Tourism, Heritage and Creativity: Divergent Narratives and Cultural Events in Mexican World Heritage Cities

Tourismus, Erbe und Kreativität: Divergierende Erzählungen und kulturelle Ereignisse in mexi-kanischen Weltkulturerbe-Städten

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Abstract

This work compares two major Mexican events held in World Heritage cities. Guanajuato is seat to The Festival Internacional Cervantino. This festival represents the essence of a Mexican region that highlights the Hispanic past as part of its identity discourse. Meanwhile, Oaxaca is famous because of the Guelaguetza, an indigenous traditional festival whose roots go back in time for five centuries. Focused on cultural change and sustainability, tourist perception, identity narrative, and city theming, the analysis included anthropological and urban views and methodologies. Results show high contrasts between the analyzed events, due in part to antagonist (Indigenous vs. Hispanic) identities. Such tension is characteristic not only in Mexico but in most parts of Latin America, where cultural syncretism is still ongoing.

Dieser Beitrag vergleicht Großveranstaltungen zweier mexikanischer Städte mit Welt-kulturerbe-Status. Das Festival Internacional Cervantino in Guanajato steht beispiel-haft für eine mexikanische Region, die ihre spanische Vergangenheit als Bestandteil ihres Identitätsdiskurses zelebriert. Oaxaca wiederum ist für das indigene traditionelle Festival Guelaguetza bekannt, dessen Vorläufer 500 Jahre zurückreichen. Mit einem Fokus auf kulturellen Wandel und Nachhaltigkeit, Tourismus, Identitätserzählungen und städtisches Themenmanagement kombiniert die Analyse Perspektiven und Methoden aus der Anthropologie und Stadtforschung. Die Ergebnisse zeigen prägnante Unterschiede zwischen den beiden Festivals auf, die sich u.a. auf antagonistische Identitäten (indigene vs. spanische) zurückführen lassen. Diese Spannungen sind nicht nur für Mexiko, sondern auch weitere Teile Lateinamerikas charakteristisch, wo die Vereinigung verschiedener Kulturen ein anhaltender Prozess ist.

Keuwords

urbanism, tourism, festival, cultural policy, creativity studies Stadt, Tourismus, Festival, Kulturpolitik, Kreativität

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1. Introduction

Mexico currently harbors 35 sites included in the UNESCO World Heritage list, ranking 7th worldwide and 1st in the American Continent as a whole. In 2017, the country became the 6th most visited nation by international tourists (*World Tourism Organization* 2018). In 2019, it maintained a similar position, ranking 7th and showing a 7% increase in visitors. Such growth in cultural and economic activity imposes pressure on historic cities and cultural events or festivals in terms of adaptation to contemporary tourist demands. At the same time, the country is well known for its sociocultural and natural diversity, a situation that poses challenges in terms of achieving a balance between heritage conservation and modernization.

Possessing a powerful asset of natural and cultural tourist resources is not enough to become competitive in contemporary tourism. Destinations without major previous interest have developed festivals and events to attract visitors. Such a strategy has some advantages, especially their flexibility and low cost compared to traditional cultural venues (TRIAR-CHI/KARAMANIS 2017; RICHARDS 2011). The new purpose is to attract visitors and private investments, supported by marketing strategies that disseminate an image of an innovative and creative city rooted in a real or symbolically constructed culture (GETZ 2008; QUINN 2006). Focusing on the economic use of culture, MacCannell (1976) and Rifkin (2001) state that this is the basis of leisure and the repository of modern society's values, including economic ones. That is why the creation of cultural experiences, within which events play a central role, has become a fundamental part of societies worldwide (ROOIJAKKERS 1999).

Regarding urban design, the process implies public space refurbishment strategies concentrated in the main commercial axes, leading to the design of homogeneous tourist spaces as a "stage" (TORRES OUTÓN 2019; ZUKIN 1987). These operations are not unique. They are rooted in the local culture, but are the product of global planning and development (ASHWORTH/PAGE 2011). As Toselli (2006) states, this trend causes a process of "culturalization" of the destination, including trivialization or "staged authenticity," in which architecture, crafts, or local festivities are just part of a stage for tourists. Within such a context, theming has become a frequent strategy for cities (BLANC/SOTO SEPÚLVEDA 2009). Theming implies urban and marketing design to create or re-create physical or intangible aspects of a city, based in authentic or invented

cultural or historical topics and it is usually oriented to attract visitors and investors (PELLICER/SAGA 2015).

