female’s *traje*, this section explores how weaving and wearing *traje* help females to construct a sense of self. My interview with Estrella,¹⁴⁴ a San Antonio weaver and weaving teacher aged 33, highlighted the crucially important role that *traje* has played throughout her life. She explained, for example, that from the age of four she sat with her mother so that she could watch her weave. By the age of seven, as is the norm in San Antonio,¹⁴⁵ Estrella’s mother deemed her ready to learn the weaving process from beginning to end, a process that Altman and West rightly regard as akin to ‘a process of enculturation’ (1992: 28). When I asked about the importance of weaving to her, Estrella’s immediate reaction perhaps reflected her preoccupation with her financial situation given her status as a single parent with a young daughter: ‘es para el sostén familia, para mantener a la familia que es lo más importante’. It was only when I questioned if there were any other reasons, that she referred to the cultural significance of weaving: ‘para mantener la cultura, mantener las tradiciones’ and emphasised the importance of passing this cultural knowledge through the

¹⁴⁴ The names of all participants have been changed except in cases where consent was granted to de-anonymise. A full list of interviews is included in Appendix 1.

¹⁴⁵ This point was confirmed by my informal conversations with four weavers from San Antonio.

generations: '[L]a mayoría de los diseños son a memoria, los vamos aprendiendo de generación en generación, es muy importante'.

Estrella's 10-year-old daughter is learning to weave and, notably, while Estrella is able to teach her on Sundays on her day off from work, Estrella's mother teaches her for the rest of the week.¹⁴⁶ There is a clear irony, therefore, that Estrella's work as a weaving teacher limits the time she has available to teach her own daughter how to weave. Similarly, she also mentioned that she had had to buy two of her five *huipils* as she struggled to find the time to weave her own. My informal conversations with three textile vendors in San Antonio revealed that such issues are not new or uncommon since they also were all taught by their grandmothers because their mothers were working. Nevertheless, Estrella did not seem to view this as a negative situation, presumably as it strengthens the relationship between her daughter and her mother and, furthermore, conforms to her desire to pass knowledge down through generations.

In relation to the importance for Estrella of wearing *traje*, her (Maya) indigenous identity came to the fore: 'es muy importante porque divide los grupos étnicos. El grupo étnico, también el idioma, es muy importante mantener el traje que es de la región [...] para distinguirse de cada grupo étnico, cada dialecto Maya'. When I commented that she looked very proud, she responded 'sí, me siento muy orgullosa de mis raíces indígenas'. Estrella confirmed that she always wore *traje*, both in private and public. The exception to this is on occasions, such as visits to restaurants, when she considers that formal trousers, a blouse and jacket are more appropriate. However, the absence of *traje* on these occasions led her to state, 'no me siento bien'. Significantly, not only is this because she is more accustomed to wearing her *traje* rather than *vestido*, but also because of what her peers would think if they saw her: 'a veces siento que las personas no me ven bien. Cuando hay personas que son del mismo pueblo y lo ven a uno con no el traje y entonces a veces

¹⁴⁶ Estrella estimated that currently in San Antonio, 80 percent of youngsters learn how to weave, while the remaining 20 percent do not like weaving and prefer to play on their computers. Although in San Antonio boys as well as girls often learn to weave, for the former this is combined with learning other types of (mainly agricultural) work (Asturias de Barrios, 1997: 81; and as per Estrella and my informal conversations with four weavers/textile vendors in San Antonio).

uno no se siente cómodo’. At times such as these, therefore, not only does she feel uncomfortable within herself, but she also experiences anxiety that her indigenous identity may be questioned by others.

As she had mentioned her *pueblo*, I clarified whether her identification was with her ethnic group or San Antonio and she replied in the following way:

Estrella: no, cada grupo étnico. Cada grupo étnico

Me: ok. Y ¿para ti es Kaqchikel?

Estrella: Kaqchikel

Me: ok, so, ¿no te importa el lugar específico? ¿es el grupo?

Estrella: no, el grupo

However, when I asked if she was able to recognise different types of *traje*, she replied ‘sí, es posible reconocerlos por medio del traje, de qué grupo étnico son y de qué también, de qué pueblo son’ and added ‘es muy importante’. Indeed, when I pressed her further, by asking if it is important that her *traje* and, more particularly, her *huipils*, feature designs from San Antonio, she replied that it is, because the designs they bear reflect both daily life and the abundant flora, fauna and agricultural produce of San Antonio. More specifically, in relation to the *marcador* for which San Antonio is famous, Estrella noted, ‘San Antonio Aguas Calientes se ha declarado [...] patrimonio cultural, el huipil, porque es el más importante a nivel de Sacatepéquez. No hay otro pueblo que trabaja los diseños de los dos lados, no hay ninguno, solamente San Antonio’. And when I asked how she felt to be from San Antonio, Estrella broke into a wide smile and replied ‘muy orgullosa de ser de San Antonio’. Significantly, therefore, although her spontaneous initial response to my questions privileged an indigenous and, subsequently, Kaqchikel identity over one linked to *municipio*, questions focusing specifically on San Antonio’s *huipils* triggered her to demonstrate more fully her pride in her San Antonio identity.

Of importance for this thesis is that, even in these short excerpts taken from our much longer conversation, it is clear just how important weaving and wearing *traje* is for Estrella’s sense of self; an aspect that is often lost in sources that focus on the

process of weaving and the resulting textiles. In addition, while the intergenerational gender aspect of weaving shines through, Estrella also moves between her Kaqchikel, indigenous, weaver, worker, breadwinner, teacher and *municipio* identities during a very short space of time during the interview. As highlighted by Little's (2004a) research as discussed in Chapter Two, this demonstrates the extent to which individuals engage in multiple identities that, rather than being fixed, are fluid and marked by a continual process of re-positionings depending on the context at any given moment. The academic sources above that highlight the importance of weaving and wearing *traje* for the construction and expression of identity categories in Guatemala, such as ethnicity, gender, age and class, are essential; however, these sources tend not to underline this fluidity. This background together with the subtle variations in *traje* forms and styles detailed above must be considered when discussing the identities embodied by the dolls both literally (via their materiality) and figuratively.

Hybrid *traje*: Continuity and change in San Antonio

While the above sections underline the complex meanings and identities represented by *traje* that are undiscernible to the layperson, the following section is a corrective to the perhaps widely held perception of international visitors to Guatemala, that *traje* is a static form of dress untouched by modernity and that, by extension, this characteristic also applies to those who wear it. It is, in fact, important to note that while changes to the shape of Guatemalan *traje* are minimal since the garments are formed from uncut, untailored panels, by contrast, *traje* designs and materiality are constantly evolving.¹⁴⁷ In San Antonio more particularly, there has been a dramatic change from the rather plain *traje* of the beginning of the 1900s, which included *huipils* handwoven from handspun, undyed cotton of pale brown which featured narrow white warp (vertical) stripes and a smattering of small *marcador* motifs to contemporary *huipils* which, aided by the time saved by the introduction of pre-spun thread bought ready coloured with synthetic dyes, are in some cases wholly covered by vibrant *marcador* designs of

¹⁴⁷ For a general overview of *traje* developments in Guatemala, see Rowe (1981), Knoke de Arathoon and Miralbés de Polanco (2010).

flora and fauna against a background of royal blue and purple.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, *cortes*, which were once indigo-blue with white pinstripes are currently made from brightly coloured *jaspe* material (Schevill, 1986: 58).¹⁴⁹ A dilemma, therefore, is how to reconcile this fluidity with the oft-repeated notion that distinct forms of *traje* enable Highland Maya to, as Hendrickson puts it, ‘readily identify the municipal origin of particular *traje* pieces and equate the wearer with what is being worn’ (1995: 51). As her (1995: 182-192) research shows, this is achieved by a process of incremental developments that although marking a break with the past are, nevertheless, ‘inextricably bound with elements of the old’ (1995: 182-183). Importantly, however, for these adaptations to take root beyond the individual weaver or wearer, they must either gain the collective recognition of the community or the recognition of an individual who the community respects, or, the reason for the adaptation must resonate with community members (1995: 183). In sum, creative innovations that combine with shared understandings of a specific social context constitute particularly powerful ‘statements’ (1995: 191). Significantly, there is also a reciprocal relationship between, on the one hand, the social context, which can spur changes to *traje* and, on the other hand, creative changes to *traje* that are appropriated in order to make social statements and construct new meanings.

The incremental developments in San Antonio *traje* were prompted not only by new source materials but also by an ever-increasing scope for interactions with ideas and people from both within the nation state and beyond. In turn, the *huipils* of other towns such as Comalapa, Tecpán, Concepción Chiquirichapa and Santa María de Jesús, are heavily influenced by the styles of San Antonio.¹⁵⁰ Other recent developments point to a growing tendency to embrace non-place-specific *traje* choices. For example, the brightly coloured *corte* of *jaspe* material currently worn in San Antonio, is a generic garment worn throughout the Central Highlands (Hendrickson, 1995: 35). Similarly, there is a nationwide trend, influenced by

¹⁴⁸ These developments can be traced in the following sources; Wood and Osborne (1966), Schevill (1986: 56-58, 1993: 14), Altman and West (1992: 172), Hecht (2001a: 93), Chandler *et al* (2015: 27) and at the Centro de Textiles del Mundo Maya, San Cristóbal and Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena, Guatemala City.

¹⁴⁹ See Altman and West for a fuller description of *jaspe* (1992: 66-69).

¹⁵⁰ This information was provided by an old version of Nim Po’t’s website that is no longer available.

international fashion conventions, to wear *traje* comprising garments of various tones of a singular colour, irrespective of their provenance.¹⁵¹ In sum, such interchange demonstrates an increasing tendency towards a pan-Maya dress form in Guatemala, whereby individuals select their favourite garments from different areas to create a kind of “hybrid” *traje*.

Hybrid *traje*: *Traje* and the pan-Maya movement in Guatemala

While the tendency towards pan-Maya *traje* forms, noted above, is not overtly political, it has a different connotation within the pan-Maya movement. Here, *traje* is a vitally important element of the push to foster a pan-Maya identity for Guatemala’s 21 Maya ethnic groups while recognising their diversity. With power achieved through unity, the movement aims to influence state policies in order to address the social and economic inequalities experienced by Guatemala’s Maya population (Warren, 1998). The role of *traje* within this stems from its status both as the key visual indicator of Maya identity and a key symbol of Maya resistance. Otzoy, who is an advocate of the pan-Maya movement, explains this in more detail.¹⁵² She argues that, as a historical and ongoing act of ‘Maya sociocultural resistance’, weaving and wearing *traje* constitute a political act (1996: 150). This might be on an overt level, as a highly visible public statement that Maya culture continues to resist and to be reproduced in spite of the marginalised position of Maya. Alternatively, this may be on a more covert level whereby the careful choices of motifs and designs on *traje* demonstrate creativity whilst also marking continuity with the past in order to ensure the survival of Maya culture or, in Otzoy’s terms, ‘while symbolizing continuing Maya political resistance’ (1996: 151). Further, Otzoy states that the continuities and adaptations to new challenges and opportunities that are conveyed in Maya weavings should be recognised as ‘acts of self-determination’ (1996: 151). More specifically, she argues that wearing *traje* items, or, indeed, entire outfits, from different *municipios*, is indicative of an increasingly flexible attitude whereby ‘Maya have developed a type of “common

¹⁵¹ This trend is particularly well demonstrated in exhibits at the Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena, Guatemala City.

¹⁵² Although Maya *traje* has been subject to numerous studies, the majority of these are provided by non-Guatemalans or, less frequently, non-Maya Guatemalans (Otzoy, 1996: 141). As a Maya, therefore, Otzoy is a rare exception to this tendency.

identity” (1996: 153). In addition, Otzoy notes that whilst in the past Maya may have abandoned their *traje* in an urban context to avoid being subjected to discrimination, professionals and students in particular are now more likely to assert their Maya identity as an act of defiance (1996: 154).¹⁵³ When linked with organisations that promote Maya culture and education, this assertive use of *traje* constitutes, she argues, a major ‘symbol of cultural survival and solidarity’ (1996: 154).¹⁵⁴ To close, this section refers once more to Otzoy who emphasises: ‘the language codified in Maya weavings “speaks” of the Maya as a people, of their roots, of their lives, and of their causes’ (1996: 149). Therefore, the image of a Maya woman dressed in items from various *municipios* could, on the one hand, indicate a clothing choice made purely for aesthetic reasons or, on the other hand, be a deeply felt statement of Maya resistance by an advocate of the pan-Maya movement. Significantly though, whatever the intentionality of the individual wearing the clothes, for an indigenous onlooker the effect is the same: it represents a shared sense of being Maya. Conversely, for an onlooker lacking knowledge of the evolution of *traje* and the attendant cultural codes, these subtleties often go unnoticed. The following sections assess how these fluid dress forms and complex meanings are manifested in the doll object.

Dolls from San Antonio

The following sections provide four case studies of dolls that have been produced, or are wearing textiles produced, in and around San Antonio. The overarching aim is to explore how the dolls’ materiality, production processes, and the thoughts and feelings of their producers relate to the complex and multiple identities that saturate the full-sized *traje* items explored above. Also, where applicable, the contemporary version of a doll is compared to an older example of the same type in order to provide a diachronic analysis. It is often impossible to establish the origin of older

¹⁵³ During my interview with Estrella, for instance, she noted that wearing *traje* can result in discrimination against indigenous people. See also, Velásquez Nimatuj for the ‘racial aggression’ she has experienced because of her *traje*, and the links between *traje* and discrimination more generally (2011: 525).

¹⁵⁴ Odland suggests that, while the expression of “‘Indian unity’” through dress constitutes ‘a significant trend’, it only applies to about five percent of the Maya population, of which young, educated and urban Maya are strongly represented (2006: 20).

Guatemalan dolls: firstly, because they are clothed in fragments of *traje* material that are too small to allow for an accurate identification of their specific place of production and, secondly, the construction of the dolls is often very similar irrespective of where in Guatemala they were produced. However, it is relatively easy to trace general developments, which should demonstrate to what extent the different social contexts that have driven adaptations to full-sized *traje* are also reflected in adaptations to the dolls.

San Antonio case study one: High quality, unique dolls.

Benjamín García was interviewed by Joanne Keller de García for a 1981 edition of *National Doll World*, a bi-monthly magazine published in the US for doll collectors. At the time of the interview, García was 54 years old and was married with three children: the interviewer described him as ‘indigenous’ (1981: 12). Although he worked at the Tourism Office in Antigua, he also made dolls dressed in various examples of *traje* from Guatemala. García started to learn how to make dolls (by obtaining and then dismantling a pair) in the early 1960s, a decision prompted by the responsibility he felt, as the eldest of nine children, to help his parents provide for the family.

The doll bodies are made from a wire frame around which is wrapped ‘coffee or skin-colored cloth’ (1981: 14). Wood shavings are then used to form the body and a piece of dried corn husk is used to make the face. Finally, the whole body is wrapped in muslin and the facial features are embroidered on. It was very important for García that the dolls were clothed in accurate representations of regional *traje* and he went to great lengths to ensure this. He explained, for example, that the miniature *traje* was ordered on a bespoke basis from weavers of the different communities represented. This sometimes entailed him chasing up late orders by telegram or going in person to the weaver’s village to discuss the finer details of the outfit. If his standards were not met, he insisted on the *traje* being remade. The outfit could take over a month for the weavers to complete.

The pair from San Antonio shown in Figure 15 was made by García in 1984 specifically for Angela – a doll collector from Ireland – who contacted him after

reading the aforementioned article.¹⁵⁵ Significantly, the couple presents a rather idealised depiction of reality since the male's dress is a record of what, at that time, was a dying form of dress. Thus, although García's motivation to record regional *traje* produced an accurate, three-dimensional miniature version of male attire the, presumably unwitting, consequence for a consumer based outside the locale was that it reinforced the spurious idea of unchanging indigenous life. By contrast, the female doll's *traje* did accurately record that worn in early 1980s San Antonio. Indeed, even the *marcador* work for which San Antonio is so well known is reproduced in miniature on the *tzute* (multi-purpose cloth) the doll is carrying (Figure 16).

In the magazine article García stated 'I make dolls now because I like to' and, furthermore, because 'I want the tourists to know the textiles of my country' (1981: 14). Thus, his motivation for making the dolls seemed to have changed over time: from a sense of economic familial responsibility to, on the one hand, a drive to promote the culture of Guatemala and, on the other hand, the experience of enjoyment. This sense of enjoyment, whilst a seemingly straightforward emotion, perhaps points to a more profound motivation: a feeling akin to a sense of wellbeing. This is demonstrated when García spoke of the conflict he experienced in relation to his dollmaking. On completing a pair of dolls he noted, 'it is true that I don't want to sell it, but I must; I tell myself it is for my family that I am doing this. [...] I need the sustenance that they afford me, but really, for me it is interesting to make them' (1981: 15). It seems here that, understandably, he cites his familial responsibilities in order to justify to himself and to others his compulsion to make dolls. More importantly, not only did he comment that 'more than anything else' he preferred to spend his rare free time perfecting his dolls but, 'I continue also because many people have helped me saying that my dolls are pretty and that what I do is an art' (1981: 15). It can, therefore, be suggested that at this stage of his life his dollmaking, and the positive responses that his work inspired, provided him primarily with an invaluable sense of self-worth.

San Antonio case study two: Worry dolls

¹⁵⁵ I was able to interview Angela for her perspective on her purchase. See Chapter Five for details.

Carmen is from San Lorenzo el Cubo, which, although only a mile from San Antonio, in stark contrast to its neighbour, is a *ladino* town.¹⁵⁶ She is 30 years old and is married with 3 children under the age of 13. Although Carmen started to help her mother make dolls when she was between 8 and 10 years old, it was her grandmother who taught her the skill. When Carmen was around 10 or 12 years of age, she started making them by herself. She said that the majority of mothers in San Lorenzo produce dolls for sale and have known how to make them since being youngsters. In fact, her mother, three sisters and sister-in-law are all also involved in making the dolls, thus highlighting the importance of this business for her family.

Carmen works from home and has a production cycle whereby every week her client provides her with the materials that she needs to make the dolls and tells her how many to make and in which styles and sizes. A few days later, her client returns to collect the finished dolls. She, therefore, has no part in the vending process except in those instances when people, such as myself, visit her at home and may buy items of spare stock if available. Carmen makes dolls in a range of sizes, from the tiny, 2-centimetre versions to those of 10 centimetres in height and defines them all as ‘muñequitas quitapenas’. For Carmen to make a female doll of five centimetres with a material face involves the following process. The body is formed of a piece of dried *cibaque* that is bent in half. This plant is used for various crafts, such as basket making, and, if softened in water, it is also used to tie together *tamales*.¹⁵⁷ The arms are formed of wire covered in a type of beige coloured paper that has many uses in Guatemala; for example, food items such as *tacos* and *tostados* are often served on it. Surprisingly, therefore, although seemingly mundane and, in any case, hidden from view, these source materials are linked to practices that have cultural resonance in Guatemala. The head is made of a piece of sponge covered in a fragment of stocking or tights material onto which the facial features are sewn. These components are bound together with thread and tied into position (Figure 17). This “skeleton” is then partly covered with fabric to represent

¹⁵⁶ See Annis (1987: 23-24, 149) for an explanation of San Lorenzo’s status as a *ladino* town.

¹⁵⁷ *Tamales* are a popular dish in Guatemala and Mexico, and are formed of corn dough and other ingredients that are wrapped in corn husks or banana leaves.

a rudimentary *huipil*.¹⁵⁸ The doll's *corte* is made from a *faja* for full-sized *traje*, which is cut in half, lengthways (Figure 18). The miniature *huipil* and *corte* are tied into position with thread and secured with glue (Figure 19). Finally, the *tocoyal* is also secured by glue onto the head. Carmen usually works with her sister and together they carry out one stage of the production process on all of the dolls before moving on to the next stage. For example, when I went to see her, there were dozens of dolls that were finished apart from the addition of a *tocoyal*. Carmen adapts this process to make other dolls in her repertoire, including a male version which is formed of an identical body but has gender-specific clothing. To make 144 of these male or female dolls it takes Carmen and her sister approximately 8 hours.¹⁵⁹

Notably, the *fajas* from which the dolls' *cortes* are made – which are supplied by Carmen's client – are produced in Comalapa.¹⁶⁰ When I asked why the *fajas* are from Comalapa rather than neighbouring San Antonio, especially given the status of the latter as an important centre of textile production, Carmen said that not only is it the cheaper option, but San Antonio *fajas* are unsuitable for dollmaking since their designs of flowers and birds are too large for such small-scale dolls. Thus, the dolls are not particularly representative, in terms of the producer or the textiles, of the local indigenous identity.

Even though she defined her work as '*artesanal*', I was struck by the speed at which Carmen worked and the copious amount of glue involved in the process. Central to her work seems to be how, albeit with care, she is able to work deftly with small components in order to fulfil her client's order, rather than technical skill or artistry. She has little, if any, creative input into the design of the dolls or textiles used and, since she works strictly to her client's requirements, all the dolls are of a standardised form. In fact, her remit extends to details such as the amount of stitches to be used for the facial features of different sized dolls and, significantly in terms of the representation of indigenous people, the colour of the tights/stocking used to cover the faces. Carmen showed me two dolls with faces covered in pieces

¹⁵⁸ For larger dolls, a folded-up strip of newspaper is wrapped around the torso before the *huipil* is placed in position.

¹⁵⁹ 12 dozen is a standard measurement of sale.

¹⁶⁰ Comalapa is around 30 miles by road from San Antonio.

of beige and white coloured tights, respectively. She explained the reason for this distinction in the following way: ‘porque todas las personas no somos blancas, blancas ni tan morenas, somos diferentes’. When I asked which colour is most requested by customers, she replied ‘antes, antes, pedían mucho la que era color cafecita. Pero se estuvo escaseando este color, entonces ahora nos piden más el blanco’. When I said that I preferred the darker colour, she added ‘sí, todos tienen los gustos diferentes y piden blanca o sea color cafecita’. This highlights, therefore, that for some consumers at least, a white doll wearing indigenous clothing is preferable to a darker one.

Carmen also makes female dolls that carry babies on either their back or chest, that are called ‘mamá, con bebé’. When I asked about the relevance of the babies for this type of doll Carmen explained:

para enterarlos de lo que son uno de mamá, cómo cargan a los niños, cómo los tratan. Porque nuevamente aquí en San Lorenzo y en San Antonio [...] todas para cargar un bebé, para salir al mercado o para salir a comprar, siempre tienen que cargar un rebozo y más cómodo para cargar a los bebés, ajá, entonces usted lo puede ver en una muñequita, la apariencia de una mamá con un niño.

The dolls are, therefore, a reflection of everyday life and since the women of San Lorenzo, as *ladinas*, do not wear *traje*, this is a reflection of a gender norm in rural towns that cuts across ethnic lines. Of crucial importance, however, is that only female dolls dressed in indigenous *traje*, rather than *vestido*, are particularly associated with this image. Thus, as noted in Chapter One in relation to Erich Fox Tree’s (2015) assessment of indigenous Barbie dolls with babies, this representation reflects and also reproduces the stereotypical gendered image of indigenous women as consisting purely of their “indigenous” and “mother” identity.

Overall, Carmen likes making dolls and prefers it to the agricultural work that she used to do. In addition, because making dolls entails working with her other female family members towards a shared deadline and since the majority of mothers in San Lorenzo make dolls and presumably utilise this same working model, this

activity surely permeates her life on both a familial level and a community level. But in contrast to Benjamín García, I did not sense a marked emotional attachment for Carmen either to the finished dolls or their source materials. She commented that she hardly ever uses worry dolls under her pillow and although she was open to displaying them for decorative purposes she did not have any in her house at the time of the interview. This is perhaps suggestive of a lack of connection between Carmen, as a *ladina*, making dolls representing indigenous people.

San Antonio case study three: Weaver dolls

As noted in Chapter Two, as I did not have the opportunity to secure a formal interview with makers of other types of dolls, case studies three and four, in contrast to those above, are predominantly based on material analysis. A key purpose in briefly describing these contemporary examples is to provide, in the subsequent section, a comparison with their earlier counterparts. The first case study is weaver dolls which, although not as readily available as other types of doll clothed in *traje*, are often sold in Antigua and San Antonio. The example on the left of Figure 20 was bought from the Mercado de Artesanía Compañía de Jesús, Antigua in January 2018. The vendor, who was an older indigenous woman from San Antonio, told me it was made by local children there. The doll's *huipil* is made from a fragment of second-hand *huipil* whilst its *corte* is made from *corte* material, both from Santa María de Jesús, a town a little under 10 miles by road from San Antonio. While the vendor had three other weaver dolls for sale that were made from old *huipils* from three different places, she did not have any dressed in San Antonio *traje*. That no importance is placed on the origin of the doll's *traje* suggests a flexible approach to dollmaking in relation to the expression of local indigenous identities and also perhaps indicates the expense of even second-hand *huipils* from San Antonio. Indeed, even well-worn, patched and repaired San Antonio *huipils* retain value and are sold as is at various vending contexts in San Antonio and Antigua. Alternatively, larger fragments are probably more profitably adapted into larger-scale souvenirs, such as cushion covers, that would better display the *marcador* designs.

San Antonio case study four: Large dolls

The final case study is a group of contemporary dolls produced in San Antonio (Figure 21). The male and female on the right were purchased at Mercado de Artesanía Compañía de Jesús in May 2017 from an indigenous female vendor from San Antonio who described them as ‘muñecas de San Antonio’. During an informal chat she mentioned that the dolls were made by her 12-year-old daughter and added, seemingly to explain the reason for her daughter’s involvement, that her husband had gone and life was difficult. She showed me the strip of textile from which the female doll’s *corte* was made and said that it was woven by hand. As the textile’s pattern looked rather generic, I was intrigued to know whether, if I showed her the doll, Estrella could identify its origin. Estrella recognised the textile immediately and confirmed that it was woven in San Antonio on a backstrap loom as a narrow strip. This latter point is important since the strip was the correct width for the doll’s *corte* and, therefore, would not require cutting to size or hemming to prevent fraying as it would have a selvedge.¹⁶¹ When I mentioned to Estrella that I had been unable to identify the textile as being from San Antonio she clarified that for weavers lacking economic resources, ‘trabajan solamente el fondo’; in other words, they weave only the base of a textile, with stripes but no design.

Aside from the two dolls on the right of Figure 21, all of the other dolls were bought from an indigenous female vendor from San Antonio, at Mercado de Artesanía Compañía de Jesús, in January 2018. Significantly, the vendor and her family produce dolls in the full range of sizes: from the 20-centimetre-high mother and father of the family group on the left of the photograph, to the newer, larger type of worry doll of 5 centimetres at the top of the photograph, thus highlighting the scaling down of the dolls’ bodies and their gender-specific detailing. Except for the addition of thick wire to the *cibaque* legs of the dolls in the family group – presumably to strengthen their larger bodies – the construction of all of the examples shown in the photograph is virtually identical to that of the five-centimetre worry doll made by Carmen. By comparing weaver dolls and, more

¹⁶¹ A selvedge forms part of a garment’s construction that locks threads in place to prevent them from unravelling.

particularly, large dolls to older examples, the following section demonstrates how their development has been influenced by producers' engagement with the market.

Continuity and change: Towards hybrid dolls

It is striking how little the basic form of the large dolls in Figure 21 has changed over time. Figure 7 shows similar dolls, mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, dating from between 1880 and 1903 from an unidentified location in Guatemala, that are held by the Pitt Rivers Museum.¹⁶² Although plainer in detail, these older dolls have the same material faces with sewn-on facial features, paper-covered limbs and handwoven *traje* as the current versions.¹⁶³ In addition, the different genders are marked, as they are currently, by a *tocoyal* and basket carried on the head for female dolls in contrast to the male dolls that wear hats; one also carries a load of wood on its back. Examples from my own collection from a range of dates between the 1930s and 1950s show the dolls with the addition of stands and carrying more paraphernalia than the older versions (Figure 22). Significantly, there is also the introduction of unequivocal gender markers: more specifically, moustaches for male dolls¹⁶⁴ and, for one of the female dolls, a baby.¹⁶⁵ Presently, in fact, nearly all female dolls larger than 10 centimetres in height are accompanied by babies. Weaver dolls, which are without exception represented as females, have also followed this trend of becoming inescapably linked to babies. Although smaller, the weaver doll on the right of Figure 20 is virtually identical to line drawings and descriptions from a selection of 12 Kimport newsletter/catalogues from a range dated between 1944 and 1978. It is startling how little the basic form of these dolls has changed through the years except for the addition on the newer versions of a baby on the weaver's back, which is not referred to in any of the entries in the Kimport newsletters/catalogues.

¹⁶² The dolls on the top right and middle right of the photograph are anomalies and, therefore, are not included in this assessment.

¹⁶³ These older versions range in height from 4.5 centimetres to 7.2 centimetres.

¹⁶⁴ The addition of moustaches as a key marker of masculinity seems particularly significant since, as it forms part of the body, it is very effective in counteracting perceptions of femininity related to the male use of *traje*.

¹⁶⁵ That these were general trends are confirmed by drawings, photographs and descriptions of 16 female dolls and 18 male dolls in *Doll Talk* – Kimport's newsletter/catalogue and doll collector books dated from between 1942 and 1980.

These adaptations, that have led to the increasingly gendered character of the dolls, were perhaps implemented in response to the growing tourist market and aimed not only to make the dolls more appealing but also, since there is no gender demarcation in the construction and shape of their bodies, to clearly differentiate between male and female examples. Therefore, in line with Graburn's (1976) arguments noted in Chapter One of this thesis, in order to increase sales, producers have perhaps modified objects to conform to consumers' expectations of an "authentic" representation of an indigenous person. To recapitulate, Graburn argues that modifications can take two main forms. Firstly, there is a requirement for the object, in this case a doll, to be understandable for someone who is unfamiliar with the producers' culture; in other words, a need for a sameness within difference. Secondly, there is an effort to appeal to tourists' preconceptions of the 'grotesqueness or exoticism' of the 'untamed' aura of indigenous people (1976: 18). Thus, key markers of ethnicity for tourists, in this instance, the indigenous woman carrying her baby, can become exaggerated in souvenir production. Of crucial importance here is that these gendered modifications are implemented not only by producers such as Carmen, whose dolls conform to strict, externally imposed requirements, but also by indigenous families, including children. This begs the question of whether, by reproducing such exaggerated self-representations, this also to some extent reproduces gendered norms, both on a familial and a community level.

Furthermore, Carmen anticipates that in the future it may be left to dolls to depict this way of life:

pues normalmente todo va cambiando y pueda [*sic*] ser que algún día ya sólo lo vamos a ver en muñequitas, cómo se cargaban antes los bebés ¿verdad? porque ahora, todo va a cambiar. [...] todos ya andan en carruajes cargando a los bebés, o sólo abrazados, porque ya les da como pena o vergüenza no sé, cargar un rebozo.

That the dolls continue to depict a disappearing way of life is also seen in the persistence of male dolls clothed in *traje*. Since they are dressed in base textiles

with no design the aim is not, unlike in Benjamín García's case, to accurately record local *traje* in miniature scale. The persistence of male representations, therefore, may be to tap into consumers' presumed preference to buy dolls as a heteronormative couple or idealised nuclear family or it may be indicative of the producers' tendency to romanticise a more traditional past. In sum, whilst some elements of dolls – such as their size and materiality – are constantly changing, other elements – such as the continuing representation of no longer existing male *traje* and females carrying babies – seem destined to be immune to change. Ironically, it is these latter characteristics that seemingly mark the dolls as being an authentic depiction of indigenous life.

Another key difference between older and newer dolls but one that is not immediately apparent, is the construction of their *traje*. That is, in the older examples the *traje* was made from scraps of textiles and, consequently, required hemming. By contrast, as previously mentioned, as *fajas* are currently used to represent *cortes*, they do not require this additional time-consuming task. This suggests that whilst previously the dolls were made as a way of extending the value of existing old clothing, currently *fajas* are either bought or woven by dollmakers specifically to dress dolls with relatively less effort; the implication here being that dollmaking is approached in a more rationalised, business-conscious way than in the past.

A final notable development is the change in size of worry dolls. Depending on the different viewpoints of producers and vendors I asked, either tiny worry dolls have increased in size or the large dolls attached to wooden stands have decreased in size over the years. The unambiguous result, however, is the prevalent dolls of 5 to 10 centimetres, such as those made by Carmen, and all agreed that this development was to provide more consumer choice and, consequently, more sales. Importantly, this adaptation was not just about size *per se*, since it took the main feature of the large dolls – their relatively detailed, fabric faces and clothing – and the salient feature of the tiny, two-centimetre dolls – their “mystique”, function and name of *muñecas quitapenas* – to produce a version that is more appealing to a wider range of customers.

Since the emergence of larger worry dolls, such as those made by Carmen, there have been further incremental developments over the last five or so years. It is not clear whether these adaptations are driven by producers' ingenuity or at the behest of mediators, such as wholesalers fulfilling international orders. In any case, dolls for specific worries can be purchased in Antigua (Figure 23). These build on the existing dolls by adding accoutrements or by modifying bodily features to represent worries related to, for example, studying, shopping, weight and, even, bad hair days. Moreover, there are still newer types of worry doll that no longer retain even the facial features of the former manifestations, such as cat worry dolls and skull worry dolls, in which the representation of a human face is swapped for that of a cat and a skull respectively (Figure 24). Aside from the inclusion of an adapted worry doll legend in the packaging, the vital thread of continuity that enables these two examples to be identified as worry dolls, is the textile used to make the dolls' *corte*.

Ironically, although these incremental modifications provide more consumer choice, in some ways, because the type of textile used to make the *cortes* looks increasingly generic and to the layperson is merely stripy, colourful fabric, the resulting dolls are of an increasingly standardised appearance. Indeed, rather than representing local differences they can be viewed as pan-Maya Guatemalan dolls. Furthermore, in the case of the skull worry doll, which incorporates Día de Muertos imagery predominantly associated with Mexico, this can be extended to the representation of a supranational Maya identity.¹⁶⁶

Although this increasingly generic dress is, perhaps, the product of rationalisation due to the tourist market, it also converges with the pan-Maya sensibility currently seen in actual *traje*: firstly, of increasingly generic garments, such as *cortes* and, secondly, flexible approaches to local identities whereby a *huipil* is worn from a place other than the one in which the wearer originates or lives. It could also be argued, however, that the root cause for trends seen both in dolls and *traje* in San Antonio, and in Guatemala more widely, is indicative of the demand

¹⁶⁶ The example of a "skull" worry doll was made by a company named 'De la selva', now known as 'From the Mayan People to You'. This large producer and exporter of worry dolls is based in San Juan del Obispo, three miles by road from Antigua, see: <https://www.fromthemayan.com/> (accessed 13 February 2020).

for accelerated and efficient productivity in contemporary life whereby the average indigenous Guatemalan woman has limited time and economic resources to enable them to make or buy high quality, unique *traje* and, by extension, for the average dollmaker to produce high quality, unique dolls using its remnants. In summary, the dolls produced in or near San Antonio assessed in the sections above utilised the following textiles:

- High quality, unique dolls – miniaturised, accurate copies of San Antonio *traje*.
- Worry dolls – *faja* material from Comalapa, since it is cheaper and more suitable for dollmaking than that produced in San Antonio.
- Weaver dolls – fragments of old *traje* from *municipios* other than San Antonio.
- Large dolls – strips of seemingly generic, basic, selvedged fabric from San Antonio that are cheap and easy to produce since they do not incorporate a design.

