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STUCK WITH TOURISM

Space, Power, and Labor
in Contemporary Yucatán

MATILDE CÓRDOBA AZCÁRATE

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"This original ethnography offers a new theoretical perspective on tourism and its impact on local communities. Rather than accepting the received view that tourism benefits the inhabitants of a place, it takes a more critical perspective that uncovers how tourism restructures every aspect of the environment and the economy through its predatory and extractive practices."--Setha M. Low, Distinguished Professor of Environmental Psychology, Anthropology, Earth and Environmental Sciences, and Women's Studies, The Graduate Center, City University of New York

"Through deep ethnographic detail, Matilde Córdoba Azcárate captures the sensorial life that tourism's lopsided national economies and intercultural encounters bring to the Yucatán. She follows the labor that holds up the gamut of cosmopolitan, ecotouristic, and indigenous fantasy worlds engineered by tourist desire, updating Jamaica Kincaid's observations about the perverse gifts of tourism. *Stuck with Tourism* exposes the steep price tourism extracts from the men and women caught in it, as well as the struggles and dreams that sustain them."--Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez, author of *Securing Paradise: Tourism and Militarism in Hawai'i and the Philippines*

"*Stuck with Tourism* is an extremely compelling account of the spatial, cultural, and ecological impacts of tourism in the Yucatan region of Mexico, with implications far beyond. Córdoba Azcárate grounds her analysis in more than a decade of ethnographic immersion in sites representing beach resort tourism, nature tourism, cultural tourism, and a factory producing goods for the tourist market. She sensitively portrays how tourism geographies are predator, and how workers, regions, and nations get "stuck" with tourism as a developmental trap, even while holding out hope for better futures. Incorporating the latest theoretical literature on tourism in an accessible way, the book reorients the imagination of tourism as encounter toward a consideration of tourism's crucial role in the production of space, scale, and mobilities in the face of ecological crisis." --Mimi Sheller, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for Mobilities Research and Policy, Drexel University

Tourism has become one of the most powerful forces organizing the predatory geographies of late capitalism. It creates entangled futures of exploitation and dependence, extracting resources and labor, and eclipsing other ways of doing, living, and imagining life. And yet, tourism also creates jobs, encourages infrastructure development, and in many places inspires the only possibility of hope and well-being. *Stuck with Tourism* explores the ambivalent nature of tourism by drawing on ethnographic evidence from the Mexican Yucatán Peninsula, a region voraciously transformed by tourism development over the past forty years. Contrasting labor and lived experiences at the beach resorts of Cancún, protected natural enclaves along the Gulf coast, historical buildings of the colonial past, and maquilas for souvenir production in the Maya heartland, this book explores the moral, political, ecological, and everyday dilemmas that emerge when, as Yucatán's inhabitants put it, people get stuck in tourism's grip.

Matilde Córdoba Azcárate is Assistant Professor in the Communication Department at the University of California, San Diego.

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