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Packaged Vacations: Tourism Development in the Spanish Caribbean (review)

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thize with its fierce apology of *estadolibrista* ideology, the book is worth reading for its fresh approach to old buzzwords such as colonialism, nationalism, decolonization, sovereignty, autonomy, assimilation, and identity.

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Packaged Vacations: Tourism Development in the Spanish Caribbean. By Evan R. Ward. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008. Pp. xxvi, 236. Figures. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$69.95 cloth.

The history of tourism in Latin America is a growing field to which Evan R. Ward has made an invaluable contribution with *Packaged Vacations*, a study that should appeal to a wide readership in a variety of academic disciplines. Ward's monograph is both ambitious and unique, for it compares the development of decentralized tourist hotspots in the Caribbean since 1945, namely, Dorado Beach (Puerto Rico), Cancún (Mexico), Varadero (Cuba), and Punta Cana (Dominican Republic). Remote, coastal, and, literally, steeped in nature, these peripheral destinations comprise some of the world's most pristine beaches and luxurious resorts as well as some of the most compelling problems inherent in tourism development, which affect the environment, local communities, and national well-being.

Through a comparative framework, Ward takes the reader on a backstage tour of these sand, sea, and sun destinations to show us the ideas and people behind hotel conglomerates like RockResorts, Hilton International, Sol Meliá, and Grupo Puntacana, and as well as state development agencies like PRIDCO in Puerto Rico and FONATUR in Mexico, whose efforts have made the Caribbean a veritable playground in the post-World War II era. Part history and part reportage, Ward masterfully interweaves archival research with contemporary interviews and observation to illustrate the varied models of development and the local as well as global conditions that shaped their trajectory. Among the many important conclusions one can draw from this study is Ward's argument that, with the successful development of peripheral zones and the successful mass marketing of packaged resort vacations, these early "poles" are now "cores"—unsustainable, dense, and urban—particularly in Punta Cana and Cancún.

Packaged Vacations is organized into three chronologically informed parts based on models of tourism development: American private investment (1945-1959), Latin American state-driven investment (1960s-1980s), and a combination of American and European investment (since the 1980s). Ward aptly begins with a fascinating examination of the life and work of Laurance Rockefeller, who, through RockResorts, invented the remote, nature-driven beach resort, first in the U.S. Virgin Islands and then in Dorado Beach, Puerto Rico. More than just an interest in profit, Rockefeller's goal was to contribute to Latin America's economic growth through tourism, particularly in out-of-the-way beachfront areas in need of conservation. Similarly, Ward examines Conrad Hilton's urban development model in the 1950s with the construction of the Continental Hilton (Mexico City), the Hotel Caribe

(San Juan), and the Habana Hilton (Havana). Both Rockefeller and Hilton understood the broader implications of tourism as a means for goodwill, and both mindfully designed their hotels to pay homage to local and global art, cuisine, and customs (what today would be called “glocal”). And, as Ward illustrates, both came to learn about the different risks of doing business in Latin America: Hilton pulled out of Havana in 1960, less than a year after opening, when Castro’s revolution took a radical turn, while Rockefeller divested his assets in Dorado Beach in 1977 when his expansion project in nearby Cerromar Beach floundered in the wake of high energy costs and tourism overdevelopment.

Ward shows how state-driven tourism development eclipsed American investment by the 1970s, especially in Mexico where the government founded its own development agency, INFRATUR (1971) and its successor FONATUR (1973), to plan new tourism sites and to raise foreign and domestic capital for projects like Cancún. He demonstrates how this model was part of a broader history of state development agencies like PRIDCO in Puerto Rico, which successfully wooed Rockefeller decades earlier. Unlike PRIDCO, which advocated for RockResorts but did not directly develop tourism, FONATUR used money from the Inter-American Development Bank to study and lay the plans for what Ward calls an “integrally planned” (p. 114) tourist and residential city that harnessed the area’s untapped beauty, handicraft industry, and labor force to an 18-hole golf course, Mayan-themed hotels and shopping centers, residential housing for hotel employees, and a modest airport. But as Ward and others have shown, FONATUR’s vision of Cancún was way off mark, failing to provide the much-needed infrastructure to accommodate the groundswell of migrants who have transformed Cancún into an overcrowded metropolitan area rather than a decentralized tourist pole.