Thus, the only dolls from the case studies that clearly proclaim (to the layperson) pride in San Antonio’s renowned *marcador traje* are those made by Benjamín García, which are bespoke works of art and that presumably recoup their production costs.

San Juan Chamula: Weaving, *Traje* and Dolls

The weaving process from thread to *falda*

This part of the chapter focuses on Chamula *traje*. In contrast to San Antonio’s famous *huipils*, in Chamula it is the *falda* that is an immensely significant item of clothing; partly in terms of a *municipio* identity and partly because of the substantial

effort it takes Chamula women to weave one (Figure 25). The aim of this section is to trace the journey from source materials to finished garment in order to highlight the time and skills involved in its production and which is embodied by dolls formed from its fragments. Unlike San Antonio's cotton *huipils* that are made from pre-spun and pre-dyed thread purchased by the weavers, Chamula *faldas* are made from wool produced by the weavers' own sheep. The production of the thread, therefore, starts with the ongoing care of their own lambs and sheep, which they shear to produce the wool.¹⁶⁷ The wool is then washed, dried, carded and handspun into thread with a spindle and whorl (Rosenbaum, 1993: 18; Rovira, 2000: 122).¹⁶⁸ This thread is dyed black by boiling it for several days in water mixed with black earth and a local plant called *huele de noche* (Sayer, 1985: 138).¹⁶⁹ The dyed thread is subsequently woven on a backstrap loom which, as noted in relation to the San Antonio *huipil*, also entails making the loom and other complex preparatory work. The result is a panel of fabric which, together with a virtually identical second panel, forms the *falda*. Finally, the finished section of fabric is carefully washed in order to shrink and felt it whilst retaining the wool's natural oils so that the *falda* is not only warm but also virtually waterproof and, therefore, more well suited than cotton to the cold damp weather in Chamula (Sayer, 1977: 42; Rosenbaum, 1993: 18). Unlike San Antonio *huipils*, *faldas* are not brocaded and thus do not take as long to weave. However, since *faldas* are made from scratch, the whole process can take approximately eight months (Cruz Salazar, 2014: 104).

Weaving, *traje* and the construction and expression of Maya identities

As with the production process of a San Antonio *huipil*, the above account highlights both the material properties of the *falda* and the time and expertise required for a weaver to bring to fruition a finished garment that is intimately associated with a Chamula identity. Moreover, dolls made of this fabric carry this labour in their materiality. Also consistent with the San Antonio case study is that,

¹⁶⁷ The deep attachment that Chamula women have for their sheep is such that when men become angry with their wives, Rosenbaum claims the men 'often threaten to kill and eat the sheep' (1993: 43). See also Rovira in relation to the importance of sheep for Chamula women (2000: 115-117).

¹⁶⁸ An idea of how long it takes to do this preparatory work before weaving has even commenced is provided by Berlo, who notes that it takes Quechua weavers in Peru 56 to 78 percent of their textile production time carrying out the shearing, spinning and plying of wool (1996: 451).

¹⁶⁹ Sayer asserts instead that the wool is often dyed before it is spun (1985: 138).

rather than being a homogenous dress form, subtle variations in the *falda*, *blusa* and *faja* – the core elements of female Chamula *traje* – provide extensive and complex information about the individual who wears it, aside from their *municipio* identity.¹⁷⁰ Tania Cruz Salazar’s (2014) careful assessment, for example, shows how age, economic class and social status can be expressed through Chamula *traje* and accessories with particular attention to how young, female Chamulas from migrant families have adapted styles in order to assert their indigenous identity in the cosmopolitan environment of San Cristóbal. In contrast to San Antonio, however, a notable number of men in Chamula Centre also still wear *traje*; both ceremonial garments, variations in which often denote specific roles within the political and religious hierarchy, and the workaday *chuj* (a black wool tunic with sleeves) (Morris *et al*, 2014: 122; 2015: 50, 53). These items of male *traje* are produced by Chamula women in exactly the same way as the *faldas* described above. Overall, these variations in *traje*, although not particularly apparent to the layperson, provide Chamulas with a wealth of information about the person who wears it, together with their tendency towards either individual creativity or conformity.

Weaving, *traje* and the construction and expression of Maya identities: Migration and *traje*

In terms of locally specific contexts that affect weaving and *traje*, of pivotal importance for this thesis is that for those who migrate, or have been expelled for religious nonconformity, from Chamula to the settlements that circle San Cristóbal, there is very limited access, if any, to the land necessary to rear sheep. Sheep rearing is vital for Chamulas for two key reasons. The first of these relates to the production of wool. That is, whilst women living in Chamula continue to produce their own wool, those who have been expelled are more likely to have to buy wool or, more usually, ready-woven skirts. Therefore, since Chamulas who live in San Cristóbal do not have the resources – and, in the case of younger women, the skills necessary to make one for themselves – the process of creating a *falda* is now

¹⁷⁰ The difference between a *blusa* and a *huipil* is that the former is tailored: cut and sewn to fit the body with arms attached separately (Morris *et al*, 2014: 94).

mainly limited to women in Chamula who, in addition to producing them for their own and their family's use, also produce them for sale (Cruz Salazar, 2014: 114). This leads on to the second reason, that is, as a *falda* takes several months to make, it involves spending a significant amount of time in the domestic sphere within Chamula. Cruz Salazar, therefore, argues that this garment is crucially important since it symbolises, and also reproduces, the traditional identity of the Chamula female (2014: 104, 114). Moreover, as Brenda Rosenbaum points out, since it is women who form 'the backbone of Chamula culture and identity', she rightly questions how the loss of traditional gendered practices, such as weaving, will affect the construction of Chamula migrants' identities, both on an individual and a collective level (1993: 44). It is already the case that, in contrast to women, the majority of Chamula men who have migrated to San Cristóbal no longer wear their *traje* (1993: 183).

Ashley E. Maynard and Patricia Marks Greenfield's (2010) analysis points to a further consequence of migration. Chamulas, particularly those who were expelled and who now live in San Cristóbal, have quickly made the transition to a cash economy by having to sell their woven textiles and objects to make a living (2010: 84). As a consequence, not only have they adapted their working methods to speed up production by, for example, weaving loosely, but they also have developed more-creative textile styles in order to provide items that are unique and appealing to customers. Thus, Maynard and Greenfield argue that accompanying the transition from 'a subsistence and agriculture economy to one based on money and commerce' is a propensity for innovative change in highland *traje* (2010: 79).¹⁷¹ They conclude that the impact of Chamula customers embracing these creative adaptations, that provide them with more choice and more scope to express their individuality, is the following:

a shift in the definition of creativity from a community concept, in which the goal of clothing design was to demonstrate that the wearer was a member

¹⁷¹ Although Maynard and Greenfield's research is primarily based in Zinacantán, they state that their observations can be extended to *traje* from neighbouring Chamula (2010: 79).

of a community, to an individual concept, in which the goal of clothing design was also to identify the wearer as a unique individual (2010: 79).

In sum, therefore, the motivation for Chamulas' *traje* choices, particularly among younger women living in San Cristóbal, is no longer purely to convey communal kinship, but is also to assert their individuality within the wider community.

The sections above show the importance of weaving and Chamula *traje* in terms of not only the expression of a social identity but also – through personal interpretations within this recognisable dress form – an individual's identity. These layers of meaning, as well as the expertise and time involved in the production of *faldas*, are imbued in the materiality of dolls that are subsequently made from their fragments.

Hybrid *traje*: Continuity and change in Chamula *traje*

As with San Antonio *traje*, Chamula *traje* provides a remarkable case study that underlines the rapidity and extent of change it can undergo yet still remain identifiable as belonging to a particular *municipio*. The research of textile expert Walter F. Morris Jr is crucially important in this respect. In his co-authored works, *Guía textil de los altos de Chiapas* (2014) and *Maya Threads: A Woven History of Chiapas* (2015), Morris is keen to address the limitations of his earlier works (Morris, 1986; Morris and Fox, 1987) in which his primary aim was to demonstrate the unchanging character of *traje* from the Chiapas Highlands. His recent work instead catalogues the radical changes to dress, exemplified by female Chamula *traje* (Morris *et al*, 2014, 2015).¹⁷² In brief, before the early 1970s, Chamulas wore their black wool *faldas* with black wool *rebozos* and black, brown or grey, rough wool *huipils* (Figure 26). In contrast to this rather muted affair, for the fashionable young woman the current ensemble features an elaborately embroidered, brightly coloured shiny satin *blusa* and a cardigan in a pastel shade. The *falda* has also

¹⁷² The development of Chamula *traje* can also be traced through contemporary descriptions and photographs in other research such as García Cubas (1876), Cordry and Cordry (1968: 340-342), Gossen (1984: 38-39) but originally published in 1974, Sayer (1985: 120-121, 143, 178, 216), Rosenbaum (1993: 18-19), van den Berghe (1994), Asturias de Barrios (1997: 90-91, 113), Rovira (2000: 113) and Maynard and Greenfield (2010: 87).

evolved recently as the wool from which it is made is now combed out to give an appearance akin to sheepskin. These extremely expensive long-napped *faldas* are reserved for special occasions since the nap soon becomes matted.¹⁷³ Consequently, by 2010 for everyday wear Chamulas started instead to wear skirts – made with metallic thread – from Zinacantán, a community some five miles’ distance from Chamula Centre (Figure 27).

Morris *et al*’s, sometimes overly seamless, account of the development of Chamula *traje*, bolstered by Maynard and Greenfield’s emphasis on the role played by the market and the ‘entrepreneurial spirit’ of Chamulas who now have to engage in it, highlights the incremental changes of varying degrees of rapidity that mark the development of *traje* in many highland communities in Chiapas (2010: 80). Indeed, Morris *et al*’s research presents the region as a site of creativity where access to cheaper materials and new technology, such as the relatively recent arrival of sewing machines, generates new, community-specific *traje* designs. Events and changing contexts such as the Guatemalan civil war and improved transport links between highland communities and beyond have facilitated the exchange of these new *traje* designs between members of weaving cooperatives, neighbouring communities and Guatemalan refugees.¹⁷⁴ As with the case study of San Antonio *traje*, the new designs and forms circulating in the region are evaluated within a particular *municipio*, and then either rejected or accepted as suitable for incorporating into their existing locally specific *traje*. Finally, with not a little creative one-upmanship between neighbouring *municipios*, the new design or form is adapted in order to distinguish it from its source and also to link it to the previous *traje* of the community so that a clear thread of continuity with the past is maintained. In one way, this continuous cycle of innovation fostered by increasing social interactions demonstrates an increased interconnectedness between Maya communities whilst simultaneously underlining local differences. At the same

¹⁷³ In 2015, long-napped *faldas* cost around 100-600 USD (Morris *et al*, 2015: 200). In June 2017, they cost around 7,000 pesos (equivalent to £290 or 370 USD at the time) as per my conversation with a local tour guide in San Juan Chamula.

¹⁷⁴ In contrast to research relating to *traje* and pan-Maya activism in Guatemala, research relating to the role of *traje* in activism in Chiapas, including those Maya women within the Zapatista movement, appears to be limited to assessments of the symbolic function of ski masks, such as in the research of Gossen (1999: 258-262, 280) and Conant (2010: 119-175). Although beyond the scope of this thesis, it is an aspect that would benefit from further investigation.

time, however, as Morris *et al* argue, in the cosmopolitan urban space of San Cristóbal, in which thousands of Maya from different ethnic groups have gravitated, ‘there is a growing sense that they have more in common with one another than with the dominant mestizo population’ and add, ‘[t]he woman who struts down the streets of San Cristóbal, wearing a Chamulan blouse and a Zinacantec skirt may be moving toward a future in which one’s identity is no longer based on one’s native community but in the broader culture that Maya communities share’ (2015: 201).¹⁷⁵ The following sections explore how these incremental developments, complex contexts and social and individual identities are embodied by Chamula dolls.

Chamula dolls

As with the San Antonio case studies, the key aim in this section is to assess how the materiality and production of Chamula dolls is linked to the layers of meanings and identity categories discussed above in relation to Chamula *traje*. To this end, interview data collected from a weaver/dollmaker in San Juan Chamula together with a case study of dolls made and sold by a Chamula woman in San Cristóbal are analysed. Although Chamula dolls have a relatively short history, this section also compares contemporary and older versions in order to assess how the changing social contexts that have generated modifications to full-sized *traje* are reflected in the doll object.

Chamula case study one: High quality, unique dolls

Among those interested in Mexican *artesanías*, María Patixtán Licanchitón is well known as a highly regarded weaver and dollmaker.¹⁷⁶ I interviewed María in San Juan Chamula, where she lives and where her shop is situated, to try and capture her thoughts about weaving and the dolls she produces. Although communication was relatively limited due to my lack of Tzotzil language skills, María conveyed

¹⁷⁵ See Maynard and Greenfield for examples of creative adaptations to *traje* resulting from interactions between Chamulas and Zinacantecs in San Cristóbal (2010: 81, 85, 87). In future research, the way in which heterogeneous spaces can promote homogenisation is a point worthy of investigation.

¹⁷⁶ María is a renowned dollmaker and as it would be difficult for me to disguise her identity, she happily agreed to waive her anonymity.

the crucial importance to her of weaving.¹⁷⁷ María appeared to be in her sixties and described how her mother taught her the weaving process when she was around seven to nine years of age. Significantly, although she liked weaving, it was also a necessity since it was only by this means that she acquired the woollen *falda*, *huipil*, *faja* and *rebozo* that comprised Chamula *traje* when she was younger. Similarly, when I asked about the current importance to her of weaving, María answered (via her granddaughter) ‘que cuando teje ella es para tener la comida y para venderla, para tener el dinero y si no hay trabajo, tampoco hay dinero’. Notably, therefore, both in the past and present, rather than being primarily a spiritual or emotional necessity that helps to express and maintain her sense of Chamula identity, María’s spontaneous reaction suggested that, for her, weaving is a means to an end to provide essential clothing items or income for food. Yet, when I asked María how she *feels* when she weaves, its cultural value, both on a personal- and community-level, shone through. In fact, she was compelled to reply herself in Spanish: ‘contento porque costumbre’. She reinforced this response with positive facial gestures (by smiling and by firmly nodding her head) and body movements (such as patting her heart) with the clear aim of showing me just how vital these practices are to her sense of wellbeing.

María features alongside her sister, Pascuala, in *Grandes maestros del arte popular mexicano* (1998). The book continually underlines that the wooden dolls that the sisters produce are clothed in high quality and accurate miniaturised versions of Chamula dress. It also explains that the sisters hand-carve the doll bodies and, while the dolls’ *traje* involves carding wool and preparing the warp, rather than a full-sized loom a much smaller version, like those used to weave *fajas*, is utilised along with very fine thread. Some of the dolls are intended to be a male and female pair in order to showcase the variety of materials and designs utilised in full-sized Chamula ceremonial dress. Although a singular example, Figure 28, for example, shows one of María’s renowned, highly detailed dolls clothed in the *traje* of a *mayordomía* from Chamula. However, presumably because of María’s advancing years, the production process for this type of doll has changed since the

¹⁷⁷ Even with María’s grandchildren’s help in providing interpreting skills between Tzotzil and Spanish, this interview was challenging since we all were communicating in a second language in which we had varying degrees of competence.

publication of *Grandes maestros*. Currently, therefore, different family members have different roles: María's grandson, for example, carves the wooden bodies.

In contrast to these unique works of art, María and her family also make commonplace soft-bodied Chamula dolls. To make this type of doll, a body is formed of *manta* and then stuffed with wool. For the doll's *traje*, the family weave a large piece of woollen textile on a backstrap loom and cut it into smaller pieces to form the *falda* and *huipil*. Although the textile is woven specifically for the dolls, the process is exactly the same as that involved in weaving a full-sized *falda*. Finally, embroidered details are added to the clothing and the hands are attached. In contrast to the 20 days it takes to make a wooden ceremonial doll, these woollen dolls can be produced in 2 days.

Since María was holding two woollen dolls while we were talking, I took the opportunity to ask which was her favourite: one was the relatively simple example, shown in Figure 29, that is holding a baby, the other was not carrying a baby but was more detailed and seemingly more aesthetically pleasing. Significantly, María unhesitatingly selected the former, simple doll, clasped it closely to her chest in a spontaneous and genuine act of affection, and exclaimed 'bebé!' Her grandson added 'es esa, es que como trae su pichito'. When I clarified that the representation of a (male) baby is, therefore, important, the grandson confirmed this and added, 'es el importante del pueblo'. Thus, this representation of Chamula motherhood resonated strongly not only on a personal level with María but also with her grandson, who immediately linked it to the wellbeing of the wider *municipio* – perhaps in terms of the reproduction and, thus, safeguarding of traditional Chamula identities. This vignette also underlines the complexities involved with assessing representations of indigenous people. Fox Tree's (2015) assessment rightly criticises the antithetical representations of the signature, white Barbie and the indigenous Barbie accompanied by a baby; Graburn (1976) notes that problematic stereotypes can be reproduced by artisans eager to tap into the tourist market – an example of which, as suggested earlier in this chapter, is for female Maya dolls to be paired with a baby. However, María's affection for her doll demonstrates that in some cases, depictions that are popular with consumers and indigenous producers coincide and require a different form of assessment. In sum, what is certain is that,

while the production of dolls presumably generates income for the family, María's careful handling of the dolls also revealed her evident fondness for them.

Chamula case study two: Dolls at Mercado Santo Domingo, San Cristóbal

Several sources have noted the provenance of the woollen fabric from which Chamula dolls (including Zapatista dolls) are formed. Conant, for instance, claims that the dolls are made from the 'scraps of clothes' that the dollmaker weaves (2010: 151). By contrast, Bartra states: '[t]he women who craft the dolls use a backstrap loom to weave the cloth for dressing the dolls: only cloth for the kerchief and the balaclava is bought', thereby implying that the textile is woven from scratch specifically for the doll (2011: 132). Finally, Rosenbaum notes an example of dolls from San Juan Chamula that are made from 'worn-out clothes' (1993: 140). Not apparent in these accounts but, nevertheless, of crucial importance for this thesis, is that the specific provenance of individual pieces of textile provides key information about the dollmaker. More particularly, in terms of the construction of identities, there is a vast difference between dollmakers living in Chamula and those living in San Cristóbal. For the former women, they most likely raise the sheep that produce the wool from which they handweave a *falda*, which they wear until it is unfit for use and, finally, extend its value by turning the scraps into dolls. In sum, although far from being a homogenous group of women, because they weave from scratch in their community they share in common their role in reproducing traditional Chamula culture. By contrast, the women who have been expelled from Chamula and, therefore, dislocated from their home community, may no longer be able to weave and instead have embraced the tourist market by becoming innovative craft producers of smaller touristic items. It is suggested here, therefore, that to make dolls they use pieces of either their own worn-out *traje* or, alternatively, second-hand or, even, new ready-made *faldas* that they have bought for this purpose.¹⁷⁸ Notably, from a doll's appearance alone, it is impossible to know the life story of its woollen clothes and, therefore, it is also difficult to infer the possible background of the woman who made it. The vending site can help in this respect, however,

¹⁷⁸ However, since new *faldas* are expensive, it is unlikely that they would buy one in order to make dolls' clothing.

since it has been alleged that only converts – who, by implication, have had to leave Chamula – are permitted to sell at Mercado Santo Domingo, and, consequently, it is to this site that this chapter now turns (Rosenbaum, 1993: 181).

As noted in Chapter Two, in order to circumvent my lack of Tzotzil language skills, which – given that Chamula artisans are usually female and, therefore, rarely speak Spanish – made verbal communication challenging, I visited on several occasions Frida, a Chamula dollmaker, at her stall at Mercado Santo Domingo to assess what her evolving stock revealed in terms of identities. On a more practical level, because she makes dolls whilst tending her stall, I was also able to see how they are constructed. All of the items on the stall are handmade by Frida and, aside from dolls, these included a wide range of stuffed felt animals and woven bracelets. Frida is perhaps in her late 50s and when I asked if she likes making dolls she smiled and replied ‘sí’.

The majority of Frida’s dolls share the same basic construction, whereby a piece of woollen textile is rolled up and bound with wool thread to form the body and legs. The face is then formed of cloth with sewn-on facial features (Figure 30). At this point, Frida decides whether to turn this basic body into a Zapatista doll by sewing a piece of black felt over the head to represent a ski mask, or to continue making the doll without a mask. From these latter unmasked doll bodies Frida makes commonplace Chamula dolls, with skirts made from *falda* material and miniature representations either of *blusas* formed of fragments of actual satin *blusas* or *huipils* made from woollen fabric, as shown in the centre of Figure 31. In addition, almost all of these dolls also feature red *fajas*, multi-coloured tassels and headcoverings. Significantly, although these latter three items hark back to the form of Chamula *traje* that is rapidly disappearing even amongst older women, they remain an integral part of the majority of Chamula dolls. Aside from the point that they presumably sell well, this unchanging *traje* perhaps reflects the producers’ fondness for this older type of clothing. But whatever the reason for the persistence of anachronistic forms it reproduces a spurious image of the Chamula women they represent as being frozen in the past. As mentioned previously, although it is difficult to determine the provenance of specific pieces of woollen textiles without asking the person who made the doll, Frida’s presence at Mercado Santo Domingo

suggests that, rather than weaving the textiles herself, she purchases them ready-made. Furthermore, the wide range of materials she uses suggests that she buys them as second-hand items since, to buy a variety of new – and, therefore, more-expensive – garments, solely for the purpose of making dolls, would be uneconomical. Such dolls are, therefore, potentially saturated with several layers of “Chamulanness” that speak of the potential divergent life stories of Chamula women; of the weaver who produced the textile, the person who wore it and the artisan who turned it into a doll.

Yet, in contrast to these traditional Chamula dolls, Frida also makes dolls dressed in textile fragments from neighbouring *municipios*. Figure 32, for instance, shows a doll dressed in a miniature *huipil* and *falda* made from corresponding fragments of an actual *huipil* and *falda* from Zinacantán. Furthermore, Figure 33 shows a doll dressed in a *huipil* fragment from Chenalhó.¹⁷⁹ Frida was keen to show me this latter doll in more detail and lifted up its skirt to reveal a mermaid’s tail rather than legs, and when I expressed my surprise she looked pleased and proud. Frida’s creativity is also evident in her construction of the dolls’ bodies for which she uses a variety of textiles in different colours, including white *manta*, bright orange felt and cream knitted wool and which diverges from her accurate execution of dolls’ *traje*. Through an informal conversation with Frida’s friend who spoke some Spanish I established that these choices are based on the availability of cloth. In sum, the variety of materials and forms that characterises Frida’s dolls, which is also apparent in many other Chamula dolls sold at Mercado Santo Domingo, highlights the significant levels of flexibility, resourcefulness and imagination of the individual women who make them.¹⁸⁰

For the basic bodies that Frida decides will become Zapatista dolls she both sews and ties into position boots, a tunic and arms, which are all cut from larger pieces of felted-wool; no hems are required since felt does not fray. Finally, a material cartridge belt and a piece of wood representing a gun, are tied into position. As with Carmen’s production methods for worry dolls in San Lorenzo, near Antigua,

¹⁷⁹ Chenalhó is 22 miles from San Cristóbal by car.

¹⁸⁰ I have never seen the reverse of this situation, such as an artisan from Zinacantán or Chenalhó making or selling Chamula dolls.

Frida carries out one stage of the process – such as the making of the bodies or the addition of each *traje* item – on all of the dolls before moving on to the next stage.¹⁸¹ However, in contrast to the careful yet hasty process that marked Carmen’s production of worry dolls, Frida worked carefully, yet unhurriedly, presumably because she was not under time constraints set by a third party.

In general, in comparison to the other dolls made by Chamulas, Zapatista dolls are much more standardised in appearance: they tend to be a similar size and are dressed in black *falda* material – although, occasionally white woollen material is used – and incorporate a wooden “gun” and a piece of cloth to represent a cartridge belt.¹⁸² Surprisingly, this apparent similarity does not extend to the construction of these dolls. That is, the doll on the right of Figure 34, which was made by Frida, is sewn together and no glue is used in its construction. By contrast, not one stitch of thread is used in the construction of the other dolls; all the components are instead glued together. Significantly, the extra time and skill involved in hand-stitching together the numerous components is not reflected in a higher selling price. Presumably this is because, for the layperson, the dolls look the same and thus do not warrant a significant price difference. The extra work involved for producers such as Frida is, therefore, perhaps indicative of their pride in their evident abilities as artisans or it may represent a wish to limit production costs by avoiding buying the copious amounts of glue used in the construction of the other examples. The use by some producers of time-saving glue to speed up production points to Maynard and Greenfield’s arguments noted earlier about the adaptation of working methods provoked by an engagement with market competition.

Chamula case study three: Dolls from San Juan Chamula

Leaving to one side María’s unique wooden dolls, there is a startling difference between the selection of dolls currently produced in San Juan Chamula and those produced in San Cristóbal. More specifically, although there are various felt

¹⁸¹ Frida said that it takes two days to make a Zapatista doll but she may have been referring to a batch of dolls.

¹⁸² This white textile is probably from a *jerkail* – a tunic worn by civil officials in San Juan Chamula – which is produced in the same way as the black *falda*.

animals and new developments, such as felt soft-bodied Minions, available at the market in San Juan Chamula, I have never seen there any dolls dressed in *traje* from other *municipios* or fantastical creations such as *traje*-clad mermaids. This relative lack of experimentation perhaps reflects the production context of the dolls in two ways. The first of these is that, unlike Mercado Santo Domingo in San Cristóbal where Chamula and Zinacantec artisans and vendors work side by side, in San Juan Chamula, even at the busy Sunday market, there are no vendors and only a handful of customers from other *municipios*, as denoted by their *traje*. Similarly, far fewer tourists visit San Juan Chamula as compared to San Cristóbal. Simply put, San Cristóbal is a more cosmopolitan site and the dollmakers who are based there seem to reflect this cultural melange in the dolls they produce. Thus, just as it is now a regular sight in San Cristóbal to see Chamula women wearing, for example, *faldas* from Zinacantán, so the dolls too reflect this fluid approach to local indigenous identities. Secondly, the production context also seems to reflect Maynard and Greenfield's arguments, discussed above, relating to how, by having to engage in market competition, Chamula migrants based in San Cristóbal have developed the 'entrepreneurial spirit' necessary to produce unique and inventive *artesanías* (2010: 80). By contrast, those based in San Juan Chamula have not experienced this same impetus.

Motivations for making Chamula dolls

Before comparing these dolls with their older counterparts, it is pertinent to explore why artisans make them. To be more precise, whilst, arguably, the primary motivation for the production of Chamula dolls is to generate income, the motivations for making Zapatista dolls are unclear since, in specifically representing a movement with profound socio-political aims, the dolls can be viewed as political statements as well as commodities. Undoubtedly, a major impetus for the production of the Zapatista dolls sold in cooperatives in San Cristóbal is to raise funds for Zapatista communities, which is underlined by the fact that they are usually glued together and thus, somewhat ironically given the Zapatistas' political viewpoint, conform to the efficient production methods

necessary to maximise sales to this end.¹⁸³ However, apart from a pragmatic drive to raise money, the production of Zapatista dolls can also, as Conant observes, ‘uphold and stimulate native pride’ (2010: 154). Indeed, a Chamula woman who, together with her family, was expelled from San Juan Chamula for religious nonconformity, and who was already producing and selling *artesanías* in the streets of San Cristóbal prior to 1994, stated that she started to produce Zapatista dolls following the uprising ‘because we [herself and her friends] were impressed by these people’ and only subsequently added, ‘[t]he dolls sell very well with the tourists’ (Xunka López Díaz quoted in Ortiz, 2001: 79). By contrast, when Bartra asked a selection of dollmaker/vendors their reasons for making Zapatista dolls, they replied: ‘[b]ecause they sell’ (2011: 134). When asked if they supported the EZLN, they answered: ‘[d]on’t know’ (2011: 134). One vendor, however, did unequivocally state that: ‘[t]hey’re not a fashion: they’re an ideology’ (2011: 134). Whilst it would seem, therefore, that there is a range of motivations for making Zapatista dolls, it would equally seem that those made in Chamula – a *municipio* renowned for its longstanding allegiance to the PRI – rather than constituting a statement of support for the EZLN instead represent the dollmakers’ creativity and pragmatism in developing new products in order to maximise sales.

Continuity and change: Towards hybrid dolls

As with the case studies from San Antonio, by comparing contemporary Chamula dolls and Zapatista dolls to older examples, the following section explores how their development has been influenced by producers’ engagement with the market. Although it is hard to find dated sources of older Chamula dolls for the purposes of a comprehensive diachronic assessment, the British Museum has several dolls that were acquired in San Juan Chamula in the mid-1970s. Of these, seven are the early versions of the woollen type under discussion in this thesis. From even this small selection it is clear that, although the dolls generally are of rudimentary form, there was more attention paid to their clothing than the construction of their bodies. For

¹⁸³ I visited Oventik – one of the five Zapatista *caracoles* (autonomous communities) – on 28 June 2017 and although *artesanías* and Zapatista-orientated items were for sale in the three shops there, none sold the archetypical Zapatista doll.

instance, while in several examples the miniature *fajas* and woollen *jerkailes* for male dolls and *huipils* for the female dolls are embellished with tassels, some of the bodies lack facial features and visible limbs (Figure 35).¹⁸⁴ By comparing these dolls with the contemporary versions it is clear that, broadly speaking, although working within the conventions of what constitutes a Chamula doll, Chamula dollmakers have a longstanding drive to use whatever scraps of textile are available to accurately depict their *traje* whilst, by contrast, representations of the bodies that wear the *traje* is more open to personal interpretation. In terms of gender, whereas over time this aspect of Guatemalan dolls has become more pronounced, thus far, this has not characterised the development of Chamula dolls. For example, whereas Guatemalan dolls are often presented for sale bagged together as family groups or in male/female pairs and those that depict women are usually accompanied by babies, by contrast, female Chamula dolls may or may not have a baby and, in addition, although vendors may verbally encourage the customer to buy a Zapatista male and a Chamula female doll, they are not presented for sale as a pair; neither are family groups available. This perhaps shows that Guatemalan dollmakers, who have been honing for craft for many decades and have had more interactions with tourists than their Chamula peers, have a more nuanced understanding of which features sell the best; in this instance, gendered, heteronormative representations. In fact, other than male Zapatista dolls, it is unusual to see male Chamula dolls in San Cristóbal, which reflects the reality there, since men who have migrated from the *municipio* no longer wear *traje*. Conversely, there are male dolls for sale in San Juan Chamula, which also reflects reality, as men still wear *traje* there. This marks a further difference from the Guatemalan context in which male dolls clothed in *traje* are commonplace even though they represent an idealised past and further suggests that dollmakers in Guatemala understand the importance for the tourist market of the availability of male dolls.

Although dated visual sources of Zapatista dolls are even more scarce, their increasingly standardised form is confirmed by comparing current examples to

¹⁸⁴https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1650304&partId=1&searchText=Chamula+Doll&page=1 (accessed 23 December 2019).

older versions. The original versions from 1994 seem relatively rudimentary.¹⁸⁵ However, by the late 1990s, artisans had refined the dolls by developing more-defined accoutrements, such as cartridge belts and wooden “guns”, the variety of which also demonstrates the individual creativity of the maker.¹⁸⁶ They have subsequently been adapted in a variety of imaginative ways, including smaller versions that are utilised for keyrings, necklaces and earrings. Also available are Zapatista dolls in wooden trucks and attached to the backs of felt horses. However, the dolls themselves are now more standardised in appearance than the earlier examples.

These adaptations, whereby Zapatista dolls have been utilised in an increasing number of ways to offer consumers more choice, whilst simultaneously becoming increasingly generic in form, is a development they share with Guatemalan worry dolls. A further shared characteristic is the way in which – just as large Guatemalan dolls have been miniaturised and overlaid with the Maya spirituality associated with tiny worry dolls – the creation of Zapatista dolls has overlaid Chamula dolls with the EZLN symbolism associated with anti-neoliberal sentiment and indigenous rights. In sum, in both cases, an existing, unabashed type of tourist doll has been imbued with a significantly more powerful meaning. That Guatemalan worry dolls and Zapatista dolls share a similar trajectory is demonstrated by a type of doll that incorporates all of the aforementioned features in one miniature pan-Maya statement: the Zapatista worry doll (Figure 36).

A wide range of Chamula dolls has been described throughout this section, including: María’s bespoke wooden doll dressed in a representation of the ceremonial *mayordomía traje* of San Juan Chamula; “traditional” commonplace Chamula dolls clothed in representations of the older form of Chamula *traje*; Zapatista dolls; and mermaids dressed in *traje* from Chenalhó. It would, therefore, be understandable to question what, in terms of their seemingly disparate

¹⁸⁵ An example from 1994 is held at the British Museum: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1633889&partId=1&searchText=Chamula+doll&page=1 (accessed 17 February 2020). I have also had sight of a photograph of an early version in a newspaper from circa 1995.

¹⁸⁶ For example, see Bartra for photographs of Zapatista dolls dated 1998 and 1999 (2011: 126, 133, 135).

appearance, enables all of these examples to be recognisable as Chamula dolls. But just as striped *corte* fabric provides the continuity that enables Guatemalan worry dolls to be identified as such even when they have skulls for faces, so the ongoing use of thick felted fabric provides a similar continuity that allows dolls to remain recognisably Chamula despite the incremental innovations they undergo. Furthermore, even in those examples when Chamulas produce dolls that utilise *traje* from neighbouring *municipios* that do not wear *faldas*, the familiar thick felt is used to form their bodies.