On the other hand, festivals and public traditional events play a major role in cultural transmission. Research has addressed these social representations in Asian countries where historic tradition is deeply rooted in the far past, exhibiting symbolic content as well as cultural change dynamics (WU/CAO 2004; INMAN et al. 2007; XIAO-BING 2007). Results show how cultural events become means for social education because they transmit complex cultural concepts such as identity, art, and religion. It is possible to suggest that unlike in the case of Asia, a great proportion of research about festivals and events in Western countries focuses on tourist functions, highlighting economic variables (LAN-GEN/GARCÍA 2009; SAAYMAN/SAAYMAN 2004). In this sense, the tourist industry focuses on the diversification of tourist products and experiences as well as on the increase in the number of visitors, assuming that such versatility and massive attention represent competitive advantages for those cities or destinations able to cope with constant change (RICHARDS/WILSON 2006).

Under such complex reality, this work compares two major Mexican events held in World Heritage cities, with the goal to assess how tourism exerts pressure on creative expressions on the basis of distinct sociocultural and historical contexts. Guanajuato is seat to the Festival Internacional Cervantino, greatly focused on worldwide Fine Arts. This festival represents the essence of a Mexican region that highlights the Hispanic past as part of its identity discourse. Theming is so strong that external Spanish references prevail. Meanwhile, Oaxaca is famous because of the Guelaguetza, an indigenous traditional festival whose precedents go back in time for five centuries. In this work, tourist pressure is conceived as a sociocultural change agent; therefore, results show how two contrasting Mexican cities cope with it as they struggle to keep their own identities and at the same time find creative ways to respond to contemporary economic demands. The underlying notion of creativity becomes adaptive in regard to external pressure, which does not mean that other internal factors may not participate in the process as well. To achieve the objective, the research focuses on specific issues: 1) identity narrative and city theming, 2) intangible heritage and creative tourism, 3) tourist perception during the events.

2. Methods

The Event Experience Scale (EES) is a standardized questionnaire developed by ATLAS Research Group. This tool measures the perception of tourists during their visits to specific events. Since 2014, the EES forms part of different studies performed in 15 countries (COLOMBO/MARQUES 2019; DE GEUS/RICHARDS/TOEPOEL 2016; HERNÁNDEZ-ESCAMPA/BALBUENA VÁZQUEZ/BARRERA-FERNÁNDEZ 2017; LEE/COETZEE 2017; MARQUES/BORBA 2017; RICHARDS 2019; WREFORD/WILLIAMS/FERDINAND 2019). The EES consists of 27 closed questions structured in three sections: sociodemographic aspects, motivations to attend the event, and tourist perception. Statistically, it is considered that a sample of 30 persons is the minimum to get reliable data for a population under 1,000 individuals while 100 responses are needed for any bigger population (SAMPIERI/COL-LADO/LUCIO 2006). In this study, it was possible to survey 203 persons at the Festival Internacional Cervantino and 188 at the Guelaguetza, during the 2019 events.

Direct observation constitutes a useful tool to analyze social behavior (ALVES et al. 2008; LABUS/KEEFE/JENSEN 2003). Field observation during the events yielded data regarding functional urban aspects such as mobility (pedestrian flow, reduced mobility situations), residues disposal or signaling. Besides that, it was possible to qualitatively overlook offered handicrafts and other tourist products, especially experiences, in both cities during the events and off-season. This strategy also aided locating theming landmarks such as sculptures or other representations and to understand the general ambience during the events.

Other sources of information included historical accounts of the studied events and interviews with government entities such as the Secretaries of Culture and the City Councils. Where interviewed individuals included locals and visitors from a close distance, non structured interviews focused on exploring aspects of identity and native interpretation of the event itself. This was particularly useful to interpret the cultural transmission roles of both festivals.