Finally, Ward examines the newest model of decentralized tourism development since the 1980s by international conglomerates of American and Spanish origin. In the case of Cuba, readers are privy to Fidel Castro’s plans to court Spanish hoteliers like Gabriel Escarrer Julia (of the Sol Meliá hotel chains), who shared his vision to develop low-density, nature-driven beach resorts in places like Varadero. In partnership with another Spaniard and the Cuban government, Escarrer formed Cubacan and built three Sol Meliá hotels by 1994 on the former DuPont estate. Despite attempts by the U.S. government and Miami-based terrorists to undermine Cuba’s tourism renaissance, Spanish hoteliers have found a new foothold in the Caribbean, while in the Dominican Republic, American-owned Grupo Puntacana has built a sustainable, eco-friendly resort and residential community at Punta Cana. Ward demonstrates Grupo Putacana’s seamlessly integrated model of decentralized tourism, which included sole construction and support of infrastructure, such as the international airport, schools, and utilities to neighboring communities, and a standardized, low-density conservationist design. Compared to their Spanish counterparts in nearby Bávaro, Grupo Putacana has managed to promote sustainability in the Caribbean where others have failed.

A riveting study, *Packaged Vacations* has minor flaws that pale in comparison to its strengths. Some of the chapters, particularly “Visions of Cancún,” are rife with agency names that are difficult to follow. Further, the epilogue is not terribly illuminating, with a

section on Turkey that seems out of place. Finally, detailed maps should accompany each case study to better illustrate the decentralized geography and provide points of reference. Nevertheless, Ward presents an excellent and much-needed study on resort development and its consequences in the Spanish Caribbean.

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NATION BUILDING & NATIONALISM

La Patria del criollo: An Interpretation of Colonial Guatemala. By Severo Martínez Peláez.
Translated by Susan M. Neve and W. George Lowell. Durham: Duke University Press,
2009. Pp. lii, 329. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. \$84.95 cloth; \$23.95 paper.

Historians of Guatemala regularly feed on two fundamental questions: “How do historians and social scientists divide society?” and “What forces propel change?” One Guatemalan, Severo Martínez Peláez, shifted the historiographical debate around these two questions almost single-handedly in 1970 with his acclaimed publication, *La Patria del criollo*. We finally have a deftly edited and sharp translation of this monograph. Susan Neve and George Lovell have accomplished this labor-intensive project with two additional dollops, a captivating introduction into the life and works of Professor Martínez Peláez (coedited by Christopher Lutz) and a handy “go-to” glossary for those essential Spanish and indigenous words that defy easy translation.

The publication of *La Patria del criollo* offers an extraordinary entrée into the classic dialogue between the twentieth-century intellectual and committed revolutionary, Martínez Peláez, and the late eighteenth-century chronicler and visionary for the emerging Creole class in colonial Guatemala, Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán. He argued that Fuentes y Guzmán created the notion of “patria” in his *Recordación Florida* in reaction to the “threat of transformation implicit in imperial policy and in the arrival of Spanish newcomers” (p. 73). The “true heirs of the Conquest” faced an extraordinary competition and his chronicle attempted to provide a “florid remembrance” of the good ole times. The struggle between the “Two Spains” represents the opening salvo of *La Patria del criollo* while his treatises on the “Indians” and “Race Mixture and the Middle Strata” get at the heart of the author’s convictions. Independence from colonial Spain and the ensuing liberal governments, Martínez Peláez concluded, implanted the colonial vision of the patria of the criollo to protect and enhance control over land and the indigenous and ladino workers.

Class dominated Professor Martínez Peláez’s analysis. He sought to expose the superficial ethnic tensions between the Indian and ladino, which divided the emerging proletariat. *La Patria del criollo* becomes an exposé of the conversion of a young Guatemalan intellectual to a Marxist framework in order to understand the dominating role of capitalism, reinforced by U.S. hegemony, from a historic framework. Martínez Peláez’s overreach on this particular insight provoked Guatemalan and international social scientists. The introduction by George Lovell and Christopher Lutz hones in on this philosophical leap. Citing