Chamula dolls reflect the changing local context not only in the obvious case of the Zapatista uprising but also through changes in fashions – aided by the relatively recent availability of sewing machines and the introduction of new materials such as metallic thread – which provide a greater variety of clothing fragments from which to create the dolls. Thus, just as women in San Cristóbal are increasingly displaying a fluid approach to local identities by wearing *traje* items from a variety of *municipios*, Chamula dollmakers are willing to utilise the *traje* of neighbouring *municipios* for their dolls. At the same time, however, that felted wool is the mainstay of these dolls, even among dollmakers living in San Cristóbal who may have to buy it, also suggests their enduring attachment to Chamula. The dolls assessed in this section, furthermore, demonstrate how individuals apply their skills, imagination and economic resources in markedly different ways in order to engage with the tourist market. On the one hand is María, who makes unique, finely crafted dolls. On the other hand, are those who use rationalised production methods in order to make generic Zapatista dolls held together with glue. In between these two extremes are artisans such as Frida, who produce dolls that although varied are still recognisable as being Chamula dolls. Clearly, these two former ways of competing for custom are also demonstrated in the San Antonio context by the unique dolls of Benjamín García as contrasted with the limited creativity involved in the production of standardised worry dolls that are, like many Zapatista dolls, held together with glue.

Relational Identities: *Traje* and *Vestido*

Immediately apparent in the previous sections are the local differences that mark San Antonio *traje*, comprised cotton brocaded *huipils* and ikat cloth *cortes*, and, Chamula *traje*, comprised shiny satin embroidered *blusas* and black wool *faldas*. These differences suggest that, beyond the fact that *traje* is worn by women from Maya ethnic groups, there is no reason why they should be regarded as the same type of dress. Similarly, at first glance, there appears to be little to suggest that significant characteristics are shared by dolls formed of these respective textiles. However, the final section of this chapter highlights that despite these perceived differences there are commonalities in these forms of cultural production that point to shared cross-border Maya sensibilities.

Commonalities between *traje* forms are underlined when they are contrasted with the *vestido* worn by *mestizos* and *ladinos* in Chiapas and Guatemala, respectively. Indeed, Hendrickson notes that *vestido* seems to ‘stand in stark and rigid opposition’ with Maya *traje* in that, ‘indigenous clothing, seen as an emblem of a Maya universe, contrasts with *vestido*, seen as an emblem of a world (economic/cultural) system’ (1995: 67). Thus, by highlighting how these *traje* items diverge from *vestido* the conception of Maya and non-Maya as relational and mutually constitutive identities is underlined. Alternatively put, it demonstrates that through clothing choices individuals or groups not only define who they are but, also, who they are not. As explored below, these clothing choices are, however, more profound and more complex than simply choosing to wear a *huipil* or choosing to wear jeans and a t-shirt.

In Antigua and San Cristóbal, religious prescriptions of modesty cut across ethnic distinctions and affect both the Maya and non-Maya population. However, when coupled with Maya conventions of female modesty, these discourses have a significant impact on Maya views of the female body (Hendrickson, 1995: 112; Cruz Salazar, 2014: 67, 71-73). There is, for example, a marked difference between non-Maya and Maya expectations of appropriate gender behaviour whereby the latter tend to regard *vestido* as being too tight and too revealing of the female form which, in turn, encourages the sexual attention of males (Cruz Salazar, 2014: 65,

99).¹⁸⁷ Women's *traje*, by contrast, covers the whole body except the head, neck, lower arms and legs below the calf. Notably then, while the current trend among younger indigenous women at both fieldwork sites is to wear tighter-fitting *fajas* and skirts which together reveal the waistline, this allows them to express their feminine identity and display their beauty and elegance in a way that, as Cruz Salazar emphasises, is related to the aesthetic quality of the clothing ensemble rather than the female body bearing the clothes (2014: 108).¹⁸⁸ Linked to this, is a fundamental difference in how time is spent in relation to *traje* as compared to *vestido*. In this chapter, the incredible amount of time and skill involved in every step of the creation of *traje* has been underlined. Furthermore, Hendrickson notes that for Kaqchikel women even the act of dressing is a time-consuming task requiring significant attention to detail, since the large volume of fabric that forms their *traje* has to be folded correctly, evenly distributed around the body and securely fastened (1995: 170-171). In sum, time spent on clothes that adorn the body rather than time spent beautifying the body that bears the clothes suggests that conceptions of beauty for Chamula and San Antonio women tend to pivot on their *traje* rather than their bodies.

Although the examples above suggest profound differences in the worldview of Maya and non-Maya, Cruz Salazar's research demonstrates that the apparent stark differences between *vestido* and Chamula *traje* are, however, more complex than a simple dichotomy. In fact, they are better regarded as a continuum bookended by the traditional Chamula *traje* worn by older women and *vestido*. In the middle is the dress of young Chamulas, noted above, particularly those who have migrated to San Cristóbal who, by adapting their *traje*, negotiate the tensions that can arise between their freely made, individual decisions and the pressure to conform to

¹⁸⁷ My Kaqchikel weaving teacher's modesty norms were highlighted by an incident at my first weaving lesson. I had arrived wearing a loose-fitting dress that fell just below my knees. However, when I sat down to weave, it rose above my knees to reveal more of my bare legs. My teacher looked momentarily flustered and then draped a large textile over me that reached from my waist to the floor.

¹⁸⁸ See Schevill (1986: 56) for these generational differences in San Antonio *traje*. Hendrickson notes similar trends in Tecpán, Guatemala and also argues that these new practices are not transmitting overtly sexual signals (1995: 112, 137, 171).

traditional Chamula beauty norms (2014: 13, 48).¹⁸⁹ Thus, through their tighter *faldas* and *fajas* they can continue to assert their indigenous Chamula identity whilst expressing a transgressive sensual femininity.¹⁹⁰

Hendrickson also warns against overemphasising a view of *traje* that pits it in opposition to *vestido* and the *ladinos* who wear it as, not only does this present an a-historic view of Maya as an autonomous, bounded group, thus ignoring the historical trajectory of, and opposition entailed in, relations between Maya and *ladinos* (1995: 194) but, it also ignores the point that ‘[f]or many, there is an ideological and emotional identification with *traje* such that dress is inextricably associated with a person’s very being’ and, therefore, *traje* does not always have to rely on its difference to *vestido* to give it its meaning (1995: 193). Instead, as Hendrickson notes, while in some contexts the opposition between *traje* and *vestido* is the key relationship, in other contexts such opposition is only ‘latent’, thereby recognising the fluid and positional character of ethnic identities as expressed through clothing choices (1995: 196). Of central importance is that these relational identities, although more complex than at first glance, are also reflected by the dolls from both of the fieldwork sites, as discussed below.

Chamula dolls, Guatemalan dolls and pan-Maya cultural production

Although this chapter has demonstrated how different local contexts, such as the availability of materials, climate and social relations, have affected *traje* forms from San Antonio and San Juan Chamula, it has also demonstrated crucially important supranational similarities between their *traje* styles, especially if they are compared to *vestido*. To recapitulate, these similarities are as follows:

¹⁸⁹ See also: <https://globalpressjournal.com/americas/mexico/in-mexico-indigenous-women-blend-traditional-modern-attire/> (accessed 17 February 2020) for interviews both of young Tzotzil women living in San Cristóbal who adapt their *traje* and older Tzotzils who disapprove of this.

¹⁹⁰ The exclusion of Maya beauty norms from dominant non-Maya beauty norms, means that *traje* is often regarded only in terms of the production of the Other (Cruz Salazar, 2014: 99). This also seems to reflect differential analyses in the academic sphere whereby *traje* and fashion are often assessed as bounded clothing forms, thus leading to insights more limited than in the research of Cruz Salazar and Morris *et al* (2014, 2015) which recognises hybridity and adaptations to *traje* designs and forms.

- *Traje* covers most of the body.
- With the exception of Chamula *blusas*, *traje* is not tailored: the garments are shapeless and are secured with *fajas*. Furthermore, the volume of fabric *traje* entails tends to hide the body shape of the wearer.
- Significant time and skill is involved in weaving *traje* from thread level up or embellishing it by hand.
- Generally, Chamula and San Antonio women have few items of *traje* which they take very good care of and, furthermore, it lasts a long time. It is not “throwaway” fashion.
- The time spent on clothes that adorn the body rather than beautifying the body that bears the clothes, suggests that conceptions of beauty for Chamula and San Antonio women tend to pivot on their *traje* instead of their bodies.

As demonstrated throughout this chapter, local and supranational contexts that affect the production processes and development of *traje* also affect the production and development of dolls dressed in fragments of such *traje*. Consequently, although local differences differentiate dolls from San Antonio and San Juan Chamula, when the shared pan-Maya characteristics of *traje* summarised above are applied to these dolls it highlights their shared, pan-Maya characteristics. These features, which are underlined if a doll is compared to a mass-produced example such as a Barbie, are as follows:

- *Traje* covers most of the doll’s body.
- There is no difference in the construction of male and female doll bodies. Therefore, it is clothing, accoutrements and additions, such as babies, that indicate the gender of the doll.

- Significant time and skill is involved in weaving the textiles that form the doll and, subsequently, making the doll by hand.
- The garments that the doll wears are not removable, tailored items. The clothing is integral to the doll's construction and, therefore, it is impossible to dress and undress the doll and change its clothes.
- The doll's aesthetic value is linked to its clothes rather than the construction of its body and the representation of its hair and facial features, thus suggesting a particular conception of beauty.
- There is a similar engagement with the market, resulting in a tendency towards the production either of generic dolls or unique dolls.

Conclusion

This assessment of the production of dolls from San Antonio, San Juan Chamula and their surrounding areas has traced their life story from their raw materials, through the weaving process to the finished textile, and from finished textile to doll object. Whether that textile is a *huipil* or *falda* or made specifically to form a doll, it embodies the time, skill and identity of the weaver. Dolls made of this fabric, therefore, carry this labour and these meanings in their materiality. While the profound importance of weaving and *traje* for the construction, expression and reproduction of Maya identities – both on an individual and a collective level – has been underlined, within this, of fundamental importance is the role of women, both as weavers and wearers of *traje*. Yet, far from forming a homogenous group, the multiple identities at these two markedly different sites, such as those linked to class, age, ethnicity and religion, are also revealed by subtle variations in *traje* forms and styles. These identities are embodied by the dolls both literally (via their materiality) and figuratively.

However, my interview with Estrella also showed that these identities are not fixed and static: individuals instead constantly engage in numerous and overlapping identities, with particular aspects coming fleetingly to the fore in any given context. Significantly, sources relating to *traje* generally do not tend to view identities in this way and instead provide a more simplistic picture of identity categories as static and permanent characteristics of an individual or social group. The analysis in this chapter, therefore, adds to the work of Hendrickson and Cruz Salazar, whose research relating to *traje* are exceptions to other, more limited, viewpoints.

In addition, this chapter has demonstrated the value of a comparative approach to Maya cultural production. Indeed, the dolls from the two sites can, in general terms, indicate the following themes. Firstly, the shared characteristics that mark dolls as being from either San Antonio or San Juan Chamula reveal identities linked to specific localities. Secondly, differences between specific examples produced in the same *municipio* can show the creativity, pragmatism, social status and financial resources of the individual producer. Finally, similarities between dolls from San Antonio and San Juan Chamula suggest a pan-Maya identity.

By tracing the life story of key *traje* items from two locations, this chapter has also revealed the processes by which weavers adapt their textiles and working practices over time. These incremental adaptations reflect important socio-political changes such as the following: improved communication and transportation networks that have led to increased opportunities to exchange information; the flight of Guatemalan refugees to Chiapas; the availability of source materials; expulsions on the grounds of religious nonconformity; migration and the pan-Maya movement. However, the use of hybrid *traje* by the pan-Maya movement also highlights that, more than simply reflecting the changing socio-political context, in some instances creative changes to *traje* are appropriated in order to make social statements and construct new meanings. Finally, by tracing adaptations to *traje* it has been demonstrated that for these items to maintain a clear thread of continuity with past forms, and thus continue to be associated with a specific locale, continuous and complex processes are required that entail either the acceptance,

negotiation through creative adaptation, or rejection, of new forms – both at the level of the individual and the community.

Similarly, through a diachronic analysis of a selection of specific types of Maya doll, this chapter has also revealed how they embody these changes in weaving practices and *traje* forms. Furthermore, engagement with the increasing tourism market and contexts such as the Zapatista uprising have not only resulted in adaptations to the dolls that reflect the changing socio-political context, but have provided women and their families with important sources of income, in some cases, as described in Chapter Two, disrupting gender norms. In general terms, although there is middle ground, adaptations to the dolls at the different sites reveal two key ways in which producers engage with the market: firstly, by making unique and finely crafted art pieces and, secondly, by rationalising their production methods by using fabric with a selvedge and glue to make dolls that are standardised in appearance. By focusing on such adaptations, this chapter has also emphasised that, far from being static, Maya cultural production such as *traje* and dolls are fully enmeshed in the contemporary world.

Without the expansive life story approach promoted in this thesis, the assessment of the dolls in this chapter would have erased the profound importance of their source materials and the personal and social identities intertwined within them. Chapter Four discusses the outcome for these identities linked to the personal, local, national and supranational once the dolls leave the hands of their makers.

CHAPTER FOUR

CLOSE TO HOME: THE VENDING AND CONSUMPTION OF MAYA DOLLS AT THE FIELDWORK SITES

In contrast to Chapter Three's focus on the production of dolls from San Antonio, San Juan Chamula and their surrounding areas, this chapter investigates the consumption of the dolls and associated vending practices at these local sites. This focus on the dolls once they have left their producers' hands marks the next instalment of their life story and although retaining close spatial and temporal proximity to their production context, by tracing even a small sample of these life stories the dolls' initial dispersal at once highlights the ever-increasing multitude of individual and social identities of those linked to them. The interviews assessed in this chapter not only demonstrate the fluid rather than fixed character of these identities, but also underscore the limitations of designating souvenirs with fixed meanings and functions. Indeed, the interviews instead point to the unexpected and inventive ways in which individuals engage with the Maya doll object that often exceed or disregard its intended role of a tourist keepsake of time spent in Antigua or San Cristóbal. In fact, the feelings stimulated by the dolls for all the participants, whether they owned one or not, spoke in varying degrees of weighty issues that concern individuals and reflect their experience of living in the contemporary world. These themes are examined firstly in relation to the participants in Antigua before moving on to the participants interviewed in San Cristóbal. In the spirit of following the stages of a doll's life trajectory, this chapter begins with how the dolls are sold; that is, the vending practices employed by the people and businesses who sell them.

The Vending and Consumption of Dolls in Antigua

Markets as indigenous spaces: The *mujer maya* as vendor

For the majority of *artesanía* shops and market stalls in Antigua the focus is textiles, including tableware, cushion covers, bags, often local, second-hand *traje* items and new *vestido* garments featuring embroidered or woven designs, some of which have

probably been purchased for resale. Dolls are most likely to be sold alongside textiles, but can also be found at vending sites specialising in other types of *artesanía*. They are sold in a variety of sizes from tiny worry dolls to large dolls attached to wooden stands that are often sold as sets representing an idealised family unit: comprising a male, a female carrying a baby and a young boy and girl. Dolls may also be attached to items such as book covers, napkin rings, bookmarks, pens, bags and fridge magnets.

Immediately apparent from the participant observation I carried out at these sites was that market areas were closely linked to the image of the *mujer maya* whereas shops were not. This was characterised by the dress worn by the vendors. More specifically, while the majority of vendors across all the sites were women, shop workers were usually *ladinas*, as indicated by their *vestido*, whereas at the market sites vendors wore *traje* – often from San Antonio – thereby marking market environments as indigenous spaces. Although a singular example, the acquaintance I formed with a Kaqchikel vendor from San Antonio perhaps points to the importance of promoting the image of the *mujer maya* to generate sales. I visited her on several occasions at her stall at Mercado de Artesanía Compañía de Jesús and notably, as a woman who was always immaculately dressed in San Antonio *traje*, I have since seen on social media photographs from various holidays in which she is wearing *vestido*. Although this could be an instance of an individual foregrounding different identities depending on the context, it could also be viewed as a strategic use of her Maya identity, as noted by Little, in the context of the market in order to maximise sales to tourists (2004a). Similarly, in the artisan markets there was a strong connection between the vendors and their items for sale. This was most prominent at the market hall in San Antonio where several of the women tending stalls were also weaving with a backstrap loom. In terms of vending strategies at the markets, when consumers approached a stall the majority of vendors immediately asked, in English, what they were looking for and then stated that they would give the customer a good price. Furthermore, as items were not marked with a place of origin or a price, if customers wanted to find out more about an item or make a purchase, they were very quickly drawn into some level of engagement with the vendor. In shops, by contrast, items were usually marked with fixed prices and the shop assistants were less likely to ask what you were looking

for. In essence, in a market context, the vendors' female Maya identity permeates the sale of *artesanías*.

***Artesanía* shops: Dolls as low-value *artesanías* and the attraction of the familiar in unfamiliar locations**

Nim Po't: Centro de Textiles Tradicionales, offers the most extensive selection of different types of *artesanía* for sale in the Antigua area. It was established by a North American in 1994 and artisans can leave their goods there on a consignment basis.¹⁹¹ The huge array of *artesanías* there was displayed according to type, with textiles forming the predominant component. Although the selection of textiles for sale in Nim Po't was similar to that sold in the markets, the second-hand *traje* items provided a wider range in terms of geographical origin, age, quality and cost and were, for the main part, clearly marked with fixed prices as well as their town and Department of origin. This had the effect of disseminating a Guatemalan Maya identity that was both coherent and multifaceted. The selection of dolls in Nim Po't was also similar to that found in the markets and other shops but, unlike the *traje* items, they were not marked with a place of origin. The differential treatment of the well-labelled *traje* and the unmarked dolls, indicates a demarcation based, on the one hand, items with cultural and aesthetic value (the *traje*) and, on the other hand, cheaper items made for tourists (the dolls) and, therefore, reflects the hierarchical value judgements discussed in Chapter One of this thesis.

In terms of browsing and consuming *artesanías*, Nim Po't seemed to be by far the most frequented space in the area. For example, during the 45 minutes I was there on one particular Saturday I counted about 50 people passing through. According to the languages and accents I heard during my trips there, the majority of visitors were from the US. While my participants and social media reviews articulated a number of reasons for its popularity, a reoccurring theme was that Nim Po't offered a relaxing and easy way to buy *artesanías*. More specifically, although

¹⁹¹ Information about the establishment of Nim Po't is found on its website: <http://www.nimpotexport.com/guatemalan-handicrafts-and-textiles/> (accessed 17 February 2020).

knowledgeable staff were on hand, as everything was clearly marked it was possible to browse for extended periods of time without the need to interact with anyone; payments for the items were also quickly processed by staff at a central till point. As one participant noted: ‘you can just look and look for a couple of hours with nobody harassing you, which is lovely’. Thus, in contrast to having to negotiate local cultural norms by buying items from an indigenous vendor in a market context, Nim Po’t provides consumers with a relaxing one-stop shopping experience that conforms to the familiar cultural practices of their home country. For some tourists at least, this recalls Lasusa’s arguments about the role of souvenir shopping as a familiar activity that helps individuals maintain a sense of identity while in an unfamiliar location.

Overall, the data collected from the above sites highlights the difference between market-based vending contexts, which are closely linked to indigenous – particularly female – identities, and shops, which are much less so. For international visitors, even though the idea of haggling with indigenous vendors at colourful markets is an image often promoted in travel literature and may seem appealing, for some people the convenience of shopping in a more-familiar environment may in reality be preferable since their identity position of “tourist” is not destabilised.

Consuming the Other? The consumption of Maya dolls in Antigua

In order to investigate the consumption of Guatemalan Maya dolls, this section of the chapter is based on the interviews I conducted in Antigua. Of the seven participants who were international visitors staying in the city, four had acquired a Guatemalan Maya doll and their stories are discussed in the second part of this section. First of all, however, from the participant observation I undertook at the vending contexts and at Museo Casa del Tejido in Antigua it quickly became apparent, by listening to which languages were being spoken, that these sites were frequented almost wholly by non-Guatemalans. In addition, Estrella, the Kaqchikel weaver from San Antonio previously encountered in Chapter Three, noted that in her many years as a teacher of weaving she had taught very few *ladinos* to weave, stating that: ‘a las personas guatemaltecas no les interesa mucho la cultura

indígena’.¹⁹² With this information in mind, I thought it particularly important to discover the opinions of local people about *artesanías*.

Estrella’s story: Consuming the self

In many cases, the consumption of these dolls, as objects handmade by indigenous people for the tourist market, is, in effect, the acquisition of an object for which its “Otherness” is not only an inherent feature but also seemingly its primary selling point. Yet, my interview with Estrella disrupts this presumption, since she is fond of them and owns several. Furthermore, she had put some of them to work in a most unexpected way.

When I showed her the photograph of the Guatemalan doll in Example C as part of my interview questions, she responded in the following way: ‘lo utilizan a veces para decoración o también reflejan parte del diario vivir de la [...] mujer indígena. En otras, así como aquí, ella fue de compras y lleva al bebé [...]. En otras, lo lleva cargando [...] y está torteando, o está lavando’. She also noted there were male examples, such as: ‘[un] hombre con la leña en la espalda o lleva también sus instrumentos para trabajar, labrar la tierra y las semillas [...]. Entonces también sacan este diseños reflejando al hombre agricultor’. Of crucial importance is that, rather than consider these dolls as problematic – either on the grounds that, as items produced for the tourist market, they do not represent authentic cultural production or because they represent stereotypical views of Maya women – Estrella celebrated them. In fact, this type of doll appealed to Estrella to the extent that she had bought around eight in the form of fridge magnets. Since she regarded these dolls as reflecting the daily life of indigenous women, it can be suggested that therein lay the appeal for her. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Three, Estrella viewed these dolls in a different way to the non-weaving layperson; details such as the origin of the fabric and its production method were completely transparent to her. Therefore, the dolls – and, more specifically, the female dolls – not only express

¹⁹² It should be taken into account, however, that for an average Guatemalan the cost and time required to take weaving lessons would probably be a prohibitive factor.

her identity as an indigenous mother but also resonate with her as a weaver of textiles.

Estrella was keen to point out that the larger dolls represented by Example C are not worry dolls but instead are for display purposes. In her opinion, only tiny dolls should be regarded as worry dolls to be used under pillows to take away troubles. Indeed, Estrella had used tiny dolls in this way from time to time and remarked, with a chuckle: ‘sí, las penas se van’. She had also used tiny worry dolls in a way that I could not have anticipated; as a way of demonstrating social inequalities. She had bought the dolls for her 10-year-old daughter’s school project in which each of the students was required to make a model depicting a rural area and an urban area. Estrella described the one-metre-square model as follows:

Son dos tipos de comunidades. En la urbana es donde tienen este tienen hospitales, bancos, edificios grandes. El área rural no tiene eso. Entonces son dos tipos de áreas, entonces nosotros utilizamos los muñequitos en cada edificio [...]. Representando el área en la calidad alta y la calidad baja.

Significantly, therefore, although the school’s instruction was to produce a model depicting urban and rural areas, by pointing out the disparity of resources associated with these two social contexts Estrella and her daughter in essence produced a critique of Guatemala’s markedly unequal society. Notably, however, for a person who is outspoken about the discrimination experienced by Guatemala’s indigenous population, Estrella framed these inequalities in terms of an urban/rural divide rather than an indigenous/*ladino* divide, suggesting that she recognises that inequalities in Guatemala are experienced on multiple levels.

For Estrella her dolls of different sizes perform quite different roles. The tiny versions function as worry dolls and also contributed to the novel depiction of societal inequalities whilst the larger dolls were used for decorative and functional purposes on a fridge. Importantly, the gendered representations of indigeneity represented by the larger dolls not only are compatible with Estrella’s multiple identities as a weaver and indigenous mother, but also demonstrate her pride in these identities to anyone visiting her home.

Alonso and Margarita's story: Worry dolls as carriers of national identities

Alonso and Margarita identify as *ladinos* and while neither of them owned any Maya dolls, their opinions about them, as the cultural production of their indigenous compatriots, warrant attention. Alonso, 38, is a teacher and law student for whom *artesanías* are important. Whilst having a personal affinity for craft items made of wood, he spoke with enthusiasm and pride about the textile traditions of Guatemala's indigenous people and specifically recognised the achievements of San Antonio's Kaqchikel weavers. Although Alonso is of relatively limited financial means and his house small and simple, he noted that he tries to buy typical Guatemalan items for his home for the following reason: 'tratamos de decir que, que, – a los visitantes que llegan a mi casa – que es nuestra identidad, que es el traje típico de Guatemala y que esto nos identifica del resto de países de Centroamérica y tal vez de Latinoamérica'.¹⁹³ Significantly, therefore, although he was careful to give credit to specific ethnic groups – Alonso seamlessly linked their cultural production to a Guatemalan national identity. Furthermore, he uses textiles in his home to express his national identity to others and underline its singularity among the countries of Central America and, on a wider scale, Latin America. In contrast to Alonso's economic status, Margarita, a 54-year-old teacher, lives with her husband and other family members in a large, comfortably furnished house on a gated cul-de-sac. Her home contained several textiles including utilitarian items, such as table runners, and decorative items such as a framed *huipil* displayed on a wall. She viewed the *artesanías* in her home as a way of maintaining a link to traditional Guatemalan culture in the face of the current tendency to furnish and decorate houses in more-modern ways.

These two interviews with *ladino* participants highlight issues of ethnicity and class since, although both participants concurred – albeit with different emphases – that *artesanías* are important for expressing a Guatemalan identity, Alonso understood that whilst most Guatemalans probably have inexpensive, functional handmade items in their homes many people are unable to afford *artesanías* purely

¹⁹³ European visitors occasionally visit Alonso at his house.

for decorative purposes. By contrast, the more-affluent Margarita stated that a lack of *artesanías* in people's homes suggests racist attitudes. More specifically, when I mentioned that in a previous homestay I had not seen any *artesanías*, her response was stark: 'lo que pasa es que hay gente que es muy racista', thus underlining how a lack of appreciation for indigenous cultural production can be socially unacceptable since it can indicate more-problematic sentiments. Although Margarita's lack of recognition that access to financial resources is a factor in acquiring *artesanías*, her comment was supported by Suzanne, whose interview will be discussed later in this chapter, who noted: 'wealthy Guatemalan families detach themselves from anything indigenous because it's beneath them'. This assessment was based on the fact that there was no trace of Guatemalan *artesanías* in the, albeit small, sample of four or five affluent houses that she had visited.

As for the dolls represented by Example C, significantly, both participants regarded them as good luck amulets and symbols of protection rather than having an association with the easing of worries. In fact, contra to the well-known worry doll legend, in Margarita's opinion they were devised as good luck dolls by indigenous artisans in order to publicise their products: 'entonces ellos dijeron "bueno, vamos a hacer unos muñequitos de la suerte y vamos a introducirlos como muñecos de la suerte", pero "¿porqué no un muñeco con ropa indígena?". [...] Porque son sus colores que usan los cortes, los huipiles y todo esto'. As well as a sales device, Margarita also posited that the dolls are used for the socialisation of rural indigenous girls: 'en la parte indígena, en las áreas rurales les enseñan a los niños a formar, a crear en su memoria, que ellos son van – a las niñas específicamente – [...] a formar una familia luego. Entonces ellos van a tener bebés si, esa es la idea'. Notably, this assessment, rather than indicating a shared Guatemalan identity, is framed in terms of Margarita's difference to rural indigenous females and perhaps more particularly her reference to *traje* and her linkage of indigenous females to babies brings to mind the construct of the *mujer maya* as the relational identity against which *ladinos* define themselves. This disconnection, together with Margarita's disbelief that the dolls could bring luck, perhaps explains the dolls' limited appeal to her and why, in her opinion, they would appeal only to tourists. By contrast, Alonso said that he would be open to buying one as a good luck amulet. Furthermore, by coincidence, on visiting his father's

house on the day prior to the interview, Alonso had noticed a small box of tiny worry dolls. He thought they had possibly been bought as a present by a family member to bring good luck to the house and to life in general. However, more than simply an amulet, the dolls were on display in the house. Alonso speculated the reason for this: ‘para que las personas miren que tenemos parte de, de nuestra cultura en casa’. Significantly, therefore, in this instance the dolls were perhaps displayed as an expression of national pride. In sum, both of the interviews point to the complex relationship between identities linked to ethnicity and social class in Guatemala.

Lori’s story: Worry dolls and the anxieties of contemporary life

Turning now to consumers from beyond Guatemala, Lori, 35, was one of the 4 international participants who acquired a doll whilst staying in Antigua. She had spent one week in the city and our interview took place on her last evening there before she returned home to the US. She had made the trip – her first to Guatemala – for three reasons: Spanish language immersion, including staying with a local *ladino* family; to become accustomed to international travel for work purposes; and to help address her fears of travelling abroad as a lone female. The trip was a major event for Lori as, by her own admission, she is an inexperienced international traveller and she used the words ‘nervous’, ‘afraid’ and ‘terrified’ to describe how she felt on her arrival in Antigua. Lori’s interview was notable because worry dolls appeal to her in a way that is completely compatible and intertwined with her propensity for worry and, also, her profession as a marriage and family therapist. Although she had been unaware of the dolls before she arrived in Guatemala, she wholeheartedly embraced the concept behind them, as highlighted by her acquisitions detailed below.

She had bought a hand-bound journal covered with tiny worry dolls and she light-heartedly explained that she liked the dolls because their premise – that you can tell them your problems then put them under your pillow and the problems go away – is harmonious with their incorporation onto a journal cover; that is, by writing problems in the journal, the worry dolls would deal with them. She thought

'it was a cute idea' and liked the notion of having the journal in her office at work to record her thoughts.

Lori was also open-minded about using worry dolls in the more-conventional way and had not even waited until her return to the US to do so. More specifically, she had bought the journal along with some other items from a shop called Precious Hands in Antigua and they had given her several complimentary tiny "shopping worries" dolls, each attached to a small card bearing the shop's name and the following information (Figure 37):

So many shops so little time! Almost at my credit card limit! Will she/he like it? She/he can always return it!

There's a Mayan legend that when you have worries, you tell them to a "Worry Doll", then put the doll under your pillow at night and in the morning when you awaken the Worry Doll has taken your worries away.

As Lori had been worried about what to buy for her husband and son, she had placed one of these small dolls under her pillow and thought: 'why not?! Let's give it a try!'. Furthermore, she anticipated that after she returned home she would probably keep more of the tiny complimentary dolls in the nightstand by her bed in case of future shopping worries and also keep one in her office at work, which she would probably place underneath the pillow that is on her chair, for when she has to see clients who make her nervous.

This theme of worry extended to Lori's awareness of the worry and anxieties experienced by her family-members, friends and clients. For instance, she was initially going to buy a little pack of about eight worry dolls for her son because, she noted, 'he's a little worrier too' but she decided against it because, as he is eight years old, she did not think that he would find them very interesting. Instead, she looked for a specific "friend worries" doll because her son is often preoccupied that he does not have enough friends. However, as she could not find one, she had decided to give her son one of the complimentary tiny dolls and planned to tell him that he can use it in any way that he wishes. Her final worry doll purchase was a

“wedding worries” doll that she intended to give to her friend as she was experiencing stress about her forthcoming wedding.

Lori confirmed that the concept of unloading problems onto a doll resonates with her profession of being a therapist. She added:

I think that was one of the reasons why I was drawn to them. Yeah, there is something about being able to, I think, allow yourself to disconnect from worry. That’s certainly something I relate to quite well. I understand what it’s like to have a lot of worries and anxieties about things.

More particularly, the dolls are compatible with the notion of “containment” that is related to her counselling work and entails the idea of putting worries into containers or boxes. Indeed, she had been thinking about using the dolls as counselling tools with her two child clients and she explained that it is helpful for children to use something tangible to deal with their worries rather than deal with abstract notions. Significantly, however, Lori stated that as she comes from a ‘very conservative Christian culture’ she was concerned that introducing worry dolls could be construed as being ‘anti-Christian’. The potential problem lies in the fact that the dolls are representations of humans. She could imagine that conservatively religious people, such as her grandmother, could construe their use as ‘worshipping false idols’ and could argue that, rather than placing their faith in an object, people should be praying to God about their problems. Ultimately, nonetheless, Lori did think that if their parents were agreeable she would probably try and use the worry dolls with both of her child patients.

Since Lori had acquired several worry dolls, I did not think it necessary to show her the photograph of Example C, which is a typical, gendered female doll dressed in *traje*. Instead the interview was based on her tiny dolls – which at first glance look to be of indeterminate gender and ethnicity – and her “wedding worries” doll, which is clothed in a wedding dress rather than *traje*. This point is perhaps important because Lori regarded the dolls primarily in terms of the shared human experience of anxiety rather than difference. More specifically, rather than viewing the dolls as representing an ethnicity, nationality or cultural practices different to

her own, Lori identified with them through the lens of worries and anxieties that affect not only herself, but her son, friend, clients and, one could add to this list, anybody else, regardless of their background. Lori's focus on the functionality of worry dolls rather than their role as a souvenir Other or keepsake of Guatemala, was also apparent when she was telling me about the tiny worry doll, noted above, that she had used under her pillow. It transpired that she had forgotten about the doll until our conversation and she presumed it was still in the bed clothes somewhere, and I sensed that she would not be bothered if she could not find it.

Lori's acquisitions are highly significant for this research project for various reasons. Firstly, they show a range of functions of the dolls; from being attached to a journal cover to make it more appealing to, in the example of the "wedding worries" doll, a gift for a friend experiencing stress about a particular event. They also function as promotional tools for an *artesanía* shop by linking its name to complimentary "shopping worries" dolls that not only represent gestures of thanks and luck, but also fuse Maya cultural practices with a Guatemalan national identity and Western preoccupations about consumption. Secondly, the "shopping worries" dolls also show how quickly the doll object can acquire new meanings since, on them being passed to Lori, their function changed to; potential counselling tools, a gift for her son and a means by which Lori could try and ease her anxieties both in her home and professional environment. Finally, whilst these dolls express and reproduce Lori's occupational identity and tendency to worry, there is a crucial, overarching reconfiguration at play; that is, a movement from the dolls' association with an identity that is at once rooted in the local context of Antigua and the national context of Guatemala to the experiences and concerns related to contemporary life that are at once rooted in the individual and are shared by others.

Zoe's story: Worry dolls and the recognition of fair exchange

In contrast to Lori's lack of international travel experience, Zoe, 21, from Holland, had travelled extensively in Latin America and was halfway through a 6-month internship at a non-profit organisation in Antigua when I interviewed her. She was already familiar with worry dolls prior to her arrival in Guatemala and had bought four larger versions, as represented by the doll in Example C, directly from Carmen,

the dollmaker interviewed in Chapter Three. These purchases revealed a major shift in Zoe's identity as a consumer, as described in the following account.