3. Identity Narrative and City Theming

Guanajuato is located in the central plateau of Mexico and it is the capital city of the homonymous state. During the 16th century, Spanish con-

querors founded it as a mining site due to the vast gold and silver ores found there. Unlike other Mexican cities, there was no indigenous urban precedent, the presence of minerals was the reason for establishing it at its location. Nearby indigenous culture exists, but even when recognized today, its relative role in the history of Guanajuato City remains moderate. Spaniards brought the indigenous population from far away regions, as well as African slaves, to become mining workers (CASTRO RIVAS/ LÓPEZ RANGEL/TOVAR RANGEL 1999). Mining brought economic prosperity for the dominant elites and eventually, major architectural works enriched the urban landscape. In contrast, Oaxaca, once again the capital of a homonymous state, is located in Southern Mexico and lies in association to the ancient Zapotec city of Luá and the more recent Aztec military base called Huayxácac. Re-founded as Antequera, as the Andalusian city, the new city continued to work as a multiethnic regional capital. Demography shows that in the present, all of Oaxaca state remains vastly indigenous regarding ethnic identity. The population speaks 16 native languages throughout the state, besides Spanish, thus Oaxaca is the most culturally diverse state in Mexico.

The Guelaguetza Festival in Oaxaca has its origins in a pre-Hispanic tradition, consisting of offering a tribute to the Aztec goddess of maize, Centéotl, in the hill now called Cerro del Fortín (Small Fortress Hill) (FLORES-MARCIAL 2015; OLESZKIEWICZ 1997), the same place where the celebration takes place since then. When the region was evangelized, the celebration was associated with the Carmen Virgin, whose festivity is on July 16 each year. The two Mondays after that day were the major festive days and they still are. During colonial times, offerings consisted of peasants carrying a part of their production to colonial rulers. In 1932 the event had a rebirth, now as a 'racial tribute.' This reinterpretation was a way of showing the cultural diversity of the state through the traditional dances from each region (LIZAMA QUIJANO 2006; Oaxaca State Government 2015). The event has had some modifications since then but this is still its core. The two Mondays after the Carmen Virgin celebration, called Lunes del Cerro (Mondays of the Hill) are the central days of an event that currently lasts a month long. The main performances take place in the Guelaguetza auditorium on the Cerro del Fortín. Firstly, a girl disguised as Centéotl opens the performance with a speech. Then, dancing groups from each of the eight regions in Oaxaca state perform their traditional dances and after each dance they throw gifts to the public such as coffee, chocolate, tortillas, and pineapples, or other food articles depending on the region's production. This is the



Fig. 1: The Guelaguetza in Oaxaca, parade along Macedonio Alcalá Street (source: the authors).

remainder of the pre-Hispanic religious offering and the colonial tribute, and also the festival's essence, taking into account that Guelaguetza means "to give" in Zapotec. Apart from the main performances, there are parades, concerts, food festivals, exhibitions, arts and craft markets, and many other activities in Oaxaca's city center and other locations.

The Festival Internacional Cervantino in Guanajuato is rooted in the small Cervantes theatre performances, called entremeses, organized by Prof. Enrique Ruelas in 1953. They were so successful that they were represented again in the following years. In 1972, the festival was established and in 1976 it was given its current structure, with few changes (Noticiero del Servicio Exterior Mexicano 2013). Currently, it is organized by the Presidency of the Republic and some federal, state, and municipal agencies and it is seen as an international display of the best and latest of Mexican and international culture (Guanajuato State Government 2008; Mexican Government 1976; FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL CERVANTINO 2015a). It consists of dozens of performances, including theatre, dance, concerts, exhibitions, and conferences. The opening ceremony and the performances by some of the most renowned world artists are the most demanded activities. Although many of them are indoors, there are also several free-of-charge, open-air activities. Most performances take place in Guanajuato's city center but there are also activities in other towns from the state and in other Mexican cities, to make them share a part of the festival's benefits and prestige (FESTI-VAL INTERNACIONAL CERVANTINO 2015b). Apart from arts-related

activities, the festival also functions as an opportunity for thousands of young people to gather and have fun. Taking into account that Guanajuato is a historic university city in Mexico, it has also consolidated a popular nightlife, adding attraction to the festival.

City theming is notorious in both, Oaxaca and Guanajuato. In the case of Oaxaca, the native traditions play a major role and the Guelaguetza indeed becomes the main theme. It is possible to state that Guelaguetza theming occurs because there is a year round reference to the festival and associated dances everywhere in the downtown. Dance companies permanently offer an off-season "Guelaguetza." This means there are some traditional dances from the State of Oaxaca, in some sort of miniature festival, which can be represented in smaller stages or even restaurants. Even weddings and other social events can get Guelaguetza material at any time. Guelaguetza imagery is also frequent in the handicrafts stores year round.