Zoe had bought three of the dolls as gifts for family members and she was thinking of buying more in readiness for her return to home to Holland. She had selected the dolls as gifts since she deemed them to be 'really typical for Guatemala' and she contrasted them with items such as bracelets, that are readily available in many other countries. Zoe had bought the fourth doll for herself and, at the time of the interview, she was keeping it in a drawer besides her bed as there was not a lot of room in her rented house and hanging things on the wall was not permitted. She did not plan to use the doll to alleviate worries, stating that: 'I'm not that superstitious, but I really like that people can believe that kind of stuff'. Instead, she said that on her return to Holland she would like to display the doll, alongside more examples that she intended buy, in a colourful dish. When I asked why it would be important for her to display them, Zoe replied, 'I think it's nice to let them [family and friends] see I was in a whole different culture 'cos I've been [doing] a lot of travelling [for] the last two years'. When I enquired what message this dish filled with dolls might communicate to other people, she thought that, while it would say something about her, people may not realise exactly what this would be. Zoe explained what she meant by this enigmatic reply by outlining an important shift in her behaviour as a consumer: 'people will think "oh, she bought some presents on the market"'. Yet, since spending time in Guatemala she had come to realise that consumers can choose whether to pay a fair price for items or not. She noted that if someone chooses to drive a hard bargain at a market, 'you're actually not providing [for] the family' and clarified that, although producers may sell plenty of items, they profit little after they have taken into account the materials and time it takes to sell even a single item. Therefore, Zoe's dish of worry dolls will be able to be read on two levels. For Zoe herself, '[it] will say something about me [...] like, you can give good [fair] prices and you can still enjoy, you can enjoy a little more your products', whilst for onlookers the dish will perhaps represent Zoe's identity as an experienced international traveller who is adept at negotiating local market contexts.

In fact, her concern about giving – specifically women – producers a fair price for their products had motivated Zoe to conduct preliminary enquires among weavers about starting her own small business which would sell their fairly traded handmade pillows/cushions via the internet to a European market, with part of the profits going to a Guatemalan-based children’s education charity. If Zoe is able to establish her business, she would like to send her customers a complimentary worry doll attached to a little card with each purchase and, by doing so, she would also help support Carmen and other dollmakers by paying them a fair price.

The clear recurrent theme throughout Zoe’s interview was that the dolls reflected the internal conflict she had experienced as a consumer whose preference for handmade textile crafts clashed with her identity as a thoughtful and ethical individual who understands the unequal exchange involved in the production and consumption of *artesanías*. The dolls also represent her subsequent resolution of these conflicting identities. Yet, importantly, the internal shift experienced by Zoe does not undermine the local identity represented by the dolls.

Suzanne’s story: Making connections

Suzanne, 44, her 3 children and – on a part-time basis – her husband were coming to the end of a 6-month stay in Antigua when we had our interview. She was working on a voluntary basis at a school near Antigua that was run by a non-profit organisation. However, the wider aim of the sabbatical was to provide ‘a break from corporate America’ as Suzanne put it, where she had been a finance professional, and for the family to discover a new place together. Although Suzanne lived in the US, she was brought up in France, had lived intermittently in Mexico and was extremely well travelled; one got the impression that she would feel comfortable in any given cultural context.¹⁹⁴ This adaptability stemmed from the opportunities to experience different worlds and learn different languages that Suzanne’s parents had given her as she was growing up and, similarly, by staying in Antigua, Suzanne wanted to provide her own children with similar opportunities.

¹⁹⁴ Suzanne had holidayed in around 30 other countries as well as undertaking a few months of voluntary work in Zimbabwe.

Suzanne had acquired several worry dolls and, significantly, each highlights different themes of this thesis. The first example – a worry doll hair clip – underlines how material objects can help in the construction of – or, in this case, the reproduction of – identities associated with well-rounded individuals like Suzanne. She bought the hairclip from the market for her 11-year-old daughter because, Suzanne explained: ‘I liked the symbolism of it’, by which she meant the following:

it’s just like the dreamcatchers in the native American communities [...] there’s a connection to the unexplained. [...] You don’t explain dreams, you just know that you were trying to build something to protect yourself from the bad ones and so, here, worry dolls – worries – they’re there – you can’t just take them and throw them in the trash. So you’re seeking the help of something very cultural and that’s fabric and just somebody to take the worries and [...] prevent them from coming back into your head, which is super-cute.

Suzanne was the only participant who viewed worry dolls in relation to cultural production on a global scale. Although dreamcatchers may be considered to have a more apotropaic purpose than worry dolls, Suzanne’s expansive outlook underlines her ability to recognise the connections – on a mystical level – between different examples of culturally specific material objects and perhaps also points to her extensive exposure to, and participation in, different cultural practices.

Although her daughter knew about worry dolls, Suzanne was not sure whether she would use them, and added: ‘I just believe, or maybe secretly hope, that whatever I instil on a day-to-day into the head of a teen makes its way to the heart and soul at some point’. In the event that they did not resonate with her daughter, Suzanne hoped that they may at least have the following effect: ‘hopefully it creates a connection in her [...] future years with some other cultures and some other traditions’. Thus, not only did the symbolism of the worry doll hairclip appeal to Suzanne but, as a gift to her daughter, it embodies her desire to provide her children

with the skills and open minds that would help them to navigate different places and cultural practices with ease.

Whilst the worry doll hairclip has a role in the reproduction of a particular set of personal values, the second example highlights how quickly an object can accumulate chapters in its life story and can change function in the process. Prompted by the student/tutor relationship Suzanne was given a bag of tiny worry dolls by a child whom she tutored in the school where she worked. The boy, who was about 10 years old, had acquired the dolls from his mother who makes them for sale. Suzanne found this gesture ‘very sweet’ and continued:

acts of giving and kindness from children [...] are not expected necessarily [...] in the environments that I operate – in the [...] less privileged communities that I [...] work with at schools. [...] I have no expectations, so when they give me a gift like this – usually they ask for things, they don’t give. The fact that he gave, was just very touching.

Suzanne subsequently gave the bag of dolls to her daughter, who had expressed a desire to acquire some. Suzanne did not find this problematic because of their familial ties. She stated: ‘it’s not a re-gifting. I said “it’s for all of us” and [...] we’re not going to use them as worry dolls, it’s more of a souvenir’. Thus, during Suzanne’s family’s stay in Antigua the dolls – that represent the culturally specific livelihood of the boy’s mother and a gift prompted by a personal relationship – had already been made available for the whole family to enjoy as a souvenir of their time in Antigua.

The final worry doll that Suzanne had acquired was attached to a keyring which she had bought for herself to use when she returned to the US. However, like the hairclip, the keyring seemed destined to fulfil more than a practical function. More specifically, when I asked if she anticipated thinking about her Guatemalan trip every time she unlocked her door, she replied:

no, I think those moments happen where you empty your bag in a coffee shop and, suddenly, the doll is in front of you, and looks at you, and then

you take a pause for a minute and you think about it. I think it hits you [...] I'll feel the doll in my bag [...] I'll recognise the doll in the touching [given that bags can be disorganised inside].

Suzanne confirmed that touch is very important to her and intermittently during the interview she squeezed a bag and a purse that she had with her. Indeed, she was the only participant who noted that touch, in and of itself, could trigger memories. Thus, not only would the keyring be a practical item, but she also anticipated that it would serve a memory function in a multisensory way.

Aside from her worry doll acquisitions, Suzanne also had insightful, more-general views about the type of doll represented by Example C. When I showed her the photograph, her reaction was as follows:

I guess it's beautiful in one way and sad in another. [...]. So, beautiful that the child and the mother are connected through this; it's not just the individual, it's not a country of individuals [...] Latin America's not known for its individualism. So that kid, hooked at the hip, is beautiful. At the same time, the sad part of it, is that the woman's role is, unfortunately, almost just that, with cooking. [...] so, unfortunately, [...] you can look at it from that prism as well.

This quotation highlights a further instance in which Suzanne considered the doll in a context beyond that of Guatemala. By placing Guatemala and, subsequently, Latin America in a relational position to more-individualistic countries or regions (she perhaps had 'corporate America' in mind here) she underlined their association with notions of close-knit familial and community ties. While Suzanne did not mention ethnicity in relation to the doll, the representation of mother and child resonated with her, perhaps in terms of her own relationship with her children. Unsurprisingly, given this shared experience of motherhood, her sadness seemed to speak of the perceived or actual limited opportunities for females in Guatemala, a context at odds with the wide-ranging life experiences that she wants to offer her daughter and that she has the resources to fund.

In sum, Suzanne's engagement with worry dolls shows not only how quickly an object can acquire chapters in its life story but, that as culturally specific symbols, they may, in the future, help to foster in her children a curiosity about the world and encourage them to understand connections between cultures, thus contributing to their construction as well-rounded individuals.

Daniel's story: Worry dolls and the reproduction of familial relations

In contrast to the above three participants who had bought worry dolls, Daniel, 20, from the US, had acquired one as a promotional giveaway. Although he would not have bought one, this does not diminish the importance of his doll for this research since Daniel intended to use it not only in the construction of his personal archive, in the sense of Lasusa's usage as discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, but also for the construction of his future identity.

Daniel had spent approximately eight months in Antigua, where he had stayed with a local *ladino* family, and the interview took place on his penultimate day there. His time in the city had been spent studying Spanish as part of his sociology degree. Daniel defined himself as well travelled, although this was his first trip to Guatemala. When I showed him the photograph of Example C, he immediately identified it as being a worry doll and described it as being 'really neat'. He said that he had noticed them in various vending contexts in Antigua and thought they were 'cool, little [...] toys'. He said that he had a similar example which he had acquired in the following way. He volunteered for a church-based charity to spend a day cleaning a building for malnourished children in Antigua in readiness for its grand opening. When the cleaning was finished after a long day of hard work, the director arrived with a group of about 30 rich American donors. The director acknowledged Daniel's help by inviting him to a complimentary dinner with himself and the donors at the Welten – one of the best restaurants in Antigua. It was clear that Daniel had a memorable evening there and he reminisced about the live music, swimming pool and complimentary drinks provided by the restaurant. On leaving the restaurant every guest was given a doll attached to a card which stated the following: 'Tropical ambience. Specialities created in **WELTEN** Home-made bread, noodles, cakes and icecreams' (*formatting in original*). Notably,

Daniel's doll of about six centimetres is dressed in the purple robes associated with Antigua's famous *Semana Santa* (Easter) celebrations which took place the week following his evening at the restaurant (Figure 38). Thus, rather than Lori's "shopping worries" doll that embodies a combination of Maya cultural practices and the preoccupations of some Western consumers, Daniel's doll instead represents practices related to the Catholic church and the site-specific identity of Antigua. Moreover, with this representation the doll's Maya ethnicity is not flattened, as in some of the examples explored previously in this thesis, it is completely erased and wholly replaced with an identity specifically linked to the *ladino* space of Antigua. Overarching this place-specific identity is, however, the idea of Guatemala, to which worry dolls are inherently linked.

When I asked Daniel what he planned to do with the doll, he explained that he regarded it in the same way as a wooden cross he had bought during his time in Guatemala. This cross was his favourite purchase from his trip and, since he intended to treat the worry doll in the same way, it is worth recounting its story in more detail. It is a replica of the '*Cristo del pobre*' cross that Daniel saw in Santiago Atitlán outside the rectory which was once home to the missionary priest, Stanley Francis Rother. Father Rother, from the US, was devoted to his indigenous congregation and was martyred at the rectory in 1981 at the height of the civil war. The backstory of the cross resonated with Daniel – perhaps particularly so since he had previously described his upbringing as being within: 'a more-conservative sort of family and we're raised in the church'. He anticipated that when he is older, he will keep the cross in the study that he imagined he will have at his home. When he has his own children, he anticipated that although the cross will be ever present they will not notice it until, eventually, they would ask about it and, in doing so, trigger Daniel to remember his time in Guatemala and his visit to the church in Santiago Atitlán. Significantly, there is added complexity to the memories generated by the cross and, by extension, the doll. The importance of this imagined future scenario stems from Daniel's own childhood experience with his father. As he was growing up, for example, Daniel had been aware that in his father's office was a textile he had brought back from Panama where he had been undertaking church-orientated work. Daniel remembered asking his father about the textile, 'and really appreciating and liking his story about it and the memories that came

with it and so I wanted something kinda like that in a way [...] something for my kids, or for *myself even*, to look at years down the line and, yeah, to have those memories' (*emphasis added*). Notably, then, although Daniel foresaw that the cross will remind him of his experience in Guatemala, he seemed to place equal – if not, more – importance on the enjoyment that his memories would bring to his future children.

Daniel's vision of the future was so clear that he even foresaw that within his future office, his wooden cross and his worry doll will be displayed on a corkboard. This also will exactly replicate the context of his own upbringing since he explained that his father's home office featured a large corkboard, which Daniel described as being 'filled with pictures, notes and memories'. He added, 'I think they'll [the cross and the doll] be a part of my corkboard or something, when I get older'. However, when I exclaimed that, by thinking in terms of the display of the doll and the cross on his future corkboard, they must be really important to him, he responded:

it's just memories, I think, like, the things themselves, like, I don't wanna get too attached to them or whatever. I know that memories are important and all that, but, like, I don't wanna be too sentimental or whatever, where I have, like, just all my big cases of things that I accumulated in life. [...] if something were to happen to all my stuff, it's like "alright – no, I've lived through it and I've seen it".

This seemingly inconsistent attitude whereby, on the one hand, Daniel values objects with a significant backstory as carriers of memories yet, on the other hand, considers the memories themselves to be of key importance, again indicates that the cross and the doll are primarily important to him in terms of their effectiveness, as tangible objects, in embodying and transmitting to his future children powerful memories that they would appreciate.

Although his closeness to his family was abundantly evident throughout the interview, what stood out was Daniel's recurrent dialogue between his relationship with his father and how he is already seeking to reproduce this relationship with his

own children. Within this, is Daniel's drive to replicate with his future children the specific experiences that he has had with his father and, in this case, using items such as the wooden cross and the worry doll to do so. In sum, although the doll was given as a promotional gift, in thinking about how he would use it, Daniel was, essentially, both reinforcing his self-identity as his father's son while simultaneously pre-empting the construction of his future identity as a father. Of crucial importance is that, for Daniel, the objects that facilitate this past/future dialogue are those with meaningful backstories, such as his doll.

The unexpected life stories of worry dolls

An aspect of these dolls that has not been addressed at length so far in this chapter is their role as gifts. Lori, Zoe and Suzanne had all bought worry dolls to give to friends and family for the following reasons; the alleviation of worries and stress, as typical of Guatemalan cultural production and as a functional item (a hairclip). Indeed, it is perhaps indicative of the close association of the dolls with tourist souvenirs that the Guatemalan participants, including Estrella who, ironically, had bought several for herself, considered that only foreign tourists buy them. More surprising, therefore, was that in four instances participants or their family members had received dolls as gifts from Guatemalan businesses or individuals, either as promotional tools in the cases of Daniel and Lori or as personal gestures in the cases of Suzanne and Alonso's father. That Guatemalans use worry dolls as gifts in such contexts not only indicates that they function as a symbol of Guatemala but also that they embody a combination of thanks, friendship, luck and protection, and perhaps shows the extent to which the dolls have come to represent an idea of Guatemala that Guatemalans as well as international visitors find appealing. More than their role as gifts capturing the essence of Guatemala, however, the participants' responses reveal a variety of unique and unanticipated ways in which the dolls can be utilised and, moreover, this multiplicity of functions clearly expresses and reproduces a variety of identity positions beyond a social identity of "traveller" or "tourist".

The different uses of the dolls can also reflect the range of socio-economic contexts in which they circulate. This is perhaps starkest when comparing the

examples of Estrella and Lori who, at the risk of oversimplification, represent two different worlds involved with *artesanía* production and consumption. As a weaver of textiles Estrella is at the beginning of a hypothetical worry doll's life story. Her consumption of these dolls in order to depict Guatemala's rural and urban areas for her daughter's school project expresses her precarious everyday experience as an artisan living in a country marked by a staggeringly unequal access to basic resources on the basis of ethnicity, gender and class identity. On the other hand, although seemingly an innocuous and amusing giveaway, the "shopping worries" doll given to Lori plays on the fears and aspirations that underpin free market capitalism. Similarly, while Lori's potential use of worry dolls as counselling tools for children in the US speaks of their difficulties it also speaks of the availability in affluent countries of the financial resources to buy such expertise.

Significantly, what appears to be the dolls' main attraction – that they are miniature representations of indigenous people – seemed to be of most appeal to Estrella and reflects her own indigenous identity and cultural practices. For non-locals, rather than their appeal pivoting on their representation of the Other, the dolls instead tend to reflect their own identity positions that are grounded in their own lives away from Antigua but simultaneously reflected their reason for being there. In other words, these participants shared – in spite of their different backstories – a range of identity concerns that often indicated a capacity for introspection and a drive for personal development that is often associated with the need to negotiate the challenges of living in highly developed capitalist societies. Also clear was the relative availability of financial resources in order to help them achieve this end. The idea that worry dolls function as a blank canvas has similarities with Catherine Driscoll's (2002) observations about Barbie. Here, she argues that Barbie is an empty signifier onto which girls can apply a multiplicity of identities and desires (2002: 98-100, 196). Crucially, though, in contrast to the example of Barbie, the ramification for worry dolls is that their identity linked to their indigenous producer and their local and national context becomes flattened in the process of reconfiguration that enables the consumer to express through them their deeply personal experiences and concerns.

The Vending and Consumption of Dolls in San Cristóbal

Markets as indigenous, gendered spaces

As with the *artesanía* vending sites in Antigua, the focus in San Cristóbal and San Juan Chamula is on textiles and the selection of items for sale is also very similar in all three places. Surprisingly, this includes Guatemalan dolls, as represented by the doll in Example C, but, of vital importance, these often bear a label marked “Chiapas”, the significance of which will be explored in Chapter Five. As in Guatemala, these dolls are also attached to items such as napkin rings, bookmarks, pens, bags and fridge magnets. A divergence with Antigua’s vending sites is the large number of Chamula felt animals for sale and, of course, a large selection of Chamula and Zapatista dolls. There are also a number of cooperatives in San Cristóbal that sell Zapatista-related *artesanías*.

In common with my data from Antigua, the majority of vendors were women and there was a clear demarcation between the shops, in which the staff tended to be *mestizas* as indicated by their *vestido*, and the markets, in which the vendors were indigenous and primarily wore Chamula *traje*, particularly if they were older women. By contrast, there was a difference between market-based vendors at the two fieldwork sites since in San Cristóbal there was a noticeable fluidity between the role of producer and vendor that was not apparent in Antigua. Not only did Frida – the Chamula dollmaker/vendor at Mercado Santo Domingo discussed in Chapter Three – demonstrate such fluidity but I frequently saw other indigenous women who were sewing and embroidering textiles, and making dolls, toys and bracelets whilst sitting beside the wares they had for sale.

In terms of vending practices at the markets, whereas “I give you good price” and “what you looking for?” were the key vending phrases in Antigua, among Chamula dollmakers in San Cristóbal and San Juan Chamula – even those who spoke very limited Spanish – the key phrase was “es lana”. This suggests both the close connection of the producer/vendors to wool and their belief that wool is the principal selling point of their woven dolls. The other main selling strategy was that vendors often tried to sell a pair of dolls rather than an individual one by stating

“mujer y hombre”. In terms of Zapatista dolls, this approach was more specific since if a prospective customer picked up a male version the vendor often picked up a female version and exclaimed “Ramona!” to encourage the customer to buy a male/female pair.¹⁹⁵ Clearly these strategies aimed to maximise sales by appealing to the ideal of the heteronormative male/female unit and, significantly, it is unnecessary in Antigua since dolls there are often presented for sale as pre-bagged family groups. Finally, although somewhat constrained by the lack of a shared language, consumers needed to engage with the vendors to establish the price and any other information about the items for sale since they were not labelled. Overall, as with Antigua, the sale of *artesanías* in a market environment is infused with the identity of the, primarily, female indigenous producer/vendors.

Artesanía cooperatives: Dolls as low-value artesanías

Although *artesanías* for sale in shops tended to be marked with fixed prices, in common with the markets they were not labelled with information about their provenance. By contrast, San Cristóbal’s many cooperative outlets sold textiles solely produced by indigenous weavers from Chiapas and not only marked them with the specific place of their production but also often the name of the weaver who produced it. This local focus and clear labelling was also found in the shop supported by the state of Chiapas: Instituto Casa de las artesanías de Chiapas. Thus, in contrast to the pan-Guatemalan range of items for sale at vending sites in Antigua, the cooperatives’ selection of textiles in San Cristóbal conformed to García Canclini’s analysis about the formation of a Mexican national identity through cultural production; that is, local sites express local identities, even if at a national level they are subsumed by a national identity. However, as with Nim Po’t in Antigua, the dolls that featured in these cooperatives were often not marked with their place of production. For example, in Kux lejal, a weaving cooperative, the Chamula wooden dolls for sale there were the only items in the whole shop that lacked a label noting their maker, place of production and the length of production time. Yet, when I asked the shop assistant for this information she immediately wrote down the maker’s name for me along with the specific village in which he

¹⁹⁵ Until her death, Ramona played a key role in the EZLN.

lived. The point that it was not deemed necessary to state this information on a label suggests that the dolls were considered to be less important than the examples of clothing and textiles sold in the shop.

Consuming the Other? The consumption of Chamula dolls in San Cristóbal

My observations at the *artesanía* vending sites in San Cristóbal revealed a typical consumer profile starkly divergent from that of Antigua, since the majority of visitors were local *mestizos* rather than international tourists and travellers. In fact, I encountered only a handful of non-Spanish-speaking people at vending sites during my month in San Cristóbal and although Spanish-speaking tourists – recognisable by their use of cameras and holiday clothing such as shorts, which local *mestizos* tend not to wear – may or may not have been Mexican, they formed the minority. Local *mestizos* – recognisable by their everyday clothes and functional shopping bags – were men and women from all age groups. Popular items among them were *vestido* with embroidered details, children’s wooden toys and Chamula felt animals. There were also a notable number of indigenous females of all ages shopping for clothing and accessories. Thus, whereas my observations of browsers and customers in Antigua indicated a limited interest in indigenous cultural production among Guatemalans – perhaps exacerbated by a lack of resources – the general overview provided by the vending sites in San Cristobal suggested the importance of such items to a variety of locals.¹⁹⁶

Yet, these observations were complicated by my interview with Sergio Castro Martínez, a humanitarian and the owner of the Museo de Trajes Regionales in San Cristóbal. Informed by his experience of operating the museum for over 40 years, he spoke of the indifference shown by some Mexicans for the cultural production of the country’s indigenous peoples. Whereas he noted the interest in indigenous dress shown by visitors from Europe and the US, he had the following opinion of some Mexicans:

¹⁹⁶ San Juan Chamula is renowned as an indigenous space and there were no local *mestizos* shopping or browsing at the *artesanía* market there.

el una familia de mexicanos no le gusta visitar museos, le gusta comer bien, comprar y pasear, pero establecerse en un museo, primero porque el museo no es, aquí es sin paga, no pagan, es gratuito; pero aun así siendo gratuito, no lo visitan, no hay interés entre el mismo mexicano de conocer más su propia cultura.

When I commented that this was a shame given Mexico's rich culture, he replied: 'sí, sí. El problema que existe también es cierto racismo', thereby demonstrating that indigenous people are still often marginalised within the nation state. Importantly, it also underlines the pervasiveness of shopping in contemporary life and its construction as a meaningful leisure activity at the expense of other ways of passing the time.

Chamula artisans at Mercado Santo Domingo: Consuming the self

As with the Antigua case study, the consumption of dolls more specifically was investigated primarily through interviews; three with local *mestizo* participants and two with international visitors to San Cristóbal. However, first of all, in order to glean Chamula women's opinions about the dolls made in their own likeness and to understand what these views reveal in terms of their identities, I found that to a great extent participant observation circumvented my absence of Tzotzil language skills. In more detail, I decided to take the ceremonial doll (Figure 28) I had purchased from María Patixtán – which was of superb quality – to Mercado Santo Domingo to show Frida. This strategy proved to be significant because the considerable interest the doll generated amongst a small group of Chamula artisan/vendors allowed me to observe not only how they engaged in a variety of identity categories but also the fluidity with which they moved between them. More particularly, aside from Frida, three other Chamula women gathered around and took it in turns to carefully examine how the doll was constructed by lifting up its *traje*. One of these women could speak some Spanish and, in an unexpected instance of role reversal, I answered her enquires about the price of the doll. She confirmed that it was a high-quality specimen and she was clearly impressed by it. Frida also confirmed that she liked the doll and when I – somewhat unceremoniously – pushed it head first back into my plastic carrier bag, she

immediately reached inside and removed it, smoothed down its *traje* and gently put it back in the bag feet first. That the women were keen to understand the construction of the doll clearly highlighted their identities as artisans and connoisseurs of fine craftwork. Furthermore, in the case of at least one of the women, her interest in the selling price underlined her identity as an *artesanía* vendor. Finally, not only did all of the women express their appreciation of the skill required to make the doll, but the pleasure they clearly derived in handling it seemed more akin to that experienced by doll collectors than dollmakers, thus demonstrating fluidity between these identity positions. In many ways, therefore, this encounter reflected my interview with Estrella in Antigua, since Chamula women found this miniature representation of themselves appealing and its familiarity also seemed to be of paramount interest. This, again, disrupts the presumption that the “Otherness” of these dolls is their key attraction.

Beatriz’s story: Chamula dolls and memories of childhood

Beatriz, 36, is a solicitor and language teacher whose softly spoken demeanour belies her strong views about social solidarity which is expressed through her appreciation of indigenous textiles from Chiapas. Not only does she like the variety of these textiles but she also feels that it is an important way in which she can give economic support to indigenous female artisans in recognition of the amount of labour involved in producing them. Notably, from time to time Beatriz wears indigenous clothing including a satin Chamula *blusa* which she likes to wear in the summer with casual clothes, such as jeans, as it keeps her cool. When I asked if she thought that wearing indigenous clothing expressed anything about her personality, she believed that it did and, referring also to *mestizas* more generally, she stated:

Anteriormente ponerse ropa típica indígena en San Cristóbal era mal visto, sí, porque no le prestaban el interés o definitivamente no sabían cuántas horas se invierte para realizar este tipo, de, de obras de arte. Hoy en día, pues creo que el carácter de cada mujer, la seguridad que tienes en vestir esa ropa, hace lucir, porque en sí la ropa es muy bonita. [...] Pero todo depende de la personalidad creo de la mujer, porque hay personas que

definitivamente no se atreven a ponerse este tipo de ropa por miedo de ser criticadas, todavía.

Thus, for Beatriz to wear this type of clothing requires a certain amount of confidence since, although it is attractive, it is also contra to *vestido* dress norms. While in some contexts such a visible clothing choice could be read as the appropriation of indigenous cultural production, in the context of San Cristóbal it is arguably more likely to be received as a statement of solidarity with the local indigenous populations and, consequently, open to criticism from some *mestizos*.

More specifically in relation to this thesis, Beatriz has a multi-layered affinity with Chamula dolls. She explained that she used to play with them when she was a child, as did other children. Therefore, when I showed her the photograph of Example B, she became very animated and exclaimed: ‘¡Exactamente! ¡esos, sí! esos fueron nuestros muñecos’. In fact, a similar Chamula doll that her grandmother gave her was one of the key dolls of her childhood. When I asked Beatriz if she liked her childhood doll, she replied: ‘sí, sí, para mí fue... era muy colorida, ajá, era una de mis preferidas en realidad, a comparación de, de una Barbie, como que tenía un poco más de, tal vez sea por el sentimiento que [...] esta muñeca representaba al ser un regalo de mi abuelita, sí, sí, sí’. Arguably, therefore, Chamula dolls prompt nostalgic feelings for Beatriz on two levels since not only were they the play items of her childhood but they also represent her emotional connection with her grandmother. As the dolls seemed to have a powerful significance on several levels for Beatriz, I asked whether she had bought any for her young daughter.¹⁹⁷ Although it transpired that she had not, she did instead regularly buy her daughter Chamula felt animals. Notably, she purposefully always bought them from an elderly indigenous woman who makes and sells her *artesanías* on Real de Guadalupe – a major thoroughfare in San Cristóbal lined with *artesanía* shops – as it is important for Beatriz not only to support local producers but also to teach her daughter the value of this type of *artesanía*. Beatriz’s patronage of a Chamula artisan, her use of indigenous clothing and her enthusiasm about Chamula toys and dolls not only underline her understanding of the artistic value of, and

¹⁹⁷ As Beatriz did not have a son, this question was not seeking to assess gendered play practices.

effort involved in making, *artesanías* but also express solidarity with the area's indigenous population – sentiments that she seeks to pass on to her daughter.

Bernardita's story: Changing perceptions about dolls

Bernardita, 52, is a former secretary and while she only has a passing interest in *artesanías* in comparison to Beatriz, my interview with her turned out to be of key importance in terms of how, in two markedly different temporal contexts, a doll can accumulate new meanings and, consequently, engender different emotions for their beholder.¹⁹⁸ While Bernardita had never owned any Maya dolls, in relation to the photograph I showed her of Example A – the Zapatista doll – not only did she recognise it but she also provided the following very honest account of how her feelings about such dolls have changed over time:

Bernardita: es bonito, pero a principios de... como en el 94, 95 pues esta... se puede decir que esta figura nos daba miedo ¿por qué? ¡porque es de los zapatistas!, es guerra se puede decir. Ahorita como que ya se disolvió bastante en cuestión de... de tener miedo a ese traje [stated light-heartedly], pero es, es, es vaya, es guerrillero, es de guerra, es de guerra. Yo, yo no lo viví esto, pero sí nos contaron de que estuvo feo... sí, estuvo feo cuando el 94, sí.¹⁹⁹

Emma: oh, sí... sí, sí, entiendo, pero ¿ahora es diferente para ti – este muñeco?

¹⁹⁸ There were similarities between the non-indigenous locals at the fieldwork sites in their view of their own race/ethnicity. In Antigua, in marked contrast to Estrella's response to the race/ethnicity question on the personal information form whereby she unhesitatingly and assertively stated 'indígena', Alonso and Margarita were unsure what the question meant. Indeed, it led to a long conversation with Alonso during which he said that 'raza' was a new concept for him to think about and thought it would be helpful to other participants completing the personal information form to offer categories to guide them. In San Cristóbal, while Bernardita and Beatriz defined themselves as *mestizas* they were both embarrassed that they were unsure of how to spell it, thus indicating that such self-definition rarely occurred. As these participants were a former secretary and a solicitor/Spanish language teacher respectively, this lack of knowledge could not be attributed to a lack of education.

¹⁹⁹ Bernardita was not residing in San Cristóbal when the uprising took place.

Bernardita: ah sí, sí, sí, sí, sí... sí, sí ya es diferente, ¡ya se ve diferente!, sí porque en el 94 pues como que no nos gustaba verlo, se pue... bueno, en mi caso, no porque es guerra pues, guerra. Ahora como que ya no tanto, sí [stated light-heartedly].

When I asked for clarification on this last point, Bernardita explained that her views about ‘zapatismo’ had changed. Thus, in line with her change in views about the Zapatistas, her feelings towards Zapatista dolls had also changed – from being a symbol of fear to something much less alien and intimidating.

In contrast to this change in feelings that had taken place over a long period of time, Bernardita’s reaction to the Guatemalan doll in Example C demonstrates how a person can almost instantaneously re-evaluate an object. Initially, Bernardita identified it as being from Guatemala and also said that she had seen such dolls at Mercado Santo Domingo. Although she had not heard of the term *quitapena*, when I explained that some people use the dolls to take away worries and a little about how to use them, she became very interested and quite excited and likened them to an ‘amuleto’. She exclaimed: ‘ah, ¡no lo he visto! [at the market] pero voy a ver, voy a... voy a... sí, bueno, sí veo, pero no le había yo tomado importancia’. When I asked whether she would, therefore, view them in a different light now, she confirmed: ‘sí, sí, va a ser diferente la visión que voy a tener’. The interview then took an unexpected turn reminiscent of my reversal of roles during my encounter with the Chamula artisans. That is, Bernardita was so taken by the idea of Guatemalan worry dolls that when I said that I owned several, she – I think only half-jokingly – asked me to sell her one. Thus, for Bernardita I had briefly assumed the identity of a doll vendor.

My interview with Bernardita provided two revealing examples of how a person’s perception about dolls can change almost instantaneously as well as over the long term. Both instances revealed how Bernardita’s acquisition of additional knowledge relating to the dolls caused her to grant them more value than previously. Whereas before the interview the worry dolls available in San Cristóbal had been almost invisible to Bernardita, they were now spotlighted and she found them very appealing. Similarly, she now regarded Zapatista dolls more positively

since she had acquired an understanding of the movement. In some ways, therefore, this transition countered the reconfigurations of worry dolls from the local to the personal that were evident among some of the international visitors to Antigua.

Ángel's story: Dolls and the maintenance of boundaries

My final interview with a local *mestizo* was with Ángel, a 42-year-old solicitor and teacher. Although he had never owned a Maya doll his interview was significant for explaining how *artesanías* relate to the construction of his chiapaneco identity and how this identity is to some extent formed in relation to difference with Guatemalans, a point he extended to the Guatemalan doll represented by Example C. In more detail, although Ángel stated that he likes all types of *artesanía*, he spoke with pride about how in Chiapas different communities have a particular identity which is marked by distinct forms of attractive dress. He went on to say that he finds it problematic that at Mercado Santo Domingo as well as locally produced clothing there is also for sale a large quantity of clothes from Guatemala and, while it is sometimes easy to recognise this provenance, it is also sometimes difficult to discern. When I asked if this distinction is important to him, he replied:

sí me importa, soy un poco nacionalista y obviamente necesitas comprar las cosas de México. Eso no quiere decir que las cosas de Guatemala no son bonitas, pero yo prefiero comprar cosas de Chiapas, porque soy chiapaneco, entonces me gustan las cosas de Chiapas. Pero que realmente la historia de Guatemala y Chiapas es muy similar, entonces y la cultura y las costumbres son muy similares, pero yo prefiero comprar cosas de México.

Emma: ok, México o Chiapas?

Ángel : de Chiapas, sí [laughs]

However, for Ángel, the importance of provenance is not solely related to the celebration of chiapaneco crafts. His opinion about the Guatemalan doll in Example C perhaps also hints at a more deep-rooted sentiment: the importance of demarcating difference between chiapanecos and their Guatemalan neighbours. Although Ángel had not seen an example before, he recognised that the doll was

Guatemalan because the colours and form of its dress were different to those associated with Chiapas. He explained that he had seen Guatemalan dress in television documentaries, and noted:

estamos muy cerca, entonces Guatemala y México es muy, muy similar, pero obviamente este es más típico de Guatemala, es como... cuando alguien sabe más o menos la diferencia, es posible identificar, porque muchos dicen “ah, pues es lo mismo”, pero no es lo mismo [...] es diferente, tiene características diferentes, colores diferentes y el bordado es diferente y el material, el material es diferente, es, es diferente y también este tipo de gorra, o tipo de cosas es... o trenza, no es típico en México, de las... pueblos originarios de aquí, no.

This quotation not only demonstrates Ángel’s knowledge of local cultural production but also highlights his concern that these differences are not visible to everybody. Ángel’s opinions about the Guatemalan doll and *artesanías* more generally underlined that his deeply felt chiapaneco identity is constructed and expressed not only in terms of a sense of belonging to his home state but also as a relational identity based on difference to Guatemalans.

Abby and Jamelia’s story: Chamula dolls and identities in conflict

The last interview assessed in this chapter was conducted jointly with Abby, a 57-year-old midwife and her daughter, Jamelia, an 18-year-old degree student. These US participants were visiting San Cristóbal for the first time and I interviewed them part way through their six-week summer holiday there. They are very well travelled and had decided to visit San Cristóbal following a recommendation and because of its variety of markets, crafts and craft production, which is of key interest to them. Although this was my only interview with non-locals in San Cristóbal, it was of crucial importance because of the participants’ ability to articulate the internal conflict they experienced in relation to a Chamula doll and a Zapatista doll – both in the act of buying them and in the ongoing development of their feelings about them.

Abby and Jamelia had already bought the two dolls when I interviewed them and Abby described the transaction in the following way:

The dolls I bought, I bought because this tiny little child came in [to the restaurant where they were eating], selling.²⁰⁰ She had three dolls to sell. [...] we wanted to buy one. It was 20 pesos. She said “here’s another one. Buy this pair! It’s a pair! It’s a pair!”. And my first instinct was to offer her 30 pesos for two of them, and I had to get a grip and think “that’s insane”.²⁰¹

This last sentence is of key importance since it demonstrates Abby’s split-second transition from a tourist consumer to a socially aware and progressive individual. Furthermore, whilst underlining the fluidity of these identity positions, in even stronger terms it highlights the internal struggle caused by their incompatibility. This conflict also stemmed from the point that, rather than automatically defaulting to her identity as a fair-minded, thoughtful consumer, Abby momentarily failed to keep her irrational motivations in check.

In fact, the prevailing theme of this interview was the participants’ profound emotional struggle with their position of being – by Mexican standards – wealthy travellers at the same time as having a deeply felt sense of social and political justice. Indeed, their very presence in Mexico engendered discordant feelings because, as Abby explained, it is only Mexico’s unequal economic position in relation to that of the US that enabled her to afford an extended holiday there. In terms of craft production, she pondered: ‘they don’t want me not to come and buy their things. So, you know, do I offer them three times the amount that they’re charging for it? [...] It’s all complicated’. In terms of the dolls more specifically, Abby continued: ‘It’s heart-breaking to hear that they worked on a doll for 2 days and they’re charging 20 pesos for it. [...] It feels uncomfortable’. When I asked both participants if they often think about these issues, they simultaneously replied

²⁰⁰ Abby said that the child looked to be less than five years old.

²⁰¹ At the time of the interview in July 2017, 20 and 30 pesos were the equivalent of 83p and £1.24 respectively.

with an emphatic ‘yes!!’ and they explained that they go through this thought process both in the act of buying and, subsequently, admiring their purchases.

Given that in San Cristóbal vendors trying to sell *artesanías* constantly approach tourists in the streets and at restaurant tables, I asked why they chose to buy the Zapatista doll and the Chamula doll from the young girl on that particular occasion. On her part, Abby explained that she was ‘very intrigued’ by the Zapatista dolls. Jamelia, on the other hand, did not recognise the visual reference; although she knew who the Zapatistas were, she did not know a great deal about their appearance. She was, therefore, persuaded by the little girl’s sales pitch – that the dolls represented a couple and should be bought as a pair: ‘I was, like, “let’s get the woman, like, they’re a couple, like, let’s do it!”’ Immediately after the sale Abby told Jamelia that, as the dolls represented a Zapatista and an indigenous woman, they did not, in fact, represent a couple. Jamelia recounted her thoughts at that time: ‘I was, like, “damn, we should’ve got a [second] Zapatista [instead]”’. In a noteworthy example of self-assessment, having subsequently reflected upon why she found the idea of buying a pair of dolls appealing, Jamelia stated: ‘I was being very heteronormative’ – an admission to which Abby agreed. This account provides a further example of how spontaneous reactions can often adhere to deep-seated societal norms. In this case, this norm relates to the ideal not only of a male/female partnership, but also of partners who are deemed to be a suitable “match”. Moreover, it demonstrates how Jamelia subsequently recognised that she had temporarily succumbed to a set of values contra to her own.

One way in which Abby and Jamelia try to negotiate their conflicting identity positions of, on the one hand, affluent consumers and, on the other hand, politically and socially aware individuals is through the selection of appropriate vendors from whom to buy. Jamelia said that in a market situation where there are often lots of similar items for sale they favour buying from vendors/producers who wear indigenous clothing. Notably, despite being based on a relational identity of difference, such decisions are also based on the participants’ spirit of solidarity with the producer/vendors and their recognition of the unfair recompense involved with *artesanía* production. Nevertheless, Abby still struggles with these kinds of choices and finds them ‘very tricky’. When I asked if she is more likely to buy from an

indigenous woman rather than a man, she replied, ‘definitely’. Indeed, aside from the little girl, Abby and Jamelia had also bought items from a woman who looked very old and Abby remarked: ‘those are the people that I felt like had my support [...] and why that’s the judgement? I don’t know, it just is, and you have to make a decision somehow. Those are the people that I can feel like “oh great. You got my dollar”’ [spoken in a very despondent and self-depreciating tone]. Therefore, even though Abby has strategies in place to navigate her conflicting identities, the situation remains, for the main part, unresolved.

This interview also showed particularly well how objects can quickly acquire new meanings and associations. For example, Abby and Jamelia’s growing knowledge of the local context had already led them to regard the dolls they had purchased in a different light. In terms of their Chamula doll, Abby had initially regarded it simply as a locally produced doll. However, since visiting San Juan Chamula and spending more time in San Cristóbal she had subsequently recognised the thick woollen fabric that clothed the doll and equated it to the Chamula people she had seen wearing it. Yet, it was Abby and Jamelia’s view of the Zapatista doll that underwent the most significant change following their trip to Oventik where they had encountered actual Zapatistas. Jamelia, for instance, had gained a better understanding of their doll’s “gun”. That is, when Jamelia and Abby bought the doll, they both assumed that the artisan had attached a stick to it as they did not have a toy gun. Jamelia recounted: ‘we were, like, “Ha! Look at the little stick, it’s so funny”. We laughed about it’. Subsequently, through their trip to Oventik they had acquired an understanding of the symbolic importance of the Zapatistas’ use of guns, that are purposefully displayed because they clearly do not function, and this symbolism appealed to them. By contrast, following their trip Abby had negative views about the Zapatistas’ use of ski masks, stating that, ‘they’re terrifying to me’, even while she appreciated that this is not the intended aim.

The fact that Zapatistas make and sell Zapatista-orientated items entails a further set of contradictions for Abby and Jamelia to negotiate. Firstly, Abby expressed the following view about Zapatista products: ‘I mean, it’s a little incongruous, that they’re also, like, doing their crafts and selling it in the shops. That seems a little weird [...]. It seems like, here are these badass, masked, gun-toting people who

also make dolls and stickers and t-shirts' ['dolls and stickers and t-shirts' said in a purposefully fey way]. Notwithstanding this inconsistent image, as Abby was initially sceptical that Zapatista items bought in stores in San Cristóbal would financially benefit the Zapatistas, they decided to wait until their visit to Oventik before making any further purchases. Nevertheless, once at Oventik, they felt disconcerted, as self-mockingly expressed by Abby: “hey! We’re just coming to collect our *chachkas* from your movement. Ok! We’re going now!” and it felt a little less comfortable to me – buying stuff or shopping [...] it felt like we almost spent more time in their shops than visiting their space’.²⁰² That said, their trip to Oventik had left a big impression on both participants and their encounter with Zapatistas as well as their increased familiarity with Chamulas gained through their visits to San Juan Chamula and Mercado Santo Domingo, meant that their dolls not only had acquired new meanings but had also gained in importance. When I asked Abby if her increased local knowledge affected her view of the Chamula doll, she replied: ‘yes. To me it’s wonderful, this is like “we were there [...]” that we’ve spent a little bit of time exploring, you know... the same with the Zapatista doll. Would I have needed those six months ago? No, not really!’ – clearly the implication being that she did now need the dolls.

Jamelia anticipated that on their return to the US, they would display the dolls on the mantelpiece in their sitting room, alongside a collection of rocks and, as with the other unusual ‘*chachkas*’ in their home, she thought that although other people would probably notice them, they would not generate further comment. The dolls, therefore, would be displayed for Abby and Jamelia’s own benefit rather than for the acquisition of cultural capital. In sum, the two dolls can be read on several levels. Firstly, they demonstrate that Abby and Jamelia are not only well travelled but also motivated to go off the beaten path – even beyond that of San Cristóbal which in itself cannot be considered as a mainstream destination. Secondly, they reflect the participants’ solidarity with female, indigenous producer/vendors and also the political aims of the Zapatistas; in fact, before her arrival in San Cristóbal, Jamelia had already planned to take a module on the Zapatista uprising as part of her university studies. Thirdly, the purchase and display of the dolls undeniably

²⁰² *Chachkas* is a Yiddish word meaning knickknacks.

represent a succession of flashpoints where the participants' deeply felt sense of social awareness and social justice were undermined by incompatible identity positions. Moreover, not only do the dolls embody this conflict but, by their very presence, they reproduce it, since the conflict is perpetually unresolved. Finally, and of crucial importance, is that whilst the local identities represented by Guatemalan worry dolls are often flattened by the act of consumption, for Abby and Jamelia's examples the reverse applied. That is, as they acquired local knowledge by visiting San Juan Chamula and Oventik, their understanding of the local identities represented by their Chamula and Zapatista dolls became clearer and inextricably linked to them. Thus, while they may have bought the dolls as a combination of holiday souvenir, statement of political solidarity and example of indigenous cultural production this was not at the expense of the identities expressed by the dolls.

San Cristóbal as a site of diverse specificity

The three example dolls prompted the *mestizo* and US participants to raise major themes of this thesis, such as the expression of solidarity with indigenous people, the formation of regional identities, the negotiation of conflicting identities and the development of feelings for objects over markedly different temporal contexts. However, there is not a sense from this albeit small sample that Chamula and Zapatista dolls facilitate as wide a range of potential functions as Guatemalan dolls. Although associated with an explicit purpose – the removal of troubles – worry dolls in reality operate as a blank canvas onto which can be laid myriad functions that reveal various identity positions linked to ethnicity, nationality, hobbies, professions, familial relations and other similar categories.

By contrast, unsurprisingly, all the San Cristóbal participants primarily regarded Zapatista dolls as political symbols which consequently delimits the meanings associated with them. The impact of the participants' spatial proximity or distance to the production site of the dolls is, however, revealed. In more detail, while Ángel underlined his local knowledge by suggesting that the doll in Example A specifically represented Subcomandante Marcos, his initial reaction was that it was a rag doll and he only subsequently elaborated that this type of doll is associated

with the EZLN.²⁰³ Although he recognised their appeal for tourists, for him they are simply dolls: ‘lo vemos todo el tiempo, no es como muy bonito’. This comment is perhaps indicative of how proximity to the dolls’ production site and their ubiquity in San Cristóbal can lead to overfamiliarity and even disinterest. Indeed, Ángel perhaps understood this by distinguishing between consumption by locals who, he suggested, buy the dolls for their children to play with, and nationals, who he thought are more likely to buy them as gifts or souvenir display items for the home. This distinction is also supported at the level of international visitors by Abby and Jamelia for whom their doll constitutes an important symbol of solidarity that will also function as a reminder of their trip to Oventik and their wider holiday in the south of Mexico and which will be displayed in a central position in their home. In fact, all five of the participants I interviewed in San Cristóbal thought that Chamula dolls and Zapatista dolls would appeal to national, as well as international, tourists and visitors. This view perhaps points to the dolls’ function as symbols of local identities rather than a Mexican national identity and, therefore, they are desirable to Mexicans seeking souvenirs that represent different sites and ethnic groups within their own country.

There was a similar distinction relating to the use of Chamula dolls. The local *mestizo* participants were familiar with the dolls and the majority viewed them through a gendered lens as play items for girls. They also viewed them as gifts; not only by Beatriz who had received one from her grandmother but also as suggested by Ángel who thought that fathers might buy them for their daughters. However, Beatriz thought that the dolls would have a different role for tourists, who would perhaps be more inclined to buy them as souvenirs to remind them of the local indigenous people they have seen during their time in San Cristóbal: ‘así es como viste una mujer indígena, entonces es como, como, llevarse el recuerdo de lo que ellos vieron’. This distinction reflects Abby and Jamelia’s motivation for their purchase of the Chamula doll; that is, a locally produced souvenir that represents a local indigenous female. Therefore, Chamula dolls, more so than Zapatista dolls, conform to everyday understandings both of dolls (as gendered play items) and of souvenir dolls (as representations of Others and as memory objects).

²⁰³ Subcomandante Marcos was formally a key spokesperson of the EZLN.

In a nutshell, Guatemalan worry dolls tap into themes such as the alleviation of worry and the desire for particular outcomes; themes that span national borders, gender, class and ethnicity. By contrast, Zapatista and Chamula dolls have more-delimited functions and speak of a distinction between local and non-local identities. The flexibility of worry dolls is to be expected given their generic appearance as compared to those produced by Chamulas. This standardised look makes it difficult for the majority of people who come into contact with them to determine their exact place of production and this consequently downplays their local identity. By contrast, through their clothing, Zapatista dolls and Chamula dolls are so intrinsically associated with a specific locale and context that it seemingly curtails their potential to function in different ways. Nevertheless, despite these differences, several shared themes emerged during the interviews and participant observation at both fieldwork sites, as discussed in the conclusions below.

Conclusion

In terms of vending practices at each site, in market-based contexts indigenous women are the carriers of indigenous identities and traditions; in Antigua, this relates more specifically to the construct of the *mujer maya*. By contrast, *artesanía* shops tend to be staffed by non-indigenous women. Thus, even though these two different types of spaces may sell more or less the same items, the former is marked as a “traditional” space and the latter is linked to modernity. In *artesanía* shops there was also a contrast between the informative presentation of *traje* and the marginalised presentation of dolls, thereby demonstrating how these two examples of cultural production are construed differently in these environments with the former being granted more cultural and aesthetic value than the latter. Of crucial importance is that there was no such distinction in the presentation of textile items at the market sites which suggests that indigenous producer/vendors do not categorise their cultural production in this hierarchical manner.

As for consumption, this next stage of the dolls' life story highlights the novel ways in which individuals think about and engage with Maya dolls. Moreover, it reveals the fluidity of a range of identity positions which, in some instances, are incompatible, as notably demonstrated by Abby and Jamelia's requirement to implement strategies to try and alleviate their resulting internal struggle. However, as with their use in the museums assessed in Chapter One and Chapter Two, through the process of consumption Maya dolls are also reconfigured with the effect that the ethnic, indigenous, local and national identities they are linked to are, in some cases, flattened in order to serve the purpose of the individuals who acquire them. These themes and concerns, although relating to the individual, often provide a powerful and overarching critique of the everyday experience of contemporary life.

Finally, one might ask where are the voices of indigenous consumers in investigations of these types of tourist souvenirs? Academic sources do not tend to conceive of indigenous people as consumers of souvenirs, particularly when those objects are usually linked to non-indigenous consumers. Therefore, the opinions of Estrella and the Chamula artisans are essential for revealing how these objects can be positively received by indigenous people. Moreover, their clear enthusiasm for dolls that represent themselves undermines Scott's conception of these objects as surrogates for the Western desire to possess indigenous "Otherness" (n.d.: 1). In what seems like a further act of the erasure of the indigenous identities represented by the dolls it can, therefore, be argued that indigenous people are written out of their own narrative by research that fails to take their views into account.

In Chapter Three, assessing the similarities and differences in the materiality and production processes of Maya dolls highlighted Maya identities at an individual, local, national and supranational level. In this current chapter, by broadening the scope to examine vending practices and the consumption of the dolls in spatial and temporal proximity to their production context it reveals further layers of, often unexpected, meanings and functions that have been assigned to them. However, in the case of the Guatemalan dolls in particular, these added layers of meaning entail the flattening of the local and ethnic identities represented by the dolls. Chapter Five analyses how these themes continue to develop by tracing the dispersal of the dolls beyond the locales in which they are produced.

CHAPTER FIVE

TRAVELLING DOLLS

This chapter continues to trace the life story of the Zapatista, Chamula and Guatemalan dolls represented by Examples A, B and C respectively, but will move beyond the locales in which they are produced to instead focus on their dissemination at a national and international level. The chapter commences with an examination of how they are promoted at vending contexts within Mexico and Guatemala. Following this, the reception of the dolls by Mexicans from beyond San Cristóbal is explored through interviews with Mexicans studying in the UK. The second half of the chapter considers the dolls at an international level, partly through vending contexts – taking eBay as an example – and partly through interviews with doll collectors, many of whom have not visited either Mexico or Guatemala and, consequently, buy second-hand dolls from sources such as eBay. Thus, it is possible once more to trace the life story of the dolls as they are recommoditised and subsequently resold to become an item in a collection and, consequently, become endowed with a new set of functions and values as defined by their new owner. As will become apparent, as the spatial and temporal distance between the dolls and their production context increases so too does their potential for different life paths and, concomitantly, an ever-increasing array of situations in which consumers engage with them for the purpose of identity construction. Yet, alongside this is an ever-increasing likelihood that the indigenous identities associated with the dolls become blurred or erased. This chapter explores the identity themes and issues that arise from participants' engagement with the dolls given this dislocation between production and consumption.

The Vending and Reception of Maya Dolls by Mexicans

Vending sites in Mexico: Guatemalan dolls as souvenirs of Mexico

In Chapter Two of this thesis, an assessment of the display practices at the MNA and the MAP in Mexico City demonstrated the different ways in which state sponsored institutions erase the identities associated with locally specific *artesanías*

in order to construct a Mexican national identity. A similar process was evident in the gift shops at both of these institutions. But most startling was the presence in both shops of the larger types of worry doll, that embellished products such as bags, picture frames and mirrors. At the MAP, no information was provided about the dolls or the products to which they were attached. However, at the MNA's shop all the items embellished with worry dolls were marked 'Hecho en México'. Yet, as the construction of the dolls was identical to those made in Guatemala, it is possible that these items were merely assembled in Mexico utilising Guatemalan dolls. Similarly, larger worry dolls were also sold individually at the MNA's shop. Each one was accompanied by an information card entitled 'Muñequita Quitapenas' followed by the worry doll legend and, presumably to provide the legend's provenance, 'TRADICIÓN MAYA' (*capitalisation in original*). There is no mention on the card of Guatemala and instead it is stated that the item is marketed by a Mexican-based business. It could be suggested, therefore, that these dolls were also merely marketed via a Mexican company but were made in Guatemala. Of crucial importance is that whether sold individually or fixed to bags or purses, and whether by wilful misrepresentation or not, the effect for the unknowing consumer is the same; the dolls were presented as being Mexican *artesanías* and their Guatemalan identity was erased and replaced by a Mexican national identity. Furthermore, as the individual worry dolls sold at the MNA were described as 'TRADICIÓN MAYA' their indigenous Maya identity is also in effect subsumed by a Mexican national identity. While this example could point to a cross-border Maya identity or the increasing hybridity of cross-border cultural production noted by García Canclini, in the context of a national flagship museum the lack of recognition of the Guatemalan origins of these dolls seems more akin to cultural appropriation.

Non-state vending sites in Mexico also sell Guatemalan worry dolls and similarly, rather than acknowledging their Guatemalan provenance, they are styled as products and souvenirs of Mexico. This is achieved by gluing a label bearing a Mexican place name either onto the dolls' clothing or the items to which the dolls are attached, such as bags and purses. For example, I have seen Guatemalan dolls labelled "Chiapas", "Oaxaca" and the names of places on the Yucatán Peninsular, such as "Valladolid", "Cancún" and "Isla Mujeres", as well as "Mexico" (Figure

39). Clearly, the cultural appropriation involved in the sale of these dolls is more blatant than in the state-controlled vending contexts assessed above and indicates the commercial success of the dolls in their manifestation as place-specific souvenirs rather than for their function of easing worries. That the addition of the place-specific labels is essential in reconfiguring – and appropriating – the dolls as examples of Mexican cultural production is indicated by the fact that they are only occasionally labelled “Guatemala” when sold in their home country and I have never seen a worry doll labelled with the name of a Guatemalan town or region; in other words, in this context, their Guatemalan identity is a given and does not require reinforcing. Crucially, this cultural appropriation is not a reciprocal phenomenon. Indeed, the only Mexican examples I have seen for sale during three visits to Guatemala were a small batch of unlabelled Chamula and Zapatista dolls in Nim P’ot in Antigua. When I asked at the counter where they were from, the store assistant replied ‘Chiapas’; there was, therefore, no attempt to claim this cultural production as Guatemalan. This type of evidence seems to suggest not only an unequal power relationship between the two countries but also the extent to which worry dolls are a blank slate ripe for reconfiguration to whatever end suits the vendor or consumer whereas as Chamula dolls and certainly Zapatista dolls are clearly locally specific and, therefore, do not function in quite the same way. These Mexican vending sites present Maya dolls from Guatemala in ways that foreground identities that conform to their profit-orientated policies – a Mexican national identity in the case of the shop at the MNA and a place-specific identity in the case of those marked with, for example, Chiapas or Cancún – thereby erasing or misrepresenting the indigenous and national identities with which they should be associated. The following section, which turns its attention to the reception of Maya dolls by Mexicans, provides an opportunity to assess the impact of such misrepresentations.

Mexican students living in the UK: *Artesanías* and the Mexican national identity

This group of participants more specifically comprises Mexicans living in the UK. The value of the data from this cohort, as opposed to that provided by the Mexicans from the San Cristóbal area assessed in Chapter Four, is that it allows an

examination of how attitudes and feelings about *artesanías* change when individuals move from their home country to a different national context for an extended period of time and, more generally, whether their time in the UK had reinforced their Mexican identity – either on a national or regional level or, indeed, both of these. Most importantly, the interviews were essential for investigating how the four participants who owned examples of Maya dolls used them to express their identities.

The ages of the 10 participants ranged from early 20s to late 30s and they are from a wide geographical spread within Mexico.²⁰⁴ All were studying for Masters or PhD degrees at English universities with the exception of Noemí, an *artesanía* dealer, who was accompanying her husband who was one of the student participants. This fact allowed for a control for levels of education and also, but not in all cases, perhaps pointed to their class position and socio-economic status. As expected, because the participants were invited to interview on the basis of their interest in Mexican *artesanías* the majority emphasised their importance, partly because of their aesthetic appeal but most frequently in terms of their role in representing Mexican culture. By contrast, there were various views about the extent to which *artesanías* appeal to Mexicans more generally, with half of the participants suggesting that younger people are less interested in them than older people as they do not value, or are not aware of, the skills involved in craft production. Most of the participants owned at least some *artesanías*, with clothing, textiles and chiapaneco amber most frequently mentioned and, despite limited baggage allowances, several had brought examples with them to the UK. These *artesanías* fall into two categories; firstly, gifts for academic supervisors and new friends that the participants anticipated meeting and, secondly, items for themselves. While the latter type appealed to them on an aesthetic level and as reminders of home, most were also practical items such as clothing, jewellery, bags and study accessories such as bookmarks. One participant noted that although she

²⁰⁴ As with the Mexican participants I interviewed in San Cristóbal, it was clear that the majority of the students were unaccustomed to defining their race/ethnicity. While José and Bianca defined themselves as *mestizos* on the personal information form, the other participants were unsure of what the question meant. Consequently, some chose to leave the question unanswered and others, perhaps highlighting how spatial distance from your home country affects self-identification, decided upon ‘Latin American’.

did not bring anything for herself, this was unusual as she had seen numerous photographs on social media posted by newly arrived Mexican students that show the walls of their student accommodation adorned with Mexican flags, *serapes*, *sombreros* and examples of regional dress. *Artesanías* brought as gifts included: bracelets; tequila and other regional drinks; *sombrero* keyrings; and coasters and bookmarks featuring Aztec and Maya symbols, which, although in some cases represent regional Mexican identities, they would arguably be received as representative of a Mexican national identity. The overarching rationale for the participants' selection of *artesanías* – whether for themselves or others – can be encapsulated as pride, both in their Mexican identity and in Mexican culture. Thus, although not the main focus of this analysis, the responses of the participants underlined their strong sense of Mexican national identity and, within this, in some instances, a strong identity linked to a Mexican region.

Reconfiguring identities: Guatemalan dolls as symbols of Mexico

In terms of dolls more specifically, the Chamula doll in Example B was the least recognised example. While two participants correctly identified it as representing a Tzotzil woman from Chiapas they were perhaps anomalies. That is, Noemí, 34, from Mexico City, had visited San Cristóbal before and, as an *artesanía* dealer, was perhaps more familiar with them than a layperson. Equally, Jorge, 30, from Tuxtla Gutiérrez – the only participant in this cohort from Chiapas – had seen the dolls in San Cristóbal and noted that they accurately represent the actual dress of indigenous women in the area: 'It's pretty much like a... like bringing to life an *indígena* woman [...] you can see them carrying their babies'. He correctly recollected that the dolls are from one of the outlying villages of San Cristóbal and that the makers speak Tzotzil.

While these two participants identified the Chamula doll in Example B, the Guatemalan doll in Example C produced unexpected opinions about its origins. In more detail, while five of the nine participants I asked recognised the doll shown in Example C, of crucial importance is that four of these considered the doll to be Mexican; either a representation of Mexican culture in general or Chiapas more specifically. Bianca, 25, from Yucatán, was the only person in the cohort who

identified it as being Guatemalan. She explained that her father lived for a while in Tapachula, Chiapas, near the Guatemalan border and when she used to visit him, her parents drew her attention to the Guatemalan people she saw there. That the participants from San Cristóbal noted in Chapter Four also correctly identified the origin of the Guatemalan doll highlights the link between their proximity to its production site and an ability to recognise its provenance. However, the other participants' misidentification of the Guatemalan doll indicates two further issues. Firstly, is the successful appropriation of these dolls by Mexican vendors. For example, even Noemí, who, as an *artesanía* dealer, would perhaps be attuned to these matters, deemed them to be commonplace and had seen them at various places in Mexico, including Chiapas, and understandably assumed they were Mexican. Secondly, is an assumption that any particular representation of an indigenous person is a Mexican indigenous person, thereby indicating a propensity to treat heterogeneous peoples as a homogenous mass. Therefore, not only is the specific indigenous and national identity of the Guatemalan doll erased, but it is reconfigured to represent a Mexican Other. Although he did not recognise the doll, Edgardo, 24, from Torreón, demonstrated this most clearly when he declared: 'I've seen people dressed up like that [laughing] but not the doll'. When I asked where he had seen such people, he replied: 'Pretty much everywhere [in Mexico] I think. So, people dressing up like that and carrying their babies like that. They're usually natives and they will be asking for money in [sic] stop signs'.²⁰⁵ He confirmed that this included his hometown in the north of Mexico. His linkage of indigenous people with begging or a lack of formal employment and – by extension – poverty, indigenous clothing and with carrying babies in their arms underlines their difference to and exclusion from *mestizo* Mexican society. The urban context of the traffic lights also seems to compound this image by juxtaposing the *mestizo* sat inside the protective environment of the modern car whilst indigenous people are consigned to the streets. All in all, in this instance, the Guatemalan doll represents the stereotype of an impoverished indigenous person.

²⁰⁵ As the participant was speaking in a second language, his use of the term 'native' should be regarded as a translation issue.

Yet, the generic conception of the Other may also be for the best of reasons and, rather than emphasising differences of class, race and ethnicity, may instead emphasise commonalities. An illustration is the reaction of Alegría – a 30-year-old participant from Mexico City – to the dolls. When I showed her the Guatemalan doll in Example C she became very excited and exclaimed that she had a similar example attached to a magnet which she displayed on her fridge at her student accommodation in the UK. She had bought the doll in Mexico City at an event promoting *artesanías* from Chiapas. It is understandable, therefore, that Alegría assumed that her fridge magnet doll was also from Chiapas. But it also could be argued that Alegría’s eagerness to accept this provenance reflects her affection for San Cristóbal, given that she had visited the city and either did not notice, or chose to overlook, that the indigenous women there wear *traje* starkly different from that represented by the doll. Furthermore, she felt significant empathy for the artisans there and expressed her sadness and guilt that low selling prices do not reflect the work involved in producing *artesanías*. As a consequence, she willingly paid the higher prices charged at Kux lejal, the cooperative run by indigenous women in San Cristóbal mentioned in Chapter Four. Leading on from this, Alegría’s Guatemalan doll fridge magnet represents a family group comprising mother, father and baby and she bought it from the Chiapas event in Mexico City specifically to bring with her to the UK. She was not aware of the concept of worry dolls. Instead, the appeal lay in its representation of family:

Ah, because it’s, it’s a family. It’s cute. It’s to remember that...there is people in [...] Chiapas that has [...] a family [...], so, it’s like us. They are like us. Completely. They have, they share the love with each other. [...] The first time I saw this I was completely attracted about the concept because it’s the union, the family, so I felt the love in this idea. So I feel completely, like [...] connected, [...] even when [...] I have no child, I can, I think that, well, could be my mom and me and my father. [...] or maybe in the future, me and my baby [laughing]. Yes, that’s the feeling that I have.

At several points during the interview Alegría emphasised that the concepts of “family” “togetherness” and “sharing” were very important to her and, as evident in the above quotation, although she makes a distinction, these feelings extend to

“them” – the Other represented by the dolls. Ultimately, that for Alegría the magnet represents an indigenous chiapaneco family and a blend of her own family both now and in the future, nevertheless, erases the Guatemalan identity of the doll.

In contrast to Alegría, two other participants were aware of the concept of worry dolls. Yani, 30, referred to Example C as a dream catcher doll and bought one in Mexico City to help counter the startling nightmares that she was experiencing at that time. Bianca also referred to them as dream catchers. As noted earlier, Bianca was the only participant in this cohort who recognised the Guatemalan origin of Example C. She bought a similar one in the form of a fridge magnet in Tapachula when she was a young girl and, at the time of the interview, it was still attached to the fridge at the family home in Yucatán and every time she saw it, it reminded her of Chiapas. This is significant because, while having a close attachment to Yucatán where she has nearly always lived, she also emphasised her very strong attachment to Chiapas, where she was born. Bianca went on to say that two weeks prior to our interview, she had visited Lisbon and in a store there she had seen some of the dolls represented by Example C being sold as sets with the worry doll legend attached. She described how she felt when she saw them: ‘they looked like, Guatemalan, Mayans, and I was like, “what is that doing here?!”’ and, because she did not realise that they were in circulation at an international level, ‘I was really shocked and surprised’. Although she would have liked to have bought some, her student budget would not allow for it. Nevertheless, the sight of the dolls had a powerful impact on her: ‘I was really excited [...] and I took a picture and sent it to my family and said “oh, look what I’ve found!” Yeah [...] I was really excited about it – to see something from Mexico in, in there’. This is an important example of how spatial distance affects positional identities since, when Bianca sees the dolls on the fridge at her home in Yucatán, she is reminded of Chiapas yet in Lisbon she was reminded of Mexico. However, overarching this is that while she recognised the national and indigenous specificities represented by these Guatemalan dolls she simultaneously thought of them in terms of a Mexican identity. In sum, the flattening of difference entailed in the participants’ misidentification of the Guatemalan doll in Example C and the lack of knowledge regarding the Chamula doll in Example B highlights the importance of proximity to the production sites since, by contrast, for the participants from San Cristóbal, rather than representing a generic indigenous

identity, the dolls specifically represent indigenous people from Guatemala and San Juan Chamula respectively.

Zapatista dolls: Ninjas and revolutionaries

In comparison to Chamula and Guatemalan dolls, Zapatista dolls are less ambiguous presumably because of their ski masks and, in the case of Example A shown to participants, the inclusion of 'EZLN' written onto its wooden "gun". Nevertheless, an unexpected finding in relation to Zapatista dolls was the participants' uneven knowledge about them. For instance, one participant, who had visited San Cristóbal, had no knowledge of the Zapatistas. When I showed her the photograph of Example A, she was very bemused and when I asked if she had seen a similar doll she exclaimed: 'No! No, never! It looks like a ninja!'. The other participants' familiarity with this type of doll or the EZLN more generally ranged from, on the one hand, knowledgeable to, on the other hand, vague recollections of a revolutionary movement but with uncertainty about its specific aims or the region involved. This variable knowledge could not be explained by a pattern in terms of the participants' ages or the proximity to Chiapas of their home regions and, therefore, suggests a lack of identification with the ideology of the EZLN.

By contrast, the two participants who actually owned Zapatista dolls were knowledgeable about the EZLN. Yani, mentioned above, had a Zapatista keyring which she bought from San Cristóbal and, until she came to the UK, it hung in her room at her parents' house in Mexico City.²⁰⁶ She referred to it as Comandante Marcos and she bought it because of her admiration for him and because of her support for the Zapatista movement and, more generally, indigenous rights and the protection of indigenous culture. The keyring also reminds her of other struggles, such as the search for truth about the 43 students from Ayotzinapa.²⁰⁷ Although the keyring, therefore, represents a mosaic of Yani's different concerns – the focus of which is social justice – this function does not entail the erasure of the local and

²⁰⁶ While Yani is in the UK, her Zapatista keyring, Guatemalan worry doll and her other small dolls are being stored in a box for safekeeping at her friend's house in Mexico.

²⁰⁷ In September 2014, 43 male students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers College were abducted and then disappeared after police intercepted the buses they had commandeered to attend demonstrations in Mexico City. Their fate remains unclear although they were probably killed.

political identities associated with the Zapatistas. The other participant who owned a Zapatista doll is José. His story is particularly important for this thesis partly because of his strong support for the Zapatistas and partly because he brought his doll to the UK for the duration of his studies, as detailed below.