To some degree, theming the city of Oaxaca based on the Guelaguetza festival results in a somewhat predictable phenomenon. In contrast, Guanajuato found a radical solution by importing external figures since the early versions of the Festival Internacional Cervantino. In some way, the Hispanic affinity of the city made it possible to import, as a main figure, Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra, and the fictional characters from his literary works, as characters that populate the city and name its main festival. Mining also forms part of the city imagery, but at a secondary level. References to Cervantes, Quixote, and other Spanish figures appear in street names and also as sculptures in crucial urban spots. One of the most famous museums in Guanajuato is the Quixote Museum, devoted to this sole character.

Nationalistic interpretation of Latin American history tends to produce biased romantic accounts about historic facts. Mexico is not the exception and there is a tendency to conceive an idealized pre-Hispanic past, which was destroyed or polluted by foreign agents, namely the Spaniards. This produces a constant tension between these two components, a situation supposedly solved by acknowledging cultural syncretism as a source of the present national values. (HELLAND 1990; PÉREZ MONTFORT 2011). Such balance in mentality might be the case in Mexico City and surroundings but indeed is not the case in other regions as it will be exposed in this work.



Fig. 2: Street view of Guanajuato and statue of Quixote in front of Cerevantes Theater. (source: the authors).

4. Intangible Heritage and Creative Tourism

Even when cultural tourism remains a basic sector within the industry, new trends constantly appear. Nowadays, creative tourism has become an interesting approach because it offers experience and interpretation as the main goal of the visit. This way, finished products sometimes can be substituted by the experience of participating in the production process. Or, instead of just buying a local dish at a restaurant, cooking lessons become a new tourist product. In most cases, creative tourism does not substitute for other kinds of tourism, instead, it becomes an attractive component for the system. In any case, the rise of creative tourism is related to tourist pressure as destinations keep up their competitive process (RICHARDS/MARQUES 2000; TAN/KUNG/LU 2013).

Included in the UNESCO's World Heritage List, both Oaxaca and Guanajuato possess solid cultural assets such as built heritage, traditions, and culture. Besides, both cities have joined the current international trend of developing creative tourism and becoming creative cities, which means putting the focus on cultural producers, tourists' experiences and innovation, keeping at the same time their offer of traditional

cultural products (BARRERA-FERNÁNDEZ/HERNÁNDEZ-ESCAM-PA 2017; HERNÁNDEZ-ESCAMPA/BALBUENA VÁZQUEZ/BARRE-RA-FERNÁNDEZ 2017; LANDRY 2008; RICHARDS 2013). In this sense, the strategies that each city has developed in recent years can be summarized as follows:

Oaxaca has received independent travelers since decades ago, attracted by its vast cultural diversity and indigenous presence. Indigenous communities throughout the state are also proud of their arts and crafts, gastronomy, and uses and customs. A great proportion of their products is sold in the capital city. Thus, independent tourists and those interested in anthropological and ethnological issues usually go to the villages and spend time living inside the community, even sharing a family's house, and there learn the language, ways of cooking, social and familiar behaviors, handicrafts, and other local practices. For those spending less time in the state, there is an extraordinary offer of ready-to-sell artisan products in the city.

In recent years, some indigenous groups have established their warehouses or shops in the capital city to sell their artisan production directly without intermediaries, which is particularly attractive for visitors searching the authentic and ethical. There is even a co-operative, run only by women, whose goal, besides selling, is to empower women. Regarding tourism pressure and creativity, this process became complex. Alebrijes, wooden figures depicting multicolored fictional animals, are a concrete example among handicrafts because traditional motives are sold together with those inspired in foreign animals such as penguins or giraffes. The same occurs with clothing and accessories, for example, the case where traditional patterns adorn otherwise modern items such as purses or sneakers. Yet, true ethnic clothing is also available. A remarkable coincidence is that of the traditional food market whose features are repeated in modern gastronomic markets elsewhere in the city. Even intangible notions such as feminism or sexual diversity seem to have indigenous precedents since some ancient cultures in the region possess a matriarchal component or three socially recognized genders.