The story of José and El Zapatista: Radical identities

I initially interviewed José in June 2014 when he was in his mid-30s and studying for a PhD at the University of Liverpool. His stay in the UK was the first time he had travelled beyond Mexico and within Mexico itself he was not particularly well travelled beyond his home city near Guadalajara, Jalisco. His wife, Maritza, accompanied him to the UK.²⁰⁸ Mexican *artesanías* are extremely important to the couple and they like to spend time browsing and buying items at *artesanía* markets in Mexico. Three types of craft are particularly appealing to José. The first is associated with Día de Muertos because, as he stated, these crafts ‘are very “Mexican”’ in, for example, the mixture of Catholic and indigenous traditions that *calaveras* embody. The second type is made by the Huichol (or Wixarika) people of the north of Jalisco. These crafts appeal to him because of the designs, which often incorporate representations of the peyote, deer and corn that form a triad at the core of the Huichol belief system. Finally, is *artesanía* associated with the Zapatistas. José’s Zapatista doll – which he refers to as ‘El Zapatista’ – is important because, as he explained, ‘it represents my support to the Zapatista movement for social justice and cultural change in Mexico (and globally)’. José bought El Zapatista in May 2013 from a stall selling *artesanías* from around Mexico at a street market at Plaza Tapatía in the centre of Guadalajara. He did not go to the market with the intention of buying a Zapatista doll but when he saw El Zapatista it resonated with him. He explained, ‘I’ve always wanted something Zapatista’ and ‘I saw it and thought “I have to have one” [because] I support the Zapatista movement [...] I’ve followed them since I was a teenager’. Given that José has not been to Chiapas and it is a fair distance from his home near Guadalajara he is, nevertheless, very knowledgeable about the EZLN. He described how, when he

²⁰⁸ Maritza was not a participant in this research, however, her name has been changed to preserve her anonymity.

bought the doll, he asked the vendor whether it was from San Juan Chamula and he knew that a key marker of Chamula identity is the same black woollen garments that clothe the dolls. He also knew of several groups in Guadalajara that support the Zapatistas and sell items produced in Chiapas to raise money for the cause. Although José would have been interested in buying a Zapatista doll in any event, the impetus to buy it on this occasion was his forthcoming stay in the UK as he planned to take El Zapatista with him.

Once in the UK, José utilised the doll in two main ways. The first of these was in his flat, where it was displayed on a shelf in the living area alongside a selection of other Mexican *artesanías*, including a Día de Muertos figure, a vase, a piece of embroidery and a silver heart. José and Maritza had brought these items with them from Mexico in anticipation of giving some of them away as gifts in the UK. When I saw photographs of this selection of *artesanías* displayed on the shelves, it gave the aura of a shrine celebrating Mexico. The national pride the couple expressed through these items to visitors to their flat was unmistakable and, also, bolstered their own sense of being Mexican. The other way in which José used El Zapatista was inspired by the film *Amélie* (2001), in which the film's protagonist arranged to have her father's garden gnome photographed at various landmarks around the world. Similarly, before he left Mexico José had planned to photograph El Zapatista at various UK landmarks. When I first interviewed him, he had been in the UK for a few months and had already embarked upon this aim. His choice of locations is of crucial significance as they express his cultural preferences and socio-political allegiances and, in turn, José's multiple identities, as explored below.

Several reoccurring themes emerge when assessing José's photographs featuring El Zapatista.²⁰⁹ Those taken in Liverpool not only include famous landmarks such as the Royal Liver Building and the Royal Albert Dock but also Beatles-related sites such as The Cavern Club and the gates of Strawberry Field. Similarly, those taken in London feature sites such as Trafalgar Square and an oncoming tube train at Charing Cross station. While these sites are all typical photographic subjects for

²⁰⁹ See Appendix 2 for a list of José's photographs.

national and international tourists and underline José's enthusiasm of getting to know a new country, the presence of El Zapatista also disrupts these familiar global scenes and lend them a radical character. José also expressed his interest in a wide variety of art through his photographs of El Zapatista taken in front of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh, Tate Liverpool and eight – mostly canonical – works of European art spanning several centuries and styles at the National Gallery in London. In addition, José and Maritza took advantage of their UK base to visit Rome and Amsterdam where photographs of El Zapatista demonstrate a similar mixture of touristic and art-based subject matter.²¹⁰ On the other hand, rather than representing touristic themes that incorporate his appreciation of art, other photographs are specifically linked to José's identity as a PhD student, such as those featuring the University of Sheffield, where he presented a conference paper, and the University of Liverpool where he studied.

However, the theme that emerges most clearly from the selection of photographs is José's keen sense of social justice. This is represented by the frontage of a shop named 'News from Nowhere: Liverpool's Radical and Community Bookshop' and by six photographs taken at an exhibition at the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool entitled *Art of Solidarity: Cuban Posters for African Liberation 1967-1989* which include images of Amílcar Cabral – a key figure in Guinea-Bissau's independence struggle – and a quotation from Nelson Mandela. Inseparable from this is José's allegiance to the working class, which is represented by two photographs of El Zapatista at Highgate Cemetery in London; one with the headstone of Eric Hobsbawm and the other next to the tomb of Karl Marx. José's working-class identity is a major aspect of his life. For example, as well as the crucial significance for him of *artesanías*, he also pointed out that chilli, tequila and especially corn are very important to him. In fact, he eloquently described corn as being one of the 'tenets of my identity' and 'part of my idea of being Mexican'. As he underlined, '[c]orn tortillas are particularly important to me, because they are the staple food of the peasant and working class'. Notably, José confirmed that his

²¹⁰ The list is not an exhaustive account of José and Maritza's time based in the UK as on several occasions they forgot to take El Zapatista with them, including a trip to Paris. José expressed his regret at this omission: 'It was a fantastic trip and it would have been very funny to take him there'.

time in the UK reinforced his Mexican identity but, in addition, it reinforced his working-class identity:

Distance allowed me to be more reflective. But also, surprisingly, being in contact to [*sic*] other Mexican students reinforced my sense of being Mexican and my working-class background. Many Mexican [*sic*] doing postgraduate studies in the UK do so because they want to distance from Mexico, they want to stay in the UK after finishing their studies. In my case that was the opposite, I studied in the UK to learn things that otherwise would be very difficult in Mexico, but with the aim to return to my country and work with Mexican social science students.

Of vital importance is that he shared, and continues to share, images of El Zapatista on social media and, consequently, he uses the doll not only to publicly express his support for the Zapatistas but also as a medium through which to express his broader socio-political allegiances and his cultural tastes.²¹¹

José and Maritza returned to Mexico at the end of September 2015. At the time of our email correspondence in February and March 2017 they displayed their *artesanías* on a bookshelf in the living area of their home and, significantly in terms of his working-class identity, El Zapatista was positioned next to several volumes of Karl Marx's *Capital* and a Spanish language edition of a work by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. José also continued to incorporate the doll into a mixture of photographs featuring touristic and art themes, such as a beach at Cancún and sculptures and a mural in Guadalajara – these latter examples also highlighting pride in his regional Mexican identity.

When I asked whether El Zapatista meant the same to him currently as it did in Liverpool, he replied 'I think it does mean the same. I like to have fun taking him [*sic*] photographs in landmarks or interesting places, but also as a statement of my

²¹¹ José initially shared the photographs on Facebook and Instagram, but now he shares them only on Facebook. No one makes specific comments about the photographs, but he receives "likes" for them.

sympathy to the Zapatista movement'. At the same time his feelings do seem to have shifted slightly since he also added: 'but after being in different parts of the world with him, it is a sort of a "project". Maritza and I are planning to take him [*sic*] photographs in interesting, symbolic and funny places'. Thus, El Zapatista has developed a further layer of meaning in that it represents an ongoing joint project between the couple whose relationship and shared travel experiences in Mexico and Europe are documented through the doll. Similarly, while he continues to post his El Zapatista photographs on social media, he withholds some from public consumption so that the couple can keep them for themselves. He is also thinking of printing some of the photographs for display in their home.

The case study of José and El Zapatista provides a clear example of how an individual can express multiple and compatible identities through a doll. Moreover, José's engagement with the doll is multi-faceted. Firstly, even without photographing El Zapatista at various locations, that he bought it underlines his support for the EZLN's struggle for social justice. Secondly, his concern for social justice more generally, alongside his solidarity with the working class, transcends nation-state borders and by using the doll in photographs he expresses not only these social identities and global issues, but also his personal tastes and life events. Thirdly, while the photographs reinforce his sense of self, his identity is also disseminated to others through social media. Equally, El Zapatista as the "project" he shares with Maritza privately expresses their relationship and shared experiences. Finally, although José – through the doll – foregrounds a class identity over other potential identity categories such as indigeneity and gender, this is compatible with the local and political identities represented by El Zapatista.

More generally, as with the interviews in Chapter Four, the interviews with Mexicans living in the UK highlight a difference in uses between the three types of doll. Namely, although Guatemalan dolls are infused with a Maya and Guatemalan identity they, nevertheless, tend to operate as a blank canvas onto which the consumer can overlay an array of functions, reminding us of Driscoll's work on Barbie (2002). For example, this chapter has demonstrated how Maya dolls are used to help people with their sleeping problems, act as a reminder of a family unit and represent Mexico and Mexican culture. Of critical importance, however, is that

in reconfiguring the dolls, their ethnic and national identities are erased. By contrast, because Zapatista dolls do not embody a seemingly generic indigenous identity, they are less likely to be repurposed and overlaid with the personally held meanings of individual consumers and instead are more likely to facilitate the expression of social identities that are compatible with the aims of the EZLN.

The Vending and Consumption of Maya Dolls beyond Mexico and Guatemala

eBay and alternative strategies for selling Maya dolls: From art to generic commodity

The focus of this chapter now shifts beyond Mexico to an example of an international vending site; more specifically, eBay. This auction site has been selected for analysis in this research for two main reasons. The first of these is its international reach and, also, accessibility – at least for those with access to the internet – which allows images of the dolls to be disseminated still further from their production sites. In addition, for those dolls auctioned as second-hand items, their resale is a further chapter of their life story. This not only marks a complete rupture with their original production and vending context but also their function because, for example, a gift or souvenir bought in Guatemala or Chiapas will most likely be utilised for a different purpose once sold; in fact, the consumers who subsequently buy one of these dolls from eBay may not have visited either of these two places. The second reason for which eBay is important is the use of keywords that complement the photographs of items for sale. As one among hundreds of dolls for sale on this website it is necessary for the seller to promote the significant features of their lot in order to make a maximum impact with a minimal number of words.²¹² The features that sellers choose to highlight with keywords, therefore, reveal their attitudes both about the dolls and their consumers. These words also often serve to reconfigure the previous function of the dolls to one of “eBay auction item”.

²¹² See Figure 40 for an indicative “screen shot” of eBay auction listings for the search criteria ‘Guatemala doll’.

The sale of Chamula dolls on eBay

To analyse sellers' descriptions of the dolls I used two slightly different strategies. In terms of Chamula dolls, since new auction listings are relatively infrequent, from September 2015 until July 2017 I collected details of the six lots which formed the majority of those listed under the categories of 'Chamula doll' and 'Chiapas doll'. Surprisingly, given that education is a central function, there was more detail about the dolls in some of the eBay listings than there was at the museums assessed in Chapter Two. A prime example is the following description of a doll made by María, the Chamula dollmaker featured in Chapter Three: 'Chiapas Chamula Doll MARIA PATIXTAN LICANCHITON Great Master of Mexican Folk Art' (*capitalisation in original*). These keywords not only disseminate the *municipio* and state in which the doll was produced but also María's name and the title of the book in which she is featured were also considered to be selling points. Furthermore, although the focus of this section is the use of keywords, the longer description stated María's ethnic group and details about the doll's materiality, as shown below:

Vintage hand crafted Chiapas doll by Great Master of Mexican Folk Art, Maria Licanchiton, of San Juan Chamula, Chiapas.

Wooden doll with articulated arms, dressed in the typical ceremonial textiles of the Tzotzil people of the highlands of Chiapas. Beautifully hand woven and embroidered. The doll wears a necklace of satin ribbons and beads. Measures approx. 11" (27.5 cm) tall.

The work of Maria Patixtan is featured in book *Great Masters of Mexican Folk Art* (Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C., 1998).

This comprehensive yet concise description was no doubt prompted by the doll's aesthetic and ethnographic value and also its provenance, thus, María's name was highlighted and referenced using academic conventions, thereby providing

additional gravitas. By foregrounding María's name, the doll was presented as a work of art rather than the craft production of an anonymous artisan.

In contrast to the informative description of María's doll, two of the six auction lots of Chamula dolls contained errors that confuse ethnic and national identities. The first example is a lot of five dolls described as 'VINTAGE PRIMITIVE FOLKART FOLK ART DOLLS FAMILY TZOTZIL MAYAN CHIAPAS CHAMULA' (*capitalisation in original*). But only one was a Chamula doll – as written on its wooden stand – the others, which looked completely different, were Guatemalan. That they were marketed as a Chamula family on the basis of one labelled doll despite the clear differences between them perhaps reveals the seller's assumptions of, or strategy to appeal to, societal norms that idealise the family unit. The keywords for the second example were: '2 Folk Art Woven Cloth Antique Mexico Chamula Dolls Man Basket Woman Child'. However, this pair was also Guatemalan. Although the seller may have unwittingly reproduced misidentifications by other eBay sellers it could also indicate a flattening of different ethnic identities into a generic Other. As both of these misidentified lots were listed by sellers based in the US, it perhaps hints at an assumption that the generic Other is Mexican.²¹³ Aside from these errors, the other listings were correctly identified and stated 'Chamula' and/or 'Chiapas' as keywords.

The sale of Zapatista dolls on eBay

Since new auction listings are also relatively infrequent for Zapatista dolls, from September 2015 until July 2017, I collected details of all the 23 lots that were listed for sale. Since there were more listings than for Chamula dolls it is possible to discern reoccurring keywords used to describe them. The most popular were the following (in descending order of frequency): Mexico/Mexican; Chiapas; folk art; EZLN; handmade; Marcos/Comandante Marcos. This selection demonstrates the sellers' knowledge of what the dolls represent; in fact, nine of them were selling

²¹³ Although I carried out the searches for Chamula and Zapatista dolls through eBay UK, as there were no UK-based sellers listing these dolls, eBay automatically extended the search to North America. Of these sellers, one was based in Canada, three in Mexico and the rest were based in the US.

examples that they had bought in Mexico or from a source that supports Zapatistas. That the majority of sellers did not add any noteworthy description beyond their chosen keywords indicates their assumption that prospective buyers were also knowledgeable about the Zapatista movement even though it is a relatively specialised topic outside of Mexico. Nevertheless, as keywords by their nature are reductive, they simultaneously decontextualise the dolls from the aims and significance of the Zapatistas, particularly because they were disconnected from their original vending context. In sum, the dolls were necessarily reconfigured as commodities to facilitate their resale but in doing so their role as socio-political statements was diminished.²¹⁴

The sale of Guatemalan dolls on eBay

As Guatemalan dolls are numerous and ever-present on eBay I considered all the auction listings generated by the search criterion ‘Guatemala doll’ on 4 August 2019 which, based on several years of experience, was a representative snapshot of the examples for sale on the site.²¹⁵ The search produced 322 results, 48 of which were excluded as they were related to types of doll irrelevant to this research. The remaining lots comprised 222 worry dolls and 52 large dolls. These two types of doll were marketed in considerably different ways, as discussed below.

The large dolls were all stated as being preowned and all of the sellers were based in the US and sold in the capacity of individuals or as eBay stores that also sold assorted collectables and vintage items. The most prevalent keywords used to describe these dolls were (in descending order of frequency): vintage; handmade/handcrafted; fabric/cloth/rag/textile; height of doll; folk art/folk; souvenir. The designation of ‘vintage’ was largely appropriate judging by the photographs and that it was the most used adjective – in 35 lots – seems to demonstrate that this is a primary selling point of these particular Guatemalan dolls. The use of ‘vintage’ together with ‘handmade’/‘handcrafted’ also underlines their difference from modern mass-produced dolls, as does the emphasis on their cloth,

²¹⁴ See Appendix 3. Figure 41 for Summary Table.

²¹⁵ On eBay searches, this also automatically includes examples described as ‘Guatemalan dolls’.

rather than plastic, materiality. Together, the trio of ‘vintage’, ‘handmade’ and ‘cloth’ evokes the idea of the “authentic” craft production of simpler times. The fact that the dolls represent Maya people also reinforces this idea whilst simultaneously reproducing the stereotypical image of indigenous people frozen in the past. Crucially, however, there was no incidence of “Maya” or “Mayan” being used as a keyword. Consequently, although the descriptions and photographs of the dolls disseminated a generic indigenous identity, they were not explicitly promoted as representing indigenous people. As the search criterion was ‘Guatemala doll’ the inference is, therefore, that all Guatemalans are indigenous.²¹⁶

In contrast to the large dolls, the 222 smaller versions for sale were described as worry or trouble dolls. 37 of these worry dolls were described as being second-hand and since the main keywords used to describe them were handmade/handcrafted and vintage they conformed, in essence, to the assessment of the larger dolls above. Yet the 185 listings for new, as opposed to second-hand, worry dolls revealed a markedly different set of predominant keywords. In descending order of frequency these were: handmade; fair trade; Maya/n; new. Many of the sellers were wholesale dealers of these dolls and their marketing strategy appealed to contemporary themes as opposed to a focus on vintage cultural production. In other words, aside from the overarching premise of solving worries, the major selling points of these dolls seemed to be that; firstly, rather than being mass produced, they were handcrafted; secondly, the producers received a fair recompense for their craft; and thirdly, they were associated with Maya people and thus infused with their attendant spirituality. In addition, the emphasis on the fact that they were new conveyed to the consumer that they were buying an item that would directly benefit the Maya producer, which would not have been the case with a second-hand example. Significantly, however, of all the listings assessed on eBay, the keywords used to promote this group of dolls also had the most standardised, basic descriptions which constituted a tick list of these attributes rather than any engagement with, for example, the dolls’ materiality. Indeed, the starkest descriptions omitted a reference to Maya people, such as: ‘100 Tiny Guatemalan Worry Dolls. 50 Boys and 50 Girls’. Essentially, such descriptions

²¹⁶ See Appendix 3 Figure 41 for Summary Table.

constitute the extreme devaluation of indigenous identities. This is indigenous cultural production decontextualized and reconfigured as a generic commodity sold and bought in bulk.²¹⁷

eBay: Vending strategies and different types of consumer

The reoccurrence of keywords for each type of doll indicates the seller's assumptions, or knowledge, of how to promote their lot most effectively to its potential buyer. The different types of doll lend themselves to divergent forms of promotion which configure or reconfigure them as commodities aimed at different markets and which foreground different types of function and value. It has already been suggested that new worry dolls are aimed at consumers who are attracted to contemporary concerns, such as the alleviation of worries and fairly traded items with a generic indigenous twist. It could also be suggested that, with its relatively detailed description authenticated by a book reference, María's doll is aimed at an art market. Alternatively, the intended markets for Chamula and Zapatista dolls are perhaps those with an interest in Mexican or Maya cultural production or supporters of the EZLN and other similar socio-political movements. Not only do the keywords assume a level of knowledge about the region but also all of the Chamula dolls and a notable number of Zapatista dolls are described as 'folk art'; there was no mention of 'souvenirs', perhaps to avoid the negative connotations that this term sometimes evokes. By contrast, for the large Guatemalan dolls, their vintage souvenir status is a selling point, along with their height and materiality, thereby suggesting that the intended market is collectors of dolls clothed in indigenous or national dress. In sum, the international reach of, and ease of buying from, eBay highlights technology as both enabling yet, through the use of reductive keywords, limiting, which for this thesis is nevertheless useful in underlining the different ways in which the indigenous identities associated with the production of the dolls are often flattened or erased when they are promoted for sale. For the second-hand Maya dolls sold on eBay, their recommodification and resale mark a further stage of their life story. They are often bought by collectors of this type of doll and their stories form the final section of this chapter.

²¹⁷ See Appendix 3 Figure 41 for Summary Table.

Doll collectors: Dolls and the construction of a sense of self

Indeed, doll collectors are the final group of participants to be discussed in this thesis. The importance of the data from this cohort is threefold. Firstly, it reveals the appeal of souvenir dolls for people who specifically collect them.²¹⁸ Secondly, in many instances collectors have no personal links to the countries from which their dolls originate. Therefore, as they have often been bought as second-hand items, the dolls are not necessarily souvenirs of time spent in a different country or cultural environment. Of value for this thesis, is that in several cases the collectors in this cohort are consumers of second-hand Maya dolls – especially examples sold on eBay – it is, therefore, possible to explore the next chapter in their life story following their reconfiguration from auction item to collectors' item and their extreme dislocation from their production site. Finally, the interview data also demonstrates how the participants who owned Maya dolls used them to express their identities.

Notably, the 13 participants in this group are all women, with 6 aged between 41 and 64 years and 7 aged between 65 and 84 years, who generally have high levels of education and have or have had professional careers, with 3 participants holding Bachelor's degrees, a further 3 with Masters or PhD degrees, together with an IT project manager, a retired naval officer and a paediatric surgeon. Thus, based on this albeit small sample, and in conjunction with the participants' comments about their collector friends, it seems to be older, well-educated, middle-class women who are attracted to collecting this type of doll. Given this profile, it is pertinent to bring gender back to the fore in this thesis. It may seem that a commentary about the gendered aspect of doll consumption has so far been neglected in this chapter's analysis. However, the Mexican participants did not strongly associate the dolls with female consumers. For instance, Pablo, 24, from Veracruz, explained that the dolls in Examples A, B and C did not resonate with him because he was unfamiliar with the south of Mexico and the traditional dress there is different to that of the

²¹⁸ Although collectors may favour different terms to describe their dolls, most are covered by Fainges's typology of souvenir dolls as discussed in Chapter One, namely: folk dolls, ethnic dolls, regional dolls, national dolls and international dolls.

central areas of the country with which he was more familiar. He showed me an image of an Otomi doll on his mobile phone and explained how he preferred this example as he liked its dress and, because it was more familiar to him, he could relate to it.²¹⁹ He planned to buy such a doll in the future. Furthermore, José's doll – El Zapatista – in 2017 acquired an Otomi doll as a “girlfriend” to accompany him on his travels.²²⁰ Arguably, in both instances, this ribbon-festooned object does not conform to Western societal norms that tend to associate “pretty” dolls with females, thereby suggesting the presence of different norms in Mexico.

By contrast, on the part of the collectors, there was a certain amount of awareness of the norms that link dolls to girls or to childish female behaviour. For example, Blanche, an interior designer from the US, aged 71, stated: ‘I suspect it is rather unusual for a person who almost has a PhD to collect dolls. Thus I am atypical and don't care’. When I asked her to elaborate on this comment, she explained: ‘I am not sure where that intuition about almost PhD's and doll collectors comes from. I suppose it is the sense that doll collectors are silly ladies. very silly lady of me. I know lawyers and business executives who collect dolls. why shouldn't professors?’ (*capitalisation in original*). While not as defensive as Blanche's statement, Simone, 48, from France, observed the following tendency: ‘I must say people are usually surprised when they happen to learn about my collection, as I work in IT project management, ad [*sic*] that's not really an artistic area’. It is suggested here that ‘artistic’ may be a euphemism for “feminine”, thereby contrasting with the logical (masculine) basis of her work role. Thus, as reflected in the comments of these two participants, there can also be a perceived disjuncture between, on the one hand, their educational attainment and profession and, on the other hand, their hobby.

In general, the dolls collected by the majority of the participants reflected their interest in worldwide travel, regional and indigenous dress, textiles and learning about different cultures. More specifically, one of the key attractions was not simply dress *per se* but its various manifestations in different locations and while

²¹⁹ These dolls – also known as María dolls – are made in Querétaro by the Otomi indigenous group and are very popular in Mexico City and Puebla.

²²⁰ As per email correspondence with José.

only explicitly stated by four participants the responses generally implied their regret about the loss of local identities and cultural practices resulting from a rise in homogenised cultural forms. Unsurprisingly, given these interests, it was important to nearly all of the participants that their dolls are clothed in accurate representations of local or national dress. Furthermore, unless wearing a particularly outstanding or rare outfit, it was important that their dolls are handmade rather than made of plastic. This aversion to plastic and its association with mass-produced, generic items conforms to their preference for local variation.²²¹ Although some participants collected several different types of doll, the criteria above underline the collectors' selectivity whilst simultaneously creating a distance between themselves and collectors of other types of doll which they deem to be of less cultural and aesthetic value. Although several of the collectors were interested in travel not all of them were well travelled and, therefore, in many cases they acquired their dolls from a variety of sources, including sites available in their own country such as eBay, doll shows, second-hand shops and flea markets, and from foreign travel – either their own or that of their friends and family.²²²

The aspect that really stood out when assessing this cohort's data was the importance of doll collecting in the participants' lives. Not only did they express this sentiment through their responses to my questions but it was also evident by the fact that many of them had collected since they were children or teenagers and most owned hundreds of dolls. In fact, 4 of the participants had more than 1,000 dolls each.²²³ Many lacked the room to adequately display their collection and while one participant rented storage facilities others kept their dolls in a mixture of display cabinets and storage boxes in their homes. Collections of this size can become unwieldy and to help them remember the details of each doll eight participants had photographed and/or catalogued them. Furthermore, five of these collectors disseminated these details and images via social media or their own dedicated websites and in doing so have helped to form a sense of community among collectors that was not present before the arrival of the internet.

²²¹ Two participants noted their hatred of Barbie dolls.

²²² The arrival of eBay caused many participants' collections to increase exponentially.

²²³ This includes one participant who shares a collection of 3,000 with her daughter but it includes several hundred other types of doll.

Consequently, although the participants were drawn from three different continents, several of them were in contact with each other as a result of their shared identity of “doll collector”. Of the 13 participants, 9 owned or had owned at least one of the types of doll as represented by Examples A, B and C and they are the focus of the remainder of this section.

Maya dolls: The locally specific versus the generic

Unsurprisingly, since these participants were recruited on the basis that they are doll collectors, the purpose of their Zapatista, Chamula and Guatemalan dolls was limited to that of collectors’ item and, in the case of the two participants who had bought their dolls in Mexico and Guatemala, souvenirs. Perhaps because of this – and because, of the photographs I saw of participants’ Guatemalan dolls, most were large examples attached to stands – only one participant identified Example C as a worry doll and none noted using them for this purpose. All told, the members of this cohort did not use Maya dolls in the breadth of ways revealed by other participants in this thesis. A further shared feature, albeit with a couple of idiosyncrasies addressed later in this chapter, is that all of the collectors identified the origins of their dolls correctly, even though the majority had not travelled to Guatemala or Chiapas, thereby highlighting their specialist knowledge of regional dress and doll forms. Despite these commonalities, the data highlights the different ways in which participants related to their Zapatista, Chamula and Guatemalan dolls, as explored below.

Blanche, noted above, owned versions of all three types of doll but she strongly favoured her Zapatista and Chamula examples for two key reasons: their distinctiveness and their higher quality. For Blanche, their distinctiveness was rooted in their local specificities. While she had not been to Chiapas, she bought both dolls at the time of the uprising. While the political aspect of the Zapatista doll interested her, she described her purchase of her Chamula doll, which she identified as a ‘Chiapan woman’, from a shop in Cozumel²²⁴ as follows: ‘I thought

²²⁴ Cozumel is an island in the Caribbean Sea located off the coast of Mexico.

they were interesting, with sad expressions. This was at the time of the Chiapan rebellion, which gave them a particular piquancy'. Here, not only was Blanche aware of the Zapatista uprising but by making the connection to the Chamula doll she enhanced its character.

By contrast, Blanche was given a set of Guatemalan dolls and described them as follows: 'They are very colourful and charming, but I am not sure if i [sic] would have purchased them for myself. Most dolls I have purchased are of a higher quality. These dolls use fabrics that are not in scale for the doll, but are left after creating a garment for a person'. In fact, she had visited Guatemala before but had chosen not to buy any dolls while she was there. When I asked why, she replied: 'Probably because I did not see any that particularly appealed to me in terms of quality or distinctiveness'. Significantly, therefore, whilst these dolls can be regarded as "authentic" because their dress is formed from *traje* offcuts and infused with the skill and identities of Maya weavers, for Blanche this is a limitation because, as the clothing is not reduced down to the scale of the doll, it is an inaccurate representation. In sum, whilst the Zapatista and Chamula dolls are relatively unusual types of doll that are inseparable from their local context and imbued with added character because of this, for Blanche Guatemalan dolls primarily offer a generic and inaccurate representation of dress.

Similar sentiments were voiced by Nancy, 74, from the US: 'Truthfully, I was never attracted to Guatemalan dolls'. When I asked why, she felt that they lacked the character of some other dolls and elaborated as follows:

Dolls need not be realistic depictions of humans to be desirable, but beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Even if you can't explain why a doll is interesting to you, you "know it when you see it!" The faces of Guatemalan dolls are abstractions of human features, and in art in general I tend to react more favorably to representational rather than abstract art, but there is no absolute. [...] But I like the more human-like ones more because they tell a story. Perhaps the Guatemalan dolls are just not good storytellers.

Given the life story approach that underpins this thesis, Nancy's assessment of the dolls, as stated in this last sentence, is somewhat ironic. Nevertheless, her observations are valuable for underlining the dolls' apparent generic appearance; in this case, the minimal stitches that comprise their faces and that lend them an expressionless air which, paradoxically, surely allowed participants from other cohorts to imbue them with personal meanings. Nancy also pointed out that, '[a]nother factor in choosing a collectible is uniqueness and rarity' and she further felt that although there is some variation between different Guatemalan dolls in terms of clothing and accessories, it is minimal and, therefore, collectors may only feel the need to buy one pair for their collection. In sum, the dolls did not embody enough character or difference for them to appeal to Nancy in a meaningful way.

By contrast, Petra, 52, is a well-known collector from Holland who has around 2,000 dolls that she displays through her website. At the time of the interview, she owned at least 11 dolls from Guatemala – which were mostly large examples attached to wooden stands – the majority of which she had bought from flea markets in Holland. Significantly, Petra had managed to identify at least their Department of origin from her collection of books on Guatemalan *traje*. This is quite a feat since, from my experience, even with specialist books as a resource, it is very difficult to reconcile the designs on full-sized garments with those on the small scraps of material that clothe the dolls. Petra found them appealing for the following reasons: 'They look a bit primitive [*sic*] which is charming and they have a style that seems specific to Guatemala.²²⁵ You can recognize them easily. Grouping them together makes them look even better. Fabrics are original'. Thus, in contrast with Blanche's views, Petra regarded the use of original fabrics for the dolls' clothing as an asset. Moreover, rather than regarding the dolls as generic and characterless, Petra had been quite determined to understand more about her examples and had gone to a notable amount of effort to identify their local specificities. Thus, whilst she recognised that Guatemalan dolls share a similar style, she also recognised and valued the small differences that distinguish them

²²⁵ As Petra is Dutch and wrote her answers in English as a second language, her use of the term primitive should be regarded as a translation issue.

from each other, therefore, the local identities with which they are associated were not only highlighted but also disseminated through her website.

The cycle of life and the circulation of dolls among collectors

An issue that has not been addressed so far in this chapter is the potential reasons that drive people to sell their dolls. Clearly, those bought as souvenirs by non-collectors may lose their importance and are consigned to charity shops, car boot sales or auction sites such as eBay. However, given the advancing years of several of the collectors, a theme emerged of the incompatibility of collecting with older age and illness. For instance, although Nancy did not generally favour Guatemalan dolls, she had acquired several second-hand examples in the past as she deemed them to be of exceptional quality. Yet, at the time of our correspondence, she had recently sold them to her friend, who was also a doll collector. In fact, Nancy was in the midst of selling off all of her dolls. She explained her reasons for dispersing her treasured collection as follows:

Obviously, no one lives forever, and I have read many stories about people having to leave their homes and moving to apartments with less space or assisted living facilities or nursing homes. So where do their dolls go? If they are fortunate the dolls can be given to family members who are interested in them. They can be [...] put in a storage facility, but that is an [*sic*] expensive, and conditions might damage the dolls. They can be donated to museums, which may or may not display them and often will sell them for more than the collector receives as an income tax deduction. Not an option I would choose. That leaves selling them, which is a giant headache.

Nancy's pragmatic but difficult decision was echoed by Angela, 71, from Ireland, who, after collecting since her teenage years was at the time of our email correspondence selling off her dolls. Her story is particularly important because she owned the pair of dolls made by Benjamín García that were assessed in Chapter Three. The circumstances in which she bought the pair are significant because they speak of a bygone era of collecting. Angela became aware of García's handmade

dolls through the article about him in the *National Doll World* magazine noted in Chapter Three. She was particularly attracted to them because they were handmade, her collection lacked a pair of dolls from Guatemala and simply because, as she expressed it: ‘I thought they were just fabulous’. In January 1983 Angela wrote to García at the tourist office in Antigua, as per the address quoted in the article, to ask for a price list and brochure. She received a reply from him in February 1983 in which he stated that while he did not have a printed brochure his repertoire consisted of 15-inch dolls clothed in authentic dress that represented the most important villages in Guatemala. Angela ordered the pair of dolls in April 1984 and subsequently received a letter from García stating that he was making the dolls but needed a further seven dollars from Angela to cover the unexpectedly high postage costs. She eventually received the pair and displayed them in a glass cabinet in her home, presumably as part of her collection. In terms of logistics, the written correspondence between Angela and García demonstrates the effort and time involved in acquiring a doll as an “armchair” collector in the days before the internet. In addition, that Angela had kept all the associated correspondence and the relevant issue of the *National Doll World* magazine shows how she valued the dolls. More generally, Angela’s dolls were ‘[v]ery important’ to her and she commented that ‘I enjoyed them and I loved the excitement of getting a parcel with new dolls’. Yet, Angela decided to sell the Guatemalan pair on eBay in November 2016. When I asked her reasons for doing so, she replied, ‘because of my age’. Thus, like Nancy, Angela had taken the surely difficult decision to dismantle and sell the collection that she had built up over so many years as she felt it to be incompatible with her advancing years. It is difficult to speculate about the effect on Nancy and Angela’s sense of self in giving up such an important part of their identity. However, at this point the dolls’ life story started a new chapter as I bought them from Angela via eBay and added them to my own collection and they consequently acquired an extra layer of meaning in their role as data for this thesis. Nancy and Angela’s stories demonstrate the rather circular journeys of some Guatemalan dolls as they pass between collectors. Their circulation and concomitant movement between a status of commodity and non-commodity also speak of Appadurai’s recognition of the fluidity of these categories. Moreover, these examples underline that by tracing the trajectory of a doll’s life story the key

stages in the life story of their owner are also revealed and can touch on themes at the heart of human existence.

Christine's Story: Doll collecting and compatible identities

Yet not all collectors stop collecting in their older years. Christine, 75, is from Wales and has collected regional dress dolls since she was a teenager. Her story is important partly because of the near-seamless interplay between her collecting and her multiple identities and partly because of the changing commodity status of one of her Guatemalan dolls. In more detail, not only do her dolls represent her love of travel but they are also compatible with her other hobbies which include collecting shoes and garments from around the world, making dolls and making dioramas in which to display them. In addition, Christine's collection is intertwined with the close bond she shared with her late husband. She described how after receiving her first doll her collection quickly developed but it accelerated when she got married: 'My husband [...] was my biggest fan [...]. He wanted me to have any doll that I wanted [...] He really, really did encourage me all the way through it, you know, so I was very, very lucky. I mean, a lot of men won't put up with that'. She further noted that she knows of at least one case whereby a wife's doll collecting has caused friction with her husband. Highlighted here is not only the gendered nature of dolls and doll collecting but also how they are viewed by some men as being a problematic activity for their wives to engage in, perhaps, as Blanche stated, because of the conception of collectors as 'silly ladies', with which a husband may not want to be associated.

Christine acquires her dolls from a mixture of sources including her friends' foreign holidays and eBay and, also, some are souvenirs that she actively seeks out during her own travels. At the time of the interview her collection comprised more than 2,000 examples and she was finding it a struggle to accommodate it in her home. She conceded that in terms of space: 'It's hopeless now' and 'my house – it's like a museum!'. Her sitting room, dining room, hall, landing and two spare bedrooms all feature one or more glass-fronted cabinets in which dolls are stood several layers deep. However, Christine has no intention of stopping collecting. In fact, when I asked if she could foresee a time when she no longer collects dolls, she

replied: ‘I can’t possibly imagine it’ and repeated ‘I really couldn’t imagine it’. The significance of these statements is linked to Christine’s determination to continue collecting not only despite a lack of space but also despite her advancing years. Thus, in stark contrast to Nancy and Angela and their respective decisions to sell off their collections, Christine’s older age does not conflict with her identity as a doll collector. Above all, these statements highlight the crucial importance of the dolls to Christine’s sense of self and, should there be any doubt remaining, she also emphatically declared: ‘[they are] very, very, very important. Really and truly, they’re almost my life, you know, yes, I’ve got two lovely daughters but, you know, as far as my hobbies [are] concerned, my dolls really are my life, you know, very precious’.

In addition to her collecting, she widely disseminates details about her dolls through a blog and has also in the past given numerous talks about her collection to Women’s Institute members and various other groups. But the way in which she is perhaps most well-known among collectors of souvenir dolls is through her website. In fact, her website and social media presence are of pivotal importance in facilitating an international online community of collectors of this type of doll. Christine’s motivation for establishing the website was: ‘to show the rest of the world what I’d got’ and, she added, ‘I just desperately wanted to have my own website’. However, the website allows Christine to express to a worldwide audience of collectors not only her pride in her extensive collection, which comprises numerous good-quality examples from very unusual destinations, but also her expertise and, as she readily acknowledged, she enjoys the resulting feeling of prestige.

The content of Christine’s website generally comprises a photograph and a brief standard-length description – with a focus on materiality – of each doll in her collection. In some instances, there is also a short commentary about the country and indigenous or ethnic group the doll represents. In September 2019 Christine had 11 entries for Guatemalan dolls listed on her website. Since she had not visited the country, she had bought most of the older large examples as second-hand items from eBay and three sets of new worry dolls in the UK. Aside from one entry that described the country’s geographical location, basic topography and export crops

and also noted the presence of a Maya population, the entries for each of the Guatemalan dolls described them in terms of their height, estimated age, dress and materiality and, in the case of the worry dolls, the legend with which they are associated. When I asked Christine about her rationale for the entries, she explained that while she likes to offer a brief description of the relevant country she would not venture into any weighty or political themes, partly because she may only have limited knowledge about such subject areas and partly because, she stated, ‘I don’t know that it really matters as far as the dolls are concerned’. Of course, by using standard formatting and providing descriptions that are of relevance specifically for collectors, the dolls are decontextualised and, like the ‘reductive ethnographies’ presented by the collection of dolls in the ELC at the US museum assessed in Chapter One, their differences become flattened (DuCille, 1996: 45). However, as Christine’s aim is to share information about her extensive collection with her fellow collectors rather than to use the dolls as educational tools, her focus on the dolls’ materiality is understandable. In essence, via her website, Christine reconfigures her dolls from being, often second-hand, souvenirs to specimens in a catalogue of dolls from around the world.

Christine’s website has two other purposes. Firstly, it allows her to easily view her dolls because given the size of her collection they are easier to find in her online catalogue than on the shelves in her home. Thus, once collections become unwieldy the sensory aspect of their materiality diminishes as the individual objects are experienced more via their images than their actual presence. Secondly, as Christine improves her collection by buying better examples of a particular type of doll she sells inferior versions on her website. Yet the decision to sell a doll often causes her an internal struggle: ‘I think “oh yes, I can get rid of so and so” and when I come to look at her I think “well, no I can’t really, because this has something which the other one hasn’t got”’ and, therefore, she often finds a reason to keep a doll. The following example of a small Guatemalan doll demonstrates this conflict between her identity as a collector and a seller.

The small Guatemalan doll was in the “for sale” section of Christine’s website when I originally spoke to her in December 2016. To create space in her collection, she had decided to sell it because it was similar to another Guatemalan example that

she owned. After our first interview, Christine changed her mind and withdrew the doll from sale and put it back in her collection. When I asked the reason for this, Christine replied, ‘I think my interest was more particularly aroused [...] through you actually with what you were doing with Guatemala [...]. So, you know, and then I thought “oh, I must keep that one” [laughing] [...]. I will keep it after [*sic*], for that reason, because of the interest I’ve shared with you and what you’re doing’. When I subsequently visited her house in February 2017 I noticed that in her cabinets were three other Guatemalan dolls that I had not seen on her website and, when I pointed them out to Christine, she realised that she had forgotten about them and exclaimed that she could have sold the little Guatemalan doll after all. The reason for her change of heart was that, as the small Guatemalan doll had now become one of several similar, but better, examples, it had once more become dispensable. However, when I asked about the status of the small Guatemalan doll in November 2017 Christine had changed her mind again and replied with a chuckle: ‘Oh no, she’s definitely in the collection now’. As at September 2019 it still featured on Christine’s website as part of her collection rather than being an item for sale. Clearly, the way in which this doll moved between the status of collector’s item and item for sale on several occasions exemplifies Kopytoff’s (1986) recognition of the processes of commoditisation and singularisation that characterise his cultural biographical approach, as discussed in Chapter One. As Kopytoff’s work also highlights, the internal friction that Christine generally experiences when she re-categorises a doll as a commodity reflects her conflicting identity positions as a seller and collector of dolls. Significantly, as Christine’s doll dipped in and out of a commodity status several times without any physical movement occurring it also underlines the value of extending Appadurai’s social life approach beyond an object’s commodity phase to a fuller appraisal of its life history.

Notably, Christine had forgotten about the three other Guatemalan dolls because she had catalogued them under the US Virgin Islands. She identified them as such because the eBay seller from whom she bought them informed her that this was their origin and also ‘St John’ – one of the US Virgin Islands – was written in ink underneath their wooden bases. As Christine noted with reference to eBay descriptions: ‘you have to take it with a pinch of salt sometimes if somebody tells

you it's from a certain country'. However, the three dolls could well have been bought in the US Virgin Islands but, in a case of appropriation similar to the sale of Guatemalan dolls in Mexico, reconfigured to be the cultural production of another country by the addition of labels bearing alternative place names. This example, therefore, shows how easy it is to reproduce misrepresentations – whether they are accidental or intentional – that flatten the indigenous and national identities linked to the dolls.

Demonstrated throughout Christine's story is the way in which her dolls and the process of collecting them are completely intertwined with her sense of self and her social identity. In addition, as her search for dolls and the maintenance of her website and social media presence are time consuming, they to some extent structure her time. Her other numerous hobbies are also expressed through the dolls; they are inseparable from not only her love of travel and textiles but also her dollmaking and production of dioramas. In sum, Christine's dolls are a crucial part of her identity.

Anna's Story: Doll collecting and incompatible identities

Although the participants in this cohort generally presented an unproblematic interplay between their identity of doll collector and their other identities, Anna's story provides a crucially important example of the strategies adopted by an individual when these identities are experienced as being incompatible. Furthermore, as she owned Zapatista, Chamula and Guatemalan dolls that she bought in Mexico and Guatemala, she is a participant who not only is a collector but also bought her dolls as souvenirs of her visits to these two countries. Anna, 41, is a paediatric surgeon from the UK. She acquired her first doll in ethnic/national dress when she was 5 and by the time of our email correspondence in 2017 she had accumulated around 200 examples from about 80 different countries. She bought roughly half of these during her extensive travels and the rest were gifts from family members who are also well travelled and actively look for them to buy for Anna whilst on holiday. Thus, in contrast to "armchair" doll collectors, Anna's dolls have an important role as souvenirs that remind her of either her trips abroad or her family members from whom she received them. Although

her collection is extremely important to her it is bound up in a long-running internal conflict over what she perceives to be a fundamental incompatibility with different aspects of her identity. In an effort to resolve this conflict, she implemented, and continues to abide by, stringent strategies relating to her collection, as demonstrated by the following brief history of her collecting practices.

After many years of collecting dolls, when Anna reached her later teenage years, she stopped, the reason being: '[I] felt [I] was too old to be interested in dolls'. Significantly, however, she did not dispose of the collection as it was still important to her: 'I was still fond of the dolls and had spent a lot of time collecting them. Lots of memories of holidays. Also many were presents from my very dear, deceased, grandmother and a great-aunt so had sentimental value'. Thus, although she added no further examples, over the next eight or nine years the collection remained on display on the shelves in her childhood bedroom at her parents' house, even after she had left home. Given her emotional attachment to the dolls on a variety of levels, including their aesthetic value and their role as mementoes of the experiences, people and relationships of her formative years it, therefore, seems that her feeling that she was 'too old' to be collecting them was driven by a need to conform to her perceptions of age-appropriate behaviour rather than an actual loss of interest that came with her increasing age. Tellingly, when I asked whether she associated collections or collectors of this type of doll with any particular social group, she conjectured: 'probably children?' which seems to confirm this. Although she kept the collection she did not broadcast its existence – not even to her future husband with whom she had a relationship for several years before deciding to tell him, a decision which, Anna recalled, may have been prompted by the inevitability of him seeing it on his first visit to her parents' house.

Anna resumed collecting when she was in her twenties, because, she explained: 'Was travelling in China with boyfriend (now husband!) and spotted an awesome doll that I JUST COULDN'T RESIST!!! Fab tribal one. Guiltily bought it on the sly when boyfriend's back was turned. And that was that. Slippery slope' (*capitalisation in original*). To reconcile her deep-seated desire to acquire such dolls with her perception that she was too old to do so she introduced the following requirements:

MUST be handmade. Preferably the doll as well as the costume, although in some cases a beautifully handmade costume put on a plastic doll is ok. MUST be bought in country of origin and even more preferably from the dollmaker. Never bought second hand off ebay etc! (*capitalisation in original*).

She also added that: ‘If I can’t find a handmade doll, I get no doll, rather than compromise with a factory made plastic one’. This set of strict criteria adds a level of difficulty to acquiring a doll and, together with the unacceptability of compromise, seems to assure Anna of her capacity for rational self-control, thereby neutralising her perception of her hobby as irrational and childish: ‘Not looked back. But assuaged guilt [of restarting her collection] by establishing those ground rules so as to go for quality over quantity (ie less childish collection) and not let collection get out of hand!’

Despite these strict rules, she admitted: ‘actually [I] am a bit embarrassed to be collecting dolls at my age’ and she still keeps it secret from all but her immediate family members and four closest friends. These close friends have all been Anna’s travelling companions in the past and, therefore, as she put it, ‘they had to be told’. In other words, her drive to find a doll whilst travelling and the likelihood of having to buy them in her friends’ presence overrode her scruples of confiding in them. Yet, when she explained her reason for not telling any further friends it became apparent that the root of her embarrassment is not simply related to her concerns about conforming to age-appropriate behaviour: ‘Not fessed up to any other friends, even close ones... I think they would think it kind of weird. I think that [...] “doll collector” brings to mind an image of a frumpy person collecting ugly tacky porcelain dolls from sunday [*sic*] supplement magazines’ (*formatting in original*). Here, Anna focuses on her concerns that her hobby could be misconstrued as collecting mass-produced, tasteless dolls which, by extension, involves a judgement about the perceived poor taste of the collector. When Anna recommenced collecting, such was her impetus to elevate the quality of her collection that she culled from it ‘a load of nasty plastic manufactured dolls’, including some that were gifts from her deceased grandmother and great-aunt, thereby again demonstrating

to herself her capacity for detachment and self-control.²²⁶ The effect for Anna of editing her collection in this way and introducing strict criteria for future purchases is: ‘[the] [c]ollection [is] therefore more meaningful, interesting and more appealing to look at’. Consequently, neither Anna nor her collection can be associated with bad taste. Significantly, although a preference for handmade dolls rather than mass-produced plastic examples was noted by the majority of the collector participants, most enjoyed buying second-hand dolls, particularly from eBay. Therefore, for Anna to impose the requirement that her dolls should be bought *in-situ* by herself or her family members indicates the availability of financial resources for extensive world travel that is beyond the reach of some other collectors.²²⁷ In sum, Anna’s collection not only avoids the characteristics that lead to stereotypical judgements of bad taste but instead disseminates – if only to herself and the few people who know about her collection – a particularly high level of cultural and economic capital which foregrounds the middle-class identity of herself and her family.

Anna’s concerns about being judged for transgressing social and class norms in terms of age and taste respectively are not altogether unfounded. She noted, for example, that her husband and her brother-in-law gently tease her about her collection. At the time of our correspondence, she also still kept the collection at her parents’ house. When I asked why, she replied that, in addition to a lack of space in her own home:

[my] husband does not want them in our house! They do take up quite a lot of wall space... my husband honestly is amazing in every other way but doesn't understand collecting (he thinks [it is] closely related to hoarding I think). He has occasionally actually bought me a doll! But generally he just tolerates the whole thing without actually wanting walls full of dolls in our house (*formatting in original*).

²²⁶ Anna did, however, keep enough ‘to remember them by’.

²²⁷ Although Anna has in the past been backpacking with a very limited budget, this way of travel still requires a particular level of financial resources to fund flights and is also usually a “one off” experience in people’s lives.

Therefore, her strict rules not only assure herself that she has self-control and discernment but also perhaps assure her that her family and the friends in whom she has confided understand this too.

Against this backdrop Anna bought her Zapatista, Chamula and Guatemalan dolls. She acquired them between December 2001 and January 2002 whilst backpacking with a friend from Panama City to Cancún; taking in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Belize *en route*. Among these places she particularly loved Guatemala which, with its local Maya practices and dress, ancient Maya sites and colonial towns, encompasses all the elements of her ideal travel destination. During her stay there Anna bought several dolls like the one shown in Photograph C, including a family group that she bought from a Maya woman by Lake Atitlán and she recalled her enjoyment of cycling around the lake and observing how *huipil* designs changed with each village on its shores. In general, Anna loves researching the culture and dress found in the places to which she travels and, in addition, she gets ‘an extra thrill’ if she sees people wearing locally specific garments. In Guatemala this interest led her to take photographs of different examples of *traje* and to buy two *huipils*. A consequence of her firsthand engagement with locals and their *traje* is that, unlike in some other instances in this research, rather than flattening their identity into that of Other, Anna recognises local difference.

On the other hand, Anna’s recognition of the Zapatista doll confuses the identity of two different insurgent groups. In more detail, Anna remembers buying the Chamula doll and Zapatista doll from the Yucatán Peninsula, probably from the stalls surrounding the Maya ruins in Tulum. However, perhaps because she did not visit Chiapas during her journey through Mexico but, by contrast, did travel through Nicaragua – including León, a key site of the revolution – she referred to her Zapatista doll as a ‘masked Sandanista [*sic*] warrior doll’ that ‘represent[s] the Sandanista [*sic*] rebellion’.²²⁸ Given the length of time that has elapsed since her trip and the number of countries that she visited in a relatively short space of time it is unsurprising that this could have caused her subsequent muddle. It is,

²²⁸ I have seen this doll in a photograph and can confirm that it is a Zapatista doll.

nevertheless, a significant example of how, presumably, the passage of time can cause the flattening of difference, in this case the conflation of two different insurgent groups from two different countries.

At the time of our correspondence, when Anna acquired a new doll she kept it in her own home until she had the opportunity to take it to her parents' house to join the rest of her collection. She visited her parents every two or three months and always spent some time browsing her collection and enjoying the variety of materials it encompasses and countries represented. In this sense, the feelings engendered by the dolls change over time. That is, while not of utmost importance when she travels abroad, Anna's love of searching for a doll that meets her strict criteria is ever present. She described her feelings of searching and finding a doll as follows: 'it is a bit of an addiction... always that 'hit' / reward of finding a great doll...especially as [I] have made it a bit harder for myself. I guess all collectors will say the exact same thing, whatever they collect. Rather than a drug addiction' (*formatting in original*). Thus, from the thrill of the search and the 'hit' of finding a doll, her feelings change to a more measured appreciation of its unique details once she has returned home. In addition, while nine collectors owned a Guatemalan doll, only Anna bought hers in Guatemala and she was, therefore, the only collector for whom the dolls were souvenirs that brought back memories of when and where she bought them. Indeed, she confirmed that they had retained their importance and 'remain lovely souvenirs reminding me of my trip' and this is especially the case since in Guatemala she saw people wearing local *traje*, the miniature versions of which clothe the dolls.

In stark contrast to Christine's identity as a doll collector, Anna's story underlines the internal conflict she experiences as she tries to negotiate her multiple identities. First and foremost, Anna's dolls embody her love of travel, different cultural practices and local specificities, textiles, adventure and her family. The tension that she experiences is perhaps acute because she associates her passion for dolls with childlike behaviour which presumably is at odds with her need to project a competent and mature identity in keeping both with her occupation of immense responsibility and also as the mother of young children. Furthermore, for people to misconstrue her collecting practices as an undiscerning compulsion to buy

numerous – what she considers to be tacky and cheap – plastic dolls would undermine her identity as a refined, intelligent, middle-class individual. That Anna could fully express both her love of doll collecting and the embarrassment it causes her during our email exchanges highlights the value of Little’s (2004a) work, as assessed in Chapter Two, which, while in line with Hall’s conception of positional identities, demonstrates how they are constructed through the social relations present in any given context. In other words, our shared identity of “doll collector” was of pivotal importance for our email correspondence as it provided Anna with a confidential space in which to express a facet of her identity that she usually has to suppress. It also gave us mutual pleasure and excitement, which she expressed as: ‘Any more questions just ask! Fun to be able to talk about my secret hobby!’

The interviews with collectors showed just how important dolls clothed in ethnic/regional/national dress are for their sense of self. Indeed, there was a strong emotional connection to these objects that, perhaps with the exception of José, simply did not come across with participants from other cohorts. In many cases, their identity of “doll collector” is intertwined with their multiple identities. However, the dolls are not only an instrument for identity construction but also a kind of recreation and means of education. The participants did not tend to treat Zapatista and Chamula dolls any differently to those from Guatemala, in that they were all reconfigured to become part of a collection. Yet, of crucial significance, is that, in general, the dolls’ national identity was not erased and, in varying degrees, the local and indigenous identities with which they are linked was recognised even though the spatial and temporal distance between their production contexts and the participants was usually stretched beyond that of the other participants discussed in this thesis.

Conclusion

While Chapter Four examined the dolls close to their production sites and, in doing so, not only revealed the multiple identities of their consumers but also a tendency for the local identities associated with the doll to be flattened or erased, this chapter investigated the impact on these tendencies of an increase in spatial and temporal

distance from Antigua and San Cristóbal. To explore these themes, two different types of vending site have been assessed. Firstly, were examples in Mexico, including state-sponsored sites, whereby the Guatemalan indigenous identity represented by worry dolls was erased and overlaid with a Mexican identity – both national and local. Secondly, was eBay, in which the reductive keywords presented an opportunity to investigate how different types of Maya doll lent themselves to a range of selling strategies that foregrounded their different types of value.

As for the consumption of the dolls, the interviews with Mexican students showed, as did the data from Chapter Four, that the functions of Zapatista dolls are relatively circumscribed and centre on their role as political statements and they were used by two participants in this chapter to express solidarity with the Zapatista's cause. By contrast, Guatemalan dolls are often customised by their owner to suit their requirements and often reflect themes of personal significance. Among the Mexican students, these latter dolls were used to represent family, to help ward off nightmares and as reminders of home. For collectors, on the other hand, the different types of doll all functioned primarily as items in a collection and thus had an important role for their sense of self. In several instances, however, the reconfiguration of the dolls by participants in both cohorts entailed the flattening of their indigenous and local identities into that of Other, although this was more marked in the case of Guatemalan dolls as opposed to Chamula or Zapatista dolls. In sum, the dolls are reconfigured and repackaged for particular audiences at a national level and international level but often at the expense of the specific indigenous identities they represent.

CONCLUSION

As stated in Chapter One and the Introduction to this thesis, souvenirs and dolls are two types of cultural text that until relatively recently have been neglected in academic research. Perhaps because of this, souvenir dolls, which are a blend of these two types of neglected text, have been subject to an almost complete absence of scholarship. Yet, as the function of these dolls is to represent a particular cultural context through their dress or form, their inherent appeal for consumers is that they represent difference in miniature scale; whether difference linked to nationality, region, locality, race or ethnicity. They are, therefore, a valuable lens through which to study both the production and consumption of objects that represent these identity categories. By providing a systematic and wide-ranging analysis of this type of object and those who make or acquire them, this thesis has attempted to fill this lacuna. Although, as discussed, the category “souvenir doll” can encompass many subdivisions, through an assessment of handmade Maya dolls aimed at the tourist market this thesis has made it abundantly clear that this type of object can constitute an important form of cultural production that is used by its producers and consumers to help construct and express their identities.

In order to thoroughly assess these dolls, this thesis has extended Appadurai’s social life approach to things and Kopytoff’s cultural biographical approach, as explored in Chapter One, beyond their usual conception. Whilst Appadurai’s work traces a commodity’s social life and in doing so underlines that its commodity status is a fluid rather than fixed quality, Kopytoff’s viewpoint offers vital recognition that the commodity phase of an object may form only part of its life story. However, as previously noted, both of these analytical frameworks take as their start point an already made item. This thesis has shown that extending these perspectives to an assessment of an object’s raw materials, and the production processes that transform this bundle of materials into a commodity, facilitates a more expansive and, therefore, more meaningful investigation of its life story.

The life story of objects – in this case, Maya dolls – is also, as Appadurai points out, informed by the social history of the wider class of objects to which they belong (1986: 37). Thus, Chapter Two of this thesis assessed the social, historical and

political contexts that have influenced indigenous cultural production at the national level in Mexico and Guatemala and provided a more focused analysis of Maya cultural production at the fieldwork sites within these two countries. The importance of this context is particularly clear in the case of Chamula dolls, in that their “birth” in the 1970s was unambiguously prompted by the socio-political context in Chiapas generally and Chamula more explicitly. Their subsequent transformation into Zapatista dolls was also a, strikingly literal, reflection of the area’s changing socio-political context.

In relation to the circulation of indigenous cultural production, Chapter Two highlighted that at a national level, although markedly divergent, Mexican and Guatemalan state policies regarding *artesanías* – more particularly, textiles – entail similar contradictory practices relating to their respective indigenous populations. In Mexico’s case, *artesanías* are stripped of their locally specific identity and reconfigured to become a component of the national identity, whilst in Guatemala, Maya *traje* is represented as the embodiment of national identity. Taking its lead from García Canclini’s approach, this chapter also assessed a concrete instance of this reconfiguration in practice whereby, in Mexican national institutions, the local and indigenous identities linked to Maya dolls had been flattened and they were instead presented as examples of Mexican cultural production. Notwithstanding the valuable role of *artesanías* in this type of state-sponsored project, of crucial importance is that the indigenous populations of both countries continue to be marginalised politically, economically and socially within their respective nation states.

Chapter Three commenced the investigation of the life story of Maya dolls by first of all attending to the raw materials and textiles from which they are formed. My interview with Estrella, the Kaqchikel weaver from San Antonio, highlighted the fundamental importance of the weaving process and *traje* for her sense of self and revealed her multiple and fluid identities. This fieldwork data was augmented with existing sources relating to Maya *traje* that underscore the profound importance of weaving and *traje* for the construction and reproduction of Maya identities on a collective level. However, whilst emphasising this aspect and highlighting other identities that *traje* can express such as age, class and locality,

these sources tend to treat these as fixed categories. This thesis thus adds to the small body of existing work about Maya *traje* that not only brings weavers to the fore and recognises their multiple and fluid identities but, crucially, also attends to the items that they weave.

The next stage of this investigation explored the production methods that convert these textiles into dolls. This was facilitated by interview data provided by dollmakers and participant observation at the local fieldwork sites and was supplemented by the material analysis of a large selection of dolls. Here lies a further major contribution of this thesis. That is, through an analysis of *traje* from two locations and by tracing the relationship between these garments and dolls formed from the same textiles, this chapter provided an in-depth comparative assessment of Maya cultural production in terms not only of different *municipios* but of *municipios* at a cross-border level. This comparison demonstrated that, while there are local differences in *traje* styles at the fieldwork sites, there are also cross-border similarities. These findings can be extended to the dolls, in that, although local differences differentiate dolls from San Antonio and San Juan Chamula, there are also shared, pan-Maya characteristics. Finally in relation to Chapter Three, my diachronic material analysis of various dolls, together with my interactions with dollmakers, showed a further cross-border similarity in the two key ways in which producers engage with the market; that is, the creation of unique, high-quality dolls by named artisans and consumed as art as opposed to the rationalised production methods used to create standardised dolls that are sold cheaply and, in the case of worry dolls, sometimes sold in bulk.

By continuing, in Chapter Four, to trace the life story of these dolls through their reception and consumption by locals and visitors in Antigua and San Cristóbal, this thesis offers a further contribution not only to the study of Maya cultural production but also to the study of souvenirs and dolls since research in these three areas tends to assess either their production or consumption. Unexpectedly, this analysis revealed the positive reception and consumption of the dolls by several Maya participants. This underlines that, although as objects representing the Other the dolls can appeal to tourists, as objects representing the self the dolls can also appeal to indigenous people. Whilst this theme was explored relatively briefly in the

chapter, it is perhaps a finding that could be pursued in further research. However, the principal finding of Chapter Four was the multitude of ways in which the participants I interviewed at the fieldwork sites used the dolls to express and construct their identities. A difference between Guatemalan dolls as opposed to Chamula and Zapatista dolls emerged at this point. That is, perhaps because of their recognisable look, Chamula and Zapatista dolls retained their local identity. By contrast, seemingly because of their more generic look and their association with alleviating troubles, the Guatemalan worry dolls reflected themes held personally by the participants and, in doing so, were reconfigured in a reductive way that often flattened the local, ethnic and national identities they represent into a generic cultural difference.

Chapter Five explored the impact of an increase in the spatial and temporal distance between the producer and consumer. As with the data assessed in Chapter Four, there was found to be a difference in the reception of Guatemalan dolls as opposed to Chamula examples. Here, among vending sites in Mexico beyond San Cristóbal there was a tendency for the local, national and indigenous identity of Guatemalan dolls to become erased and reconfigured as examples of Mexican cultural production. Significantly, several of the Mexican students I interviewed in the UK also assumed they were Mexican. By contrast, those participants who recognised the Zapatista doll in Example A associated it with a political cause, even if some were hazy about the particular details. The final group of participants, the collectors, highlighted how the dolls – which, in many cases, were bought second-hand rather than in Mexico or Guatemala – were reconfigured as collectors' items. Yet, while this scenario marks an extreme dislocation between the dolls' production and consumption contexts, barring a couple of misidentifications, all of the collectors who owned, or had owned, an example correctly identified their Mexican or Guatemalan origins. This underlines not only their specialist knowledge of regional dress and doll forms but also that they value local variation over homogenised cultural forms. Thus, in general, the dolls' national identity was not erased and, in varying degrees, the local and indigenous identities with which they are linked were recognised.

Overall, then, even within a seemingly narrow category of souvenir doll; that of “Maya Doll”, there are marked differences between its subcategories. Indeed, it could be argued these subcategories represent the flip sides of neo-liberal life. On the one hand are worry dolls that, particularly in their manifestation as worry-specific dolls, speak of the aspirations and life goals deemed to be desirable in contemporary life whilst simultaneously exploiting the anxieties and concerns rooted in the fear of failing to achieve these ends. Zapatista dolls, on the other hand, represent the fight against neo-liberal policies. In both instances, however, the development of these different dolls were to some extent born of the producers’ need to engage profitably in the market by adapting their products. It, nevertheless, seems ironic that these two contradictory aspects are blended together in the shape of the Zapatista worry dolls noted in Chapter Three.

As the findings in this thesis were illuminated by using a life story approach, it underlines the value of tracing a range of potential trajectories of a particular type of object; from its source materials, its production and circulation as a commodity and, in addition, its function for the consumer when it is de-commoditised. Further work in this area could extend this form of life story analysis to other case studies of dolls made by indigenous people for the tourist market in order to gauge the differences and similarities in their production and reception contexts with the Maya doll example and to assess what these may tell us about the reproduction of the identities of their producers and receivers. While the key aim of this thesis has been to explore the multitude of identities circulating around souvenir dolls during the course of their “life”, it is also suggested here that by highlighting the diverse ways in which the participants used these objects it contributes to existing academic research in relation both to dolls and to souvenirs, as discussed below.

The interdisciplinary scholarship of Dolls Studies provides crucially important assessments of problematic stereotypical representations of gender, race and ethnicity that are lacking in other sources about dolls. Analysis from this quarter has been particularly valuable for evaluating mass-produced dolls, such as Barbie. This thesis has aimed to contribute to this field of enquiry by extending this focus to the production and reception of handmade indigenous dolls since, as demonstrated, these can sometimes constitute self-representations that similarly

perpetuate stereotypical ideas of indigenous people in terms of gender and as being frozen in the past and untouched by modernity. Furthermore, while central to Dolls Studies is its conception of dolls as ‘objects through which girlhoods are constructed and reimagined, mediated and contested, played and performed’ (Forman-Brunell and Whitney, 2015: xi), it is also suggested here that, in highlighting the polyvalent character of Maya dolls and their importance for the identity construction of their producers and receivers, this thesis contributes to this body of scholarship.

Turning from Dolls Studies, the collection and assessment of fieldwork data allows this concluding chapter to revisit the key approaches to souvenirs reviewed in Chapter One. To recapitulate, these designated a uniform function to souvenirs and made the following assumptions about them: they are an expression of nostalgic longing (Stewart, 1993); they are related to the formation and maintenance of middle-class identities (Lasusa, 2007); and they have fixed, intrinsic meanings that are indicative of their acquisition under extraordinary circumstances (Gordon, 1986). This thesis has, on the contrary, highlighted Maya dolls’ status as polyvalent objects that perform innumerable functions.

Notwithstanding the narrow scopes of these approaches, they can still illuminate our understandings of souvenirs in particular contexts and if used flexibly. Firstly, while the feelings of nostalgia that characterise Stewart’s conception of souvenirs did not emerge to a notable extent during the interviews – except in the case of Beatriz and the Chamula doll that her grandmother gave her – across all the groups of participants there was a sense of loss of simpler times. Although this was not overtly expressed, this theme was most perceptible with those people who had visited Antigua or San Cristóbal and who spoke glowingly of them in terms of being peaceful havens, the inference being that they formed a contrast with hectic everyday life elsewhere. This sense of loss was similarly implied by the importance many of the participants placed on handmade, local crafts, the implication being that they valued them more than homogeneous, mass-produced items. Of course, for doll collectors in particular this was a major attraction of their dolls, as noted in Chapter Five. However, in most cases, rather than being souvenirs that provoke a nostalgic longing for a visited place, their dolls were collectors’ items.

Secondly, while Lasusa's conception of souvenirs highlights their importance for middle-class identities, her arguments are more fruitful when applied to any given identity position. For example, the role of souvenirs in the creation of a personal archive, which in turn helps to create a sense of self, was evident from Daniel's future corkboard that will help to construct his identity as a father. A second instance relates to the acquisition of cultural capital through the display of souvenirs. That is, through their websites and other means of social media, José and five of the doll collectors disseminated images of their Maya dolls and, in addition, Zoe, Abby and Jamelia planned to display their examples in their homes. Although Christine, the doll collector, enjoyed the sense of prestige this brought her, the display of dolls by these participants was not to acquire cultural capital in class terms, as described by Lasusa; it did, however, express other aspects of their identities. Finally, Lasusa's recognition of the role of souvenir shopping in providing a way for tourists to maintain a sense of identity in unfamiliar contexts, did seem apt in the case of the familiar shopping experience offered to international visitors by Nim Po't in Antigua. Her observations can also perhaps be extended to Anna and Christine, who actively search for dolls when they are abroad and, in doing so, maintain their identity of doll collector in unfamiliar locations.

Finally, in terms of Gordon's typology, the fact that souvenirs can change category and be in several categories at the same time seems to undermine the utility of this form of classification. To reiterate, the typology comprises; pictorial images, piece-of-the-rock souvenirs, symbolic shorthand souvenirs, markers and local product (1986: 140-143). Using the typology to categorise the Zapatista dolls, as conceived in the sources in the Introduction to this thesis, reveals the following:

- When the dolls are considered in terms of Bartra's (2011) discussion, they clearly conform to Gordon's definition of local craft products, that are created by indigenous people and are closely associated with the area in which they are produced.

- This “craft” aspect of Zapatista dolls is of minor importance for Conant (2010). In terms of Gordon’s typology, his assessment of these dolls firmly places them in the category of ‘symbolic shorthand souvenirs’, in that they are ‘miniaturized icons’ that symbolise a group of people closely associated with a specific location (Gordon, 1986: 142).
- In the *Insight Guide to Guatemala, Belize and The Yucatán* (Hennessy, 2008) the use of an innocuous photograph of Zapatista dolls corresponds to Gordon’s definition of ‘pictorial images’.
- Zapatista dolls as ‘metaphorical weapons’ that allow Chamulas to free themselves from the role of ‘plaything’, as claimed by Scott (n.d.: 3-4), conform to Gordon’s definition of ‘symbolic shorthand souvenirs’: those objects that are ‘toy-like’ (1986: 142). Equally, in Scott’s work they can be viewed as local craft products that are associated with ‘exotic or different people’ (Gordon, 1986: 143).

Guatemalan dolls can be similarly categorised as local craft production and, as representations of Maya people, the ‘miniaturized icons’ that Gordon associates with ‘symbolic shorthand souvenirs’ (1986: 142). However, beyond Guatemala, they also function as ‘markers’ since, with the increase in spatial distance from their production site, they become representations of the generic Other and only with the attachment of labels do they become linked to a place.

Paradoxically, therefore, rather than using the typology to categorise a souvenir according to a singular and fixed meaning and role, it is argued in this thesis that it is perhaps more usefully applied to demonstrate how any particular souvenir is conceived and used at any particular point during its life. Utilised in this way, the typology underlines how the same object can have overlapping, multiple and sometimes contradictory meanings for different individuals, thereby revealing its role in the construction and expression of individual and social identities.