New avant-garde activities have developed in recent years in Oaxaca, such as art galleries and studios, graphic design workshops and stores, and contemporary design stores and studios. The city center hosts several upmarket art galleries and studios of many kinds, where individual creators or groups live, work, and show their innovations. Graphic design, in particular, is well developed in the city. On the other side, several traditional activities have been renovated, namely, arts and crafts

workshops, stores, traditional markets, refurbished mezcalerías, and local chocolate and coffee shops. In particular, new premises have been opened offering mezcal, chocolate, mole, and coffee, where products are sold and new tourist experiences are offered. For example, it is possible to observe how chocolate is made, and organic and fair trade coffee producers sell their beans explaining how it is produced. In any case, indigenous accents are always present in these otherwise contemporary products or activities. In sum, it is possible to state that all new tourist products in Oaxaca are, at the same time, symbolically laden with references to the past.

Guanajuato does not offer anything similar because, as explained above, the city has Spanish foundations and many inhabitants arrived from Europe, Africa, and other Mexican regions, thus lacking the historical and cultural depth and variety that Oaxaca offers. However, the city has taken advantage of its Hispanic identity and developed a close identification with Cervantes, although the writer never visited Mexico, much less, Guanajuato.

In Guanajuato, many of the handicrafts sold to tourists are imported from other Mexican regions and there are few gastronomic specialties. There are some art galleries and designers' studios but they tend to concentrate more in the city of San Miguel de Allende, where there is a long-established US residents' community. Nevertheless, a particularity of Guanajuato is the popularity of estudiantinas musical groupings. As Guanajuato is known as the Mexican university city, par excellence, it has a tradition of student groups singing in the streets, something also shared with other university cities in the Spanish-speaking world. The novelty is that Guanajuato has developed a tourist product from it. The number of estudiantinas has multiplied and making a tour with one of them is a must-do in the city. During the tours, new and old legends about the city are told or recreated, constituting a way to use intangible heritage as a tourist product. In some way, the fully Western, Hispanic precedents of Guanajuato allow the city to incorporate contemporary creativity without any kind of further transformation.

It is worth mentioning that social tension is constant in Oaxaca. This process leads to some sociocultural manifestations, some of which become relevant to tourism. Such is the case of artistic creation linked to political movements. Thus, several tourists regularly arrive in the city showing interest in collective ownership of the land, educational practices in indigenous communities, feminist practices, ecological activism, and unions' fighting methods. Sometimes social conflict sharply expands

but even this constitutes an attraction for so-called 'conflict tourism' (LISLE 2000; SERRANO CARVAJAL 2019). In contrast, Guanajuato is quite a peaceful city and there is almost no presence of these activities. However, the city developed some tourist products rooted in its mining history. As explained above, the city's foundation and height were due to silver mining. This industry is still going on in the city and, in the meantime, some mine entries are opened to tourist visits where people can learn about mining techniques and the miners' lives.

Both cities use their identity discourse to create tourist products. As anywhere else in the world, such cultural change produced by tourist pressure implies some polemic, authenticity being the main topic. In any case, the described creative tourism products or activities, offered during the whole year, reach their summit during the respective events. It is possible to mention that unlike some other destinations, there seems to be no tourist rejection so far. Instead, locals consider, in general terms, that visitors constitute a valuable income source.

5. Tourist Perception During the Events

In Oaxaca 188 persons answered the EES questionnaire, 49% of them were women and 51% were men. Meanwhile, in Guanajuato, 203 persons attended the poll of which 51% were women and 49% were men. These results roughly show that there is no gender preference among visitors in any of the studied events.

Regarding the origin of visitors, there are no substantial differences on national attendees. In the Guelaguetza, 81% were nationals, mostly from Oaxaca itself, Mexico City, and the State of Mexico. Visitors came from 15 different states in total. In the Festival Internacional Cervantino, a similar proportion was found because 85% of attendees were nationals, mostly from Guanajuato, Mexico City, and the State of Mexico, from 18 different states in total. In contrast, there is a significant difference in the origin of foreign visitors. In both cases, the USA is the most important foreign country of origin, but they represent 55% of the total number of attendees from abroad in Oaxaca and 90% in Guanajuato; thus, the Guelaguetza shows a wider diversity in foreign visitors' origins. Other countries represented in Oaxaca are Canada, France, Germany, Spain, and China; and in Guanajuato people from Peru, Brazil, and Australia were also found but in lower numbers. Therefore, it is possible to state that the Guelaguetza attracts a major proportion of European tourists

while most foreigners in the Festival Internacional Cervantino come from the neighboring United States.

Concerning personal features of the festival attendees, in Oaxaca most respondents were between 20-29 years old (26%), followed by people between 30 and 39 years old (24%). In Guanajuato most respondents were between 20-29 years old (61%), followed by people between 16 and 19 years old (17%). This data reinforces the idea that the Festival Internacional Cervantino is not only a cultural event, but also a rite of passage from youth to adulthood (BARRERA-FERNÁNDEZ/HERNÁNDEZ-ESCAMPA/ARISTA CASTILLO 2016; HOEL 2007). This is so in part because Guanajuato has a lively nightlife that attracts young people. The festival is sometimes just the excuse to visit the city. At the same time, the traditional and profoundly history-laden Guelaguetza might attract a more mature public since the attraction itself is mostly cultural.

In Oaxaca, the majority of attendees have an academic profession (31%), followed by selling and services staff (21%). In Guanajuato, the majority were students (48%), followed by people having an academic profession (28%). This fact reinforces the idea previously stated that the Festival Internacional Cervantino is significantly more attractive for young people looking to have fun. Besides, it probably has to do with the fact that the Guelaguetza's tickets are relatively expensive, while in the Festival Internacional Cervantino there are many open-air, free of charge, activities. Therefore, the economic profile of the visitors is reflected in terms of acquisitive power.

Regarding educational attainment, most visitors to the Guelaguetza have a bachelor's degree (35%), high school degree (26%), and master's or doctoral degree (23%). In the Festival Internacional Cervantino, most people have a bachelor's degree (75%), high school degree (19%), and master's or doctoral degree (6%). This data, in general, show that the event in Oaxaca attracts people from lower and upper academic levels, while Guanajuato attracts more people with university education but not from the highest level. However, a further analysis splitting the attendees' origin (state local, from other states of Mexico, foreigners) shows that the Festival Internacional Cervantino remains mainly visited by persons possessing a bachelor's degree as follows: locals (71%), from other states (71%) and foreigners (90%). The remaining 10% of foreign visitors declared having a postgraduate degree. In the case of the Guelaguetza, the situation shifts as locals possess mainly a high school degree (42%) or a bachelor's degree (32%), while people from other states maintain higher education levels possessing bachelor's (34%) or

postgraduate (32%). Foreigners declared possessing bachelor's (44%) and postgraduate (32%) degrees. Therefore, locals from Oaxaca show a lower degree of education than visitors, consequent with the general condition of Oaxaca characterized by economic and educational deprivation compared to other Mexican states (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía* 2020).

Concerning the groups' composition, groups in Oaxaca were formed by 3 adults with 2 children on average, while in Guanajuato groups were formed by 3 adults with no children on average. Once again, this shows that the attendees to the Festival Internacional Cervantino are more likely to be young people who have not yet formed a family.

Concerning income, 30% of respondents in Oaxaca earn less than 5,000 MXN per month, followed by 21% who earn between 20,001 and 30,000 MXN; while in Guanajuato 76% of respondents earn less than 5,000 MXN per month, followed by 11% who earn between 5,001 and 10,000 MXN. It shows that the Guelaguetza attracts both low income and high-income attendees, while the Festival Internacional Cervantino is more focused on young students who have not yet consolidated their professional careers. However, attendees to the Festival Internacional Cervantino spend more (3,220 MXN per person) than attendees to the Guelaguetza (2,067 MXN per person). This fact has probably to do with the many diverse activities that visitors carry out in Guanajuato, especially those related to nightlife.

Both festivals show a strong fidelity by their attendees as well as a capacity of attracting new visitors. In both cases, 55% attended the event for their first time and, among those repeating a visit, it was their 5th on average. However, there is a difference in the length of stay, since in Oaxaca visitors stay in the city an average of 5 nights, while in Guanajuato they spend an average of 3 nights. In Oaxaca, visitors stayed mostly in hotels (32%) and at friends and family's homes (27%), while in Guanajuato they stayed mostly at their own homes (32%), in hotels (28%), and at friends and family's homes (24%) showing again that many attendees are students that spend their academic year in the city. At this point, it is worth repeating that Guanajuato is renowned as the Mexican university city par excellence.