Furthermore, the typology allows for the interrogation of designations of the dolls. For instance, Scott's claims that Chamula craftswomen consciously create masked dolls as 'metaphorical weapons' that prompt Western tourists to question their consumption of indigenous dolls is an assessment that is challenged by the participants' interactions with the dolls. However, what is not in doubt is that as the dolls travel in spatial and temporal terms, their function and value change and they are reconfigured and customised according to the receivers' rules. This thesis has shown that in many cases, but certainly not all, the dolls themselves assume an impoverished identity.

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APPENDIX 1: FIELDWORK MATERIALS

A) Summaries of data collection

Participants

	Location of Interview	Date of Interview (dd-mm-yy)
Weavers/Dollmakers		
Estrella	Antigua	29.05.17
Carmen	San Lorenzo, Antigua	30.05.17
María	San Juan Chamula	07.07.17
Residents at Fieldwork Sites		
Margarita	Antigua	25.05.17
Alonso	Antigua	29.05.17
Ángel	San Cristóbal	16.06.17
Beatriz	San Cristóbal	16.06.17
Bernardita	San Cristóbal	28.06.17
Visitors at Fieldwork Sites		
Daniel	Antigua	10.05.17
Lori	Antigua	19.05.17
Zoe	Antigua	23.05.17
Sarah	Antigua	27.05.17
David	Antigua	01.06.17
Jeannette	Antigua	01.06.17
Suzanne	Antigua	02.06.17
Abby	San Cristóbal	04.07.17
Jamelia	San Cristóbal	04.07.17

	Location of Interview	Date of Interview (dd-mm-yy)
Mexican Students		
Edgardo	Nottingham	06.11.16
Jorge	Nottingham	07.11.16
Noemí	Nottingham	13.11.16
Adil	Nottingham	13.11.16
Débora	Nottingham	16.11.16
Yani	Nottingham	10.12.16
Pablo	Reading	11.02.17
Alegría	Reading	11.02.17
José	Email	06.03.17 to 08.03.17
Bianca	Reading	13.03.17
Doll Collectors		
Christine	Telephone	04.12.16, 02.11.17
Angela	Email	01.12.16
Anna	Email	07.03.17 to 14.07.17
Lara	Email	08.03.17 to 11.07.17
Blanche	Email	13.03.17 to 17.03.17
Karen	Email	16.03.17
Nancy	Email	27.02.17 to 01.04.17
Margaret	Email	22.03.17
Simone	Email	05.04.17 to 18.04.17
Annette	Email	22.04.17 to 28.04.17
Dorothy	Email	05.04.17 to 23.04.17
Petra	Email	26.04.17 to 30.04.17
Sandra	Email	17.03.17 to 20.05.17

Interviews with representatives of institutions

Name of Institution	Location of Interview	Date of Interview (dd-mm-yy)
A well-established, museum in the US	Email	08.02.17 to 16.02.17
Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford	Oxford	09.03.17
Museo del Traje Típico, San Antonio	San Antonio	31.05.17
Museo Casa del Tejido, Antigua	Email	31.05.17
Museo de Trajes Regionales, San Cristóbal	San Cristóbal	07.07.17

Vending sites and institutions assessed

Name of Site/Institution	Date
Mercado Artesanía, San Antonio	Various: May/June 2017
Mercado de Artesanía Compañía de Jesús, Antigua	Various: May/June 2017
El Mercadito Artesanías, Antigua	Various May/June 2017
Nim Po't, Antigua	Various May/June 2017
15 <i>artesanía</i> shops in Antigua	Various May/June 2017
Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena, Guatemala City	17.05.17
Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología, Guatemala City	17.05.17
Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City	06.06.17
Museo de Arte Popular, Mexico City	07.06.17
<i>Artesanía</i> market, San Juan Chamula	Various June 2017
Mercado Santo Domingo, San Cristóbal	Various June 2017
Mercado de Dulces y Artesanías, San Cristóbal	Various June 2017
15 <i>artesanía</i> shops in San Cristóbal	Various June 2017
Centro de Textiles del Mundo Maya, San Cristóbal	Various June 2017
Museo de las Culturas Populares de Chiapas, San Cristóbal	28.06.17
FONART shops at Benito Juárez International Airport and Paseo de la Reforma, Mexico City.	Various June 2017

APPENDIX 1

B) Interview invitations

Invitation for Mexican Students in the UK

Hello!

I am a PhD student and would like to find out your thoughts and feelings about crafts/souvenirs from Mexico and/or Guatemala.

If you would be willing to discuss this with me, please could you contact me on e.v.jackson@pgr.reading.ac.uk or phone number 0115 8408431 or 0797 1840176.

Thank you very much,

Emma Jackson
PhD candidate, University of Reading.

Invitation for Doll Collectors

Hello fellow doll collectors/enthusiasts!

I am a PhD student currently undertaking a research project about dolls in national/regional/indigenous dress. I am very keen to chat to anybody who collects these types of doll!

If you would be willing to discuss this with me, I should be very grateful if you could contact me on e.v.jackson@pgr.reading.ac.uk or phone number (+44) 0115 8408431 or (+44) 0797 1840176. We could arrange to chat over the phone or Skype, or I could send you some questions via email, whichever is convenient to you!

Thank you very much,

Emma Jackson
PhD candidate, University of Reading, United Kingdom

APPENDIX 1
C) Consent form

CONSENT FORM

Project title: The use of Objects in the Construction and Expression of Identities: A Case Study of Dolls from Mayan Mexico and Guatemala

I have read and had explained to me by Emma Jackson the Information Sheet relating to this project.

I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project any time.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

APPENDIX 1

D) Information sheet for dollmakers/weavers/vendors

INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Participant,

The purpose of the research

This research is part of a PhD thesis at the University of Reading. The project assesses how objects are used by people to help construct and express their identities. The objects that I am particularly interested in are dolls wearing Mexican, Guatemalan or Maya dress. The research aims to expand current understandings of these dolls, as they have often been neglected in academic research.

What you will be asked to do

You have been invited to participate in this study because you make or sell dolls clothed in dress from Mexico or Guatemala, or, you produce or sell similar items, such as textiles. Your participation will involve an interview so that I can ask about how you make/sell these dolls/crafts and also your thoughts and feelings about these items.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part in an interview. If you do decide to take part, please leave your contact details at the email address above, and I will organise a location for the interview that is convenient for you. The interview will be one-to-one and will take up to 1 hour. You will be given this information sheet to keep and you will also be asked to sign a consent form. During the interview, I will also ask if you require access to the finished thesis and published work arising from it. You can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study, without giving a reason, by contacting me as per the details above. The standard of care you receive will not change whether or not you decide to participate in this study.

What happens to the information?

The interview will be recorded with a digital voice recorder and then transcribed. You can request a copy of the interview transcript if you wish. The audio recording and transcript will be stored as files on my password-protected computer. This computer data will be destroyed at the end of the study and the consent form will be kept securely in the School of Literature and Languages at the University of

Reading for a reasonable time after the project. Your response will be treated with full confidentiality and will be identified only by code numbers or false names. The data from the interview will only be used for academic purposes and will be analysed, using a computer package, by myself and only my supervisors and examiners will have access to it. At the end of the research, the anonymised information collected may appear in my thesis in an appendix and/or as quotations and may be used in publications arising from the research.

What if there is a problem?

Any complaint or concern about any aspect of the way you have been dealt with during the course of the study will be addressed; please contact Par Kumaraswami as per the details above.

This project has been subject to ethical review by the School Ethics and Research Committee, and has been allowed to proceed under the exceptions procedure as outlined in paragraph 6 of the University's Notes for Guidance on research ethics.

If you have any queries or wish to clarify anything about the study, please feel free to contact my supervisor at the address above or by email at p.kumaraswami@reading.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Signed

APPENDIX 1

E) Information sheet for Mexicans/Guatemalans/visitors

INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Participant,

The purpose of the research

This research is part of a PhD thesis at the University of Reading. The project assesses how objects are used by people to help construct and express their identities. The objects that I am particularly interested in are souvenirs from Mexico and Guatemala. The research aims to expand current understandings of souvenirs as they have often been neglected in academic research.

What you will be asked to do

You have been invited to participate in this study because you have been to Mexico or Guatemala or you have a particular interest in either/both of these countries. Your participation will involve an interview so that I can ask about your thoughts and feelings about Mexican or Guatemalan souvenirs.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part in an interview. If you do decide to take part, please leave your contact details, either at my telephone number or email address above, and I will organise a location for the interview that is convenient for you. The interview will be one-to-one and will take approximately 30 minutes. You will be given this information sheet to keep and you will also be asked to sign a consent form. During the interview, I will also ask you if you require access to the finished thesis and published work arising from it. You can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study, without giving a reason, by contacting me as per the details above. The standard of care you receive will not change whether or not you decide to participate in this study.

What happens to the information?

The interview will be recorded with a digital voice recorder and then transcribed. You can request a copy of the interview transcript if you wish. The audio recording and transcript will be stored as files on my password protected computer. This computer data will be destroyed at the end of the study and the consent forms will be kept securely in the School of Literature and Languages at the University of Reading for a reasonable time after the project. Your response will be treated with full confidentiality and will be identified only by code numbers or false names. The

data from the interview will only be used for academic purposes and will be analysed, using a computer package, by myself and only my supervisors and examiners will have access to it. At the end of the research, the anonymised information collected may appear in my thesis in an appendix and/or as quotations and may be used in publications arising from the research.

What if there is a problem?

Any complaint or concern about any aspect of the way you have been dealt with during the course of the study will be addressed; please contact Par Kumaraswami as per the above details.

This project has been subject to ethical review by the School Ethics and Research Committee, and has been allowed to proceed under the exceptions procedure as outlined in paragraph 6 of the University's Notes for Guidance on research ethics.

If you have any queries or wish to clarify anything about the study, please feel free to contact my supervisor at the address above or by email at p.kumaraswami@reading.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Signed

APPENDIX 1

F) Information sheet for doll collectors

INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Participant,

The purpose of the research

This research is part of a PhD thesis at the University of Reading. The project assesses how objects are used by people to help construct and express their identities. The objects that I am particularly interested in are dolls wearing Mexican, Guatemalan or Maya dress. The research aims to expand current understandings of souvenir dolls, as they have often been neglected in academic research.

What you will be asked to do

You have been invited to participate in this study because you collect dolls clothed in national, regional or indigenous dress. Your participation will involve an interview so that I can ask about your thoughts and feelings about these dolls. I would also like to know how you acquire, store and display the dolls in your collection.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part in an email interview. If you do decide to take part, please reply to this email and I will send you the interview questions and a consent form for you to confirm. You can send your answers to me when it is convenient for you to do so, but I may send a reminder if necessary. When I receive your responses, I may need to send you a further email/s for clarification or for further details about your answers. You can also email me if you require access to the finished thesis and published work arising from it. You can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study, without giving a reason, by contacting me as per the details above. The standard of care you receive will not change whether or not you decide to participate in this study.

What happens to the information?

Your interview responses will be transferred onto my password-protected computer. This computer data will be destroyed at the end of the study and the consent forms will be kept securely in the School of Literature and Languages at the University of Reading for a reasonable time after the project. Your responses

will be treated with full confidentiality as they will be separated from your email address by copying them into a new document that will only be identified by a code number or false name. The data from the interview will only be used for academic purposes and will be analysed, using a computer package, by myself and only my supervisors and examiners will have access to it. At the end of the research, the anonymised information collected may appear in my thesis in an appendix and/or as quotations and may be used in publications arising from the research.

What if there is a problem?

Any complaint or concern about any aspect of the way you have been dealt with during the course of the study will be addressed; please contact Par Kumaraswami as per the details above.

This project has been subject to ethical review by the School Ethics and Research Committee, and has been allowed to proceed under the exceptions procedure as outlined in paragraph 6 of the University's Notes for Guidance on research ethics.

If you have any queries or wish to clarify anything about the study, please feel free to contact my supervisor at the address above or by email at p.kumaraswami@reading.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Signed

APPENDIX 1

G) Information sheet for museums (email interviews)

INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Participant,

The purpose of the research

This research is part of a PhD thesis at the University of Reading that will assess the use of objects in the construction and expression of identities. Dolls handmade purely for tourist consumption by Maya artisans from Chiapas, Mexico and Guatemala will form the case study for this project. By approaching these dolls as cultural texts that are significant for their producers and receivers, this research aims to expand current understandings of souvenirs and, more particularly, will address the near complete absence of academic engagement with souvenir dolls.

How will the study be conducted?

You have been invited to take part in this research as a representative of a museum that has an example, or examples, of these dolls on display as an exhibit. Your participation will involve an email interview regarding your institution's procedures relating to the acquisition, cataloguing, display and storage of these dolls.

You are under no obligation to take part in the research. If you do decide to take part, please reply to this email and I will send you the interview questions and a consent form for you to confirm. You can send your answers to me when it is convenient for you to do so, but I may send a reminder if necessary. When I receive your responses, I may need to send you a further email/s for clarification or for further details about your answers. You can also email me if you require access to the finished thesis and published work arising from it. You can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study, without giving a reason, by contacting me as per the details above. The standard of care you receive will not change whether or not you decide to participate in this study.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

There are no known risks or disadvantages of taking part, as I will protect your institution's confidentiality by anonymising the data unless you explicitly agree that your institution can be named. Furthermore, there should be no issues relating to misrepresentation since you will be able to retain a copy of your emailed responses.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

In taking part, it may give you the opportunity to reflect upon your institution's display practices and also contribute to a project that will critically engage with a group of cultural artefacts that has been almost ignored in academic research.

What happens to the information?

The data produced by the interview will be transferred onto a password-protected computer. This data will be destroyed at the end of the study and the consent forms will be kept securely in the School of Literature and Languages at the University of Reading for a reasonable time after the project. The information from the interview will only be used for academic purposes and will be analysed, using a computer package, by myself and only my supervisors and examiners will have access to it. At the end of the research, the information collected may appear in my thesis in an appendix and/or as quotations and may be used in publications arising from the research. This information will be anonymised, unless you explicitly agree that the name of your institution may be mentioned.

What if there is a problem?

Any complaint or concern about any aspect of the way you have been dealt with during the course of the study will be addressed; please contact Par Kumaraswami as per the details above.

This project has been subject to ethical review by the School Ethics and Research Committee, and has been allowed to proceed under the exceptions procedure as outlined in paragraph 6 of the University's Notes for Guidance on research ethics.

If you have any queries or wish to clarify anything about the study, please feel free to contact my supervisor at the address above or by email at p.kumaraswami@reading.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Signed

APPENDIX 1

H) Information sheet for museums (face-to-face)

INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Participant,

The purpose of the research

This research is part of a PhD thesis at the University of Reading that will assess the use of objects in the construction and expression of identities. Dolls handmade purely for tourist consumption by Maya artisans from Chiapas, Mexico and Guatemala will form the case study for this project. By approaching these dolls as cultural texts that are significant for their producers and receivers, this research aims to expand current understandings of souvenirs and, more particularly, will address the near complete absence of academic engagement with souvenir dolls.

How will the study be conducted?

You have been invited to take part in this research as a representative of a museum that has an example, or examples, of these dolls on display as an exhibit. Your participation will involve an interview regarding your institution's procedures relating to the acquisition, cataloguing, display and storage of these dolls.

You are under no obligation to take part in the research. If you do decide to take part, please leave your contact details, either at my telephone number or email address above, and I will arrange a convenient time to come to your institution. The interview will take a maximum of one hour and will be audio-recorded. You will be given this information sheet to keep and you will also be asked to sign a consent form. During the interview, I will also ask you if you require access to the finished thesis and published work arising from it. You can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study, without giving a reason, by contacting me as per the details above. The standard of care you receive will not change whether or not you decide to participate in this study.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

There are no known risks or disadvantages of taking part, as I will protect your institution's confidentiality by anonymising the data unless you explicitly agree that your institution can be named. If you wish, I will send you the transcript of the interview before the analysis to allow you to ensure that you have not been misrepresented.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

In taking part, it may give you the opportunity to reflect upon your institution's display practices and also contribute to a project that will critically engage with a group of cultural artefacts that has been almost ignored in academic research.

What happens to the information?

The interview will be recorded with a digital voice recorder and then transcribed. The audio recording and transcript will be stored as files on my password-protected computer. This computer data will be destroyed at the end of the study and the consent forms will be kept securely in the School of Literature and Languages at the University of Reading for a reasonable time after the project. The data from the interview will only be used for academic purposes and will be analysed, using a computer package, by myself and only my supervisors and examiners will have access to it. At the end of the research, the information collected may appear in my thesis in an appendix and/or as quotations and may be used in publications arising from the research. This information will be anonymised, unless you explicitly agree that the name of your institution may be mentioned.

What if there is a problem?

Any complaint or concern about any aspect of the way you have been dealt with during the course of the study will be addressed; please contact Par Kumaraswami as per the details above.

This project has been subject to ethical review by the School Ethics and Research Committee, and has been allowed to proceed under the exceptions procedure as outlined in paragraph 6 of the University's Notes for Guidance on research ethics.

If you have any queries or wish to clarify anything about the study, please feel free to contact my supervisor at the address above or by email at p.kumaraswami@reading.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Signed

APPENDIX 1

I) Personal information form

Name of participant:

Address of participant:

Email:

Age:

Nationality:

Race/Ethnicity:

Profession:

Highest level of education:

APPENDIX 1

J) Images of dolls used in interviews



Example A: Zapatista doll. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Example B: Chamula doll. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Example C: Guatemalan doll. (Photograph: E. Jackson)

APPENDIX 1

K) Interview prompts for weavers/dollmakers

Part One: Weaving and *Traje*

1. Is weaving important to you? Why?
2. Tell me about how you learned to weave. (eg Who taught you? How old were you?)
3. How important is it for you to wear *traje*?
4. How does it make you feel?
5. Do you always wear *traje*?
6. Do you think weaving and *traje* is important for Maya culture in general? Why?

Part Two: Dollmaking

7. Tell me about how you learned to make dolls. (eg Who taught you? How old were you?)
8. Why did you start making them?
9. How do you make the dolls – can you describe the process from beginning to end?
10. Is it important to you that the dolls' *traje* is an accurate representation of San Antonio/Chamula *traje*?

11. How do you decide what the dolls should look like? (eg inclusion of babies for females, size).
12. Do you like these dolls?
13. Do you enjoy making them?
14. Do you produce other items as well as dolls?
15. Have you ever used worry dolls? (Guatemalan participants only)

Part Three: Selling and Reception

16. How do you decide how much to sell the dolls for?
17. Do you think this price reflects the amount of work /time involved in making the dolls?
18. What type of person seems to buy your dolls?
19. Why do you think people like your dolls?
20. Do you change the design of your dolls? (Why? In what way?)
21. Would you make a doll that you don't really like in order to sell more to customers? How does this make you feel?

APPENDIX 1

L) Interview prompts for locals from Antigua/San Cristóbal

Part One: *Artesanías*

1. Are Mexican/Guatemalan *artesanías* important to you? Why?
2. Do you think *artesanías* are important to Mexicans/Guatemalans in general? (eg All ages? All classes? Urban/rural?)
3. Which type of *artesanías* are most important to you? Why?
4. Is it important to you that the *artesanías* you buy are from the Antigua/San Cristóbal area? Why?
5. Where do you buy them from? (ie. Which vending contexts?)
6. Do you display any *artesanías* in your home?

If so, do you think that they say anything about what kind of person you are?

Part Two: Dolls

7. Do you have any of the dolls in the attached photos?
 - Figure A
 - Figure B
 - Figure C
8. If so, could you tell me:
 - How you acquired it/them?

- What attracted you to it/them?
- Are you aware of what kind of people the dolls represent?
- Are you familiar with the types of clothing that the dolls wear?
- Where do you keep it/them?
- Do you think your doll says anything about what kind of person you are?

9. If you don't have one – what kind of people do you think buy these dolls?

APPENDIX 1

M) Interview prompts for visitors to Antigua/San Cristóbal

Part One: Souvenirs

1. Have you bought/planned to buy any souvenirs/crafts during your stay here?
2. What type? Why?
3. Who did you/will you buy them for? (Yourself? Gifts for other people?)
4. Where did you/will you buy them from? (ie. Which vending contexts?)

Part Two – Your Own Souvenirs

5. Do you plan to display the souvenirs in your home?

If so, do you think that they will say anything about what kind of person you are?

6. Are they important to you?

Part Three: Maya Dolls

7. Have you bought/planned to buy any of the dolls in the attached photos?
 - Figure A
 - Figure B
 - Figure C
8. If so, could you tell me:

- How you acquired it/them?
- What attracted you to it/them?
- Are you aware of what kind of people the dolls represent?
- Are you familiar with the types of clothing that the dolls wear?
- Where will you keep it/them?
- Do you think your doll says anything about what kind of person you are?

9. If you don't have one:

Are you familiar with these dolls?

What kind of people do you think buy these dolls?

APPENDIX 1

N) Interview prompts for Mexican students in the UK

Part One: *Artesanías*

1. Are Mexican *artesanías* important to you? Why?
2. Do you think *artesanías* are important to Mexicans in general? (eg All ages? All classes? Urban/rural?)
3. Which type of *artesanías* are most important to you? Why?
4. Is it important to you that the *artesanías* you buy are from the same region/city that you are from? Why?
5. Where do you buy them from? (ie. Which vending contexts?)
6. Do you display any *artesanías* in your home in Mexico?

If so, do you think that they say anything about what kind of person you are?

Part Two: Maya Dolls

7. Do you have any of the dolls in the attached photos?
 - Figure A
 - Figure B
 - Figure C
8. If so, could you tell me:
 - How you acquired it/them?

- What attracted you to it/them?
- Are you aware of what kind of people the dolls represent?
- Are you familiar with the types of clothing that the dolls wear?
- Where do you keep it/them?
- Do you think your doll says anything about what kind of person you are?

9. If you don't have one – what kind of people do you think buy these dolls?

Part Three: Travelling Objects

10. Did you bring any *artesanías* with you to the UK?

11. Why did you bring it/them? (ie where they for yourself or gifts for other people?)

12. Why did you choose these particular items?

13. Do they mean the same to you now, as when you bought them in Mexico?

14. Do you display any *artesanías* in your home/student accommodation in the UK?

15. If so, do you think that they say anything about what kind of person you are?

APPENDIX 1

O) Interview prompts for doll collectors

Part One: Your Collection

1. Why do you find regional/indigenous dress dolls appealing?
2. Are you also interested in other types of doll?
3. What, for you, is a desirable regional/indigenous dress doll? (ie. what attributes does it have to have?)
4. How did your collection develop?

For example:

- Why did you begin your collection?
 - How long has it taken you to build a collection?
 - Around how many dolls do you have?
 - In general, where/how do you acquire your dolls?
5. Where do you keep your dolls?
 6. Do you catalogue/record your dolls? If so, what information do you record and how do you record it etc.?
 7. How important are your dolls/doll collection to you?
 8. Do you think your dolls/collection say anything about what kind of person you are?

9. Do you associate collections/collectors of regional/indigenous dress dolls with a particular type of person? For example, a particular age group, gender or class?

Part Two: Dolls from Mexico and Guatemala

10. Do you have any of the dolls in the attached photos?

- Figure A
- Figure B
- Figure C

11. If so, could you tell me:

- How you acquired it/them?
- What attracted you to it/them?
- Are you aware of what kind of people the dolls represent?
- Are you familiar with the types of clothing that the dolls wear?

APPENDIX 2: JOSÈ'S PHOTOGRAPHS

José's photographs featuring El Zapatista in the UK

- Street scene with The Liver Building in the background, Liverpool
- With a pint of Guinness in a pub
- In front of 'The Sheltering Home for Destitute Children', Liverpool. (A Victorian sheltering home, now teaching and office facilities for Liverpool John Moores University)
- Eric Hobsbawm's headstone, Highgate Cemetery, London
- Karl Marx's tomb, Highgate Cemetery, London
- Park Hill council flats, Sheffield
- In a lecture theatre at the Postgraduates in Latin American Studies (PILAS) Conference 2014, University of Sheffield
- In front of The Arts Tower, University of Sheffield
- Africa Oyé Festival, Sefton Park, Liverpool
- The Yellow Submarine, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, Liverpool
- *Everything is going to be Alright* [Sculpture], Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh
- With a pint of beer in a pub, Edinburgh
- Outside the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Centre, Edinburgh
- At the gates of Strawberry Field, Liverpool
- The Liver Building, Liverpool
- The Victoria Building, University of Liverpool
- Flyposters near Euston Station, London, featuring *Please Believe These Days Will Pass* by London artist Mark Titchner, and an advert for a dance music event featuring "old skool" rave DJs
- The platform at Charing Cross tube station with an oncoming tube, London
- The façade of the National Gallery, London

- Inside the National Gallery:
 - ‘Beyond Caravaggio’ exhibition entrance
 - The Sunflowers*: Vincent van Gogh
 - Men of the Docks*: George Bellows
 - An Old Woman with a Rosary*: Paul Cézanne
 - Van Gogh’s Chair*: Vincent van Gogh
 - Bathers at Asnières*: Georges Seurat
 - Corner of a Café-Concert, 1880*: Edouard Manet
 - Overview of room 34: ‘Great Britain 1750-1850’
 - Rockerby Venus*: Diego Velázquez
 - Venus and Mars*: Sandro Botticelli
- Trafalgar Square, London
- Outside The Tate, Liverpool
- The outside of ‘News from Nowhere: Liverpool’s Radical and Community Bookshop’
- Primark shop frontage, Liverpool
- Eleanor Rigby statue, Liverpool (including one photograph with El Zapatista cradled in the statue’s arms)
- Outside the Cavern Club, Liverpool
- Albert Dock, Liverpool
- 6 images of the ‘Art of Solidarity: Cuban Posters for African Liberation 1967-1989’ Exhibition, International Slavery Museum, Liverpool, including images of Amílcar Cabral, a key figure in Guinea-Bissau’s independence struggle who was assassinated in 1973, and a quote from Nelson Mandela

José’s photographs featuring El Zapatista in Europe

- The Colosseum, Rome
- The Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam
- Canal scene/ Café de Sluyswacht, Amsterdam
- The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
- Canal scene, Amsterdam

José's photographs featuring El Zapatista in Mexico

- A beach, Cancún
- Foliage, Cancún
- *Escudo de Armas* (A statue depicting two lions and a tree, part of the coat of arms of Guadalajara), Guadalajara
- A table (possibly in a bar) featuring *Victoria* beer (a Mexican beer) and dishes of nibbles
- A mural in a working-class neighbourhood, Guadalajara
- *La Inmolación de Quetzalcoatl* (a monument) on La Plaza Tapatía in Guadalajara's historical centre
- Five photographs of El Zapatista in front of photographs of Zapatistas; two of which include Subcomandante Marcos and one includes a mural of Emiliano Zapata
- El Zapatista stood on José's bookshelf at home, next to several volumes of Karl Marx's *Capital* and also with *Escritos económicos varios* (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels)

APPENDIX 3: IMAGES AND TABLES

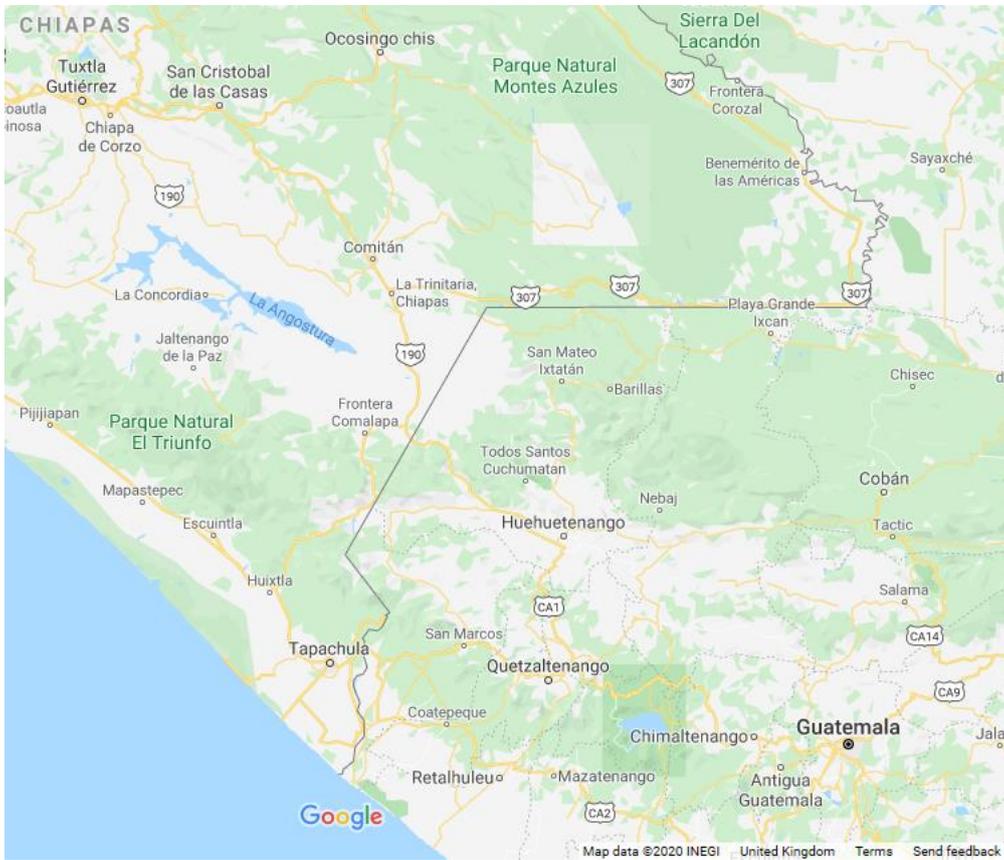


Figure 2: Map showing the location of San Cristóbal and Antigua. (Source: Google)



Figure 3: Map of the wider area. (Source: Google Maps)



Figure 4: Zapatista doll. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 5: Chamula doll. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 6: Tiny dolls at Pitt Rivers Museum. (Source: Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford. Accession no.1951.11.181.19-36)



Figure 7: Larger dolls at Pitt Rivers Museum. (Source: Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford. Accession no. 1951.11.181.71-79)



Figure 8: Large Guatemalan dolls. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 9: Top: larger worry dolls, Bottom: Tiny worry dolls. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 10: Guatemalan Dolls from the ELC. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 11: Mexican dolls from the ELC. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 12: San Antonio *traje* of unknown date. But probably prior to the 1970s. (Photograph: Courtesy of Museo del Traje Típico, San Antonio)



Figure 13: The two panels that form a San Antonio *Huipil*. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 14: *Marcacor* designs on a San Antonio *Huipil*. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 15: Benjamín García's dolls. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 16: Detail from Benjamín García's dolls. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 17: "Skeleton" of a worry doll. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 18: A *faja* used to make a worry doll's *corte* (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 19: An almost complete worry doll (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 20: Weaver dolls. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 21: A selection of San Antonio dolls. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 22: A selection of dolls from the 1930s to 1950s. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 23: Worry-specific dolls. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 24: Skull worry doll. (Photograph: E. Jackson)

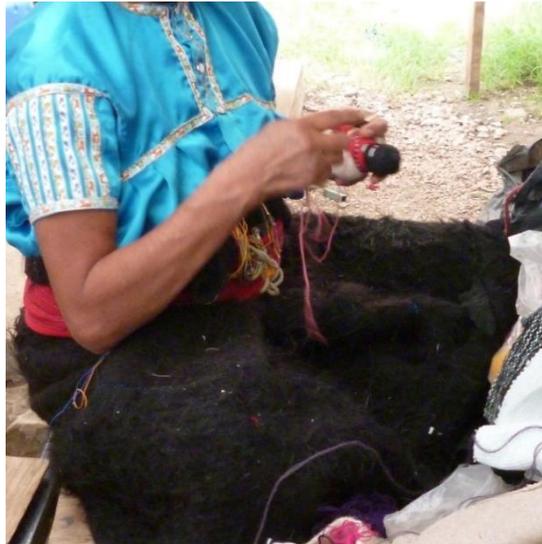


Figure 25: A Chamula *falda*. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 26: Chamula *traje* of unknown date. But probably prior to the 1970s. (Photograph: Courtesy of Museo de Trajes Regionales, San Cristóbal)



Figure 27: The *traje* of a fashionable young Chamula. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 28: A María Patixtán ceremonial doll. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 29: María Patixtán and her woollen doll. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 30: The construction of Chamula dolls. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 31: A selection of Frida's dolls. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 32: A Chamula doll dressed in Zinacantán *traje*
(Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 33: A Chamula doll dressed in Chenalhó *traje*
(Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 34: A selection of Zapatista dolls. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 35: A Chamula doll circa 1978. (Source: British Museum Accession no. AM1978,15.15.721.a)



Figure 36: Zapatista worry dolls. (Photograph: E. Jackson)

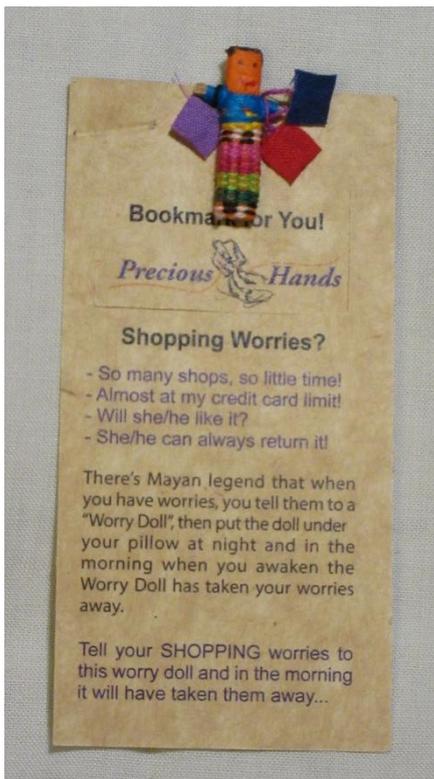


Figure 37: Lori's "Shopping worries" doll. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 38: Daniel's *Semana Santa* worry doll. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



Figure 39: A selection of Guatemalan worry dolls sold as Mexican *artesanías*. (Photograph: E. Jackson)



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Guatemala Collectable Country Flags

Figure 40: An indicative “screen shot” of eBay auction listings for the search criteria ‘Guatemala doll’.

Type of Doll	Most Popular Keywords used in Descending Order of Frequency
Zapatista Doll	Mexico/Mexican; Chiapas; folk art; EZLN; handmade; Marcos/Comandante Marcos
Large Guatemala Doll	Vintage; handmade/handcrafted; fabric/cloth/rag/textile; height of doll; folk art/folk; souvenir
Second-hand Worry Dolls	Handmade/handcrafted; vintage
New Worry Dolls	Handmade; fair trade; Maya/n; new

Figure 41