Focusing on how visitors moved while in the city, attendees in Oaxaca mostly moved on foot (31%), by taxi (29%), by car (19%), and by tourist bus (13%). In Guanajuato, attendees mostly moved just on foot (43%), on foot and by regular bus (30%), on foot and by taxi (20%), and on foot and by tourist bus (8%). The strong differences have to do with

the fact that Guanajuato is a very dense city characterized by narrow streets and a half-pedestrianized city center, while Oaxaca is a colonial city, as well, but defined by wider streets that allow a combination of methods of transport apart from walking.

Regarding the use of social media, attendees to the Festival Internacional Cervantino shared content far more than attendees to the Guelaguetza (78% to 33%), mainly through Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. This is probably because visitors to Guanajuato are mostly young students, who are more likely to use this technology. Still, both activities show that people are interested in sharing the experience in real-time, which in turn also becomes a way of indirectly promoting the events.

Concerning how attendees organized their journey, in Oaxaca 29% followed advice by friends and relatives, 16% visited the event's website, 15% used social networks, and another 15% based their decisions on previous experiences. In Guanajuato, 50 % followed advice by friends and relatives, 32% visited the event's website, 23% based their decisions on previous experiences and 20% followed the information on the event's brochure. The most significant difference here is the use of the brochure in Guanajuato, a medium which might be considered old-fashioned but, in this case, gives useful and condensed information of the events taking place simultaneously every day. The importance of brochures obeys the nature of the Festival Internacional Cervantino, which implies a huge amount of specific shows or performances from which the attendees must choose according to fixed schedules and in different venues throughout the city. In contrast, the Guelaguetza relies on massive attendance to specific moments such as the street parades or the dancing performances, all other attractions being supplementary.

Among main motivations to attend the event, in Oaxaca, 41% answered that they attended because they like the festival, 15% because of entertainment, 12% to spend time with their friends and relatives, and 8% to visit the region. In Guanajuato, 48% answered that they attended because they like the festival, 39% because of entertainment, 36% to spend time with their friends and relatives, and 17% to try something new. Again, the answers in Guanajuato are in line with the fact that many attendees are young students looking to have fun with their friends.

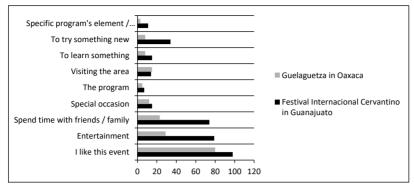


Fig. 3: Main motivations to attend the event. Source: the authors.

For 31% of respondents, the Guelaguetza was one among other reasons to visit Oaxaca and for 14% it was the only reason. When asked about alternatives in case of cancellation, 35% would have done another activity in the city, while 24% would have visited another destination nearby. For 28% of respondents, the Festival Internacional Cervantino was one among other reasons to visit Oaxaca and for 26% it was the only reason. In case of cancellation, 43% mentioned they would have stayed at home or gone to work, while 32% would have done another activity in the city. These data show that a large proportion of the Guelaguetza attendees are tourists while in the Festival Internacional Cervantino many of them are students that reside in the city all year long.

Regarding the possible recommendation of the festival to friends and relatives, respondents in Oaxaca gave a mark of 8.98/10. When asked about the probability of repeating their visit another year, respondents gave a mark of 7.95/10. The most valued aspects related to the festival and the city were security, heritage preservation, and the festival venues. According to respondents, the worst aspects were traffic, car parking, accessibility for people with disabilities, signage, health services, water and air quality, public transport, and street-cleaning. In Guanajuato, respondents gave a mark of 8.50/10 when asked about the possible recommendation of the festival to friends and relatives. When asked about the probability of repeating the visit another year, respondents gave a mark of 8.52/10. The most valued aspects related to the festival and the city were the program of performances, lodging quality, and leisure offer. According to respondents, the worst aspects were traffic, car parking, accessibility for people with disabilities, and language skills by staff. As can be seen, aspects related to transport and mobility are heavily criticized in both cities. The colonial and historic nature of both destinations plays a role in this, especially in Guanajuato due to the narrow streets. In Europe, similar urban contexts are usually pedestrian and/or accessible by massive public transport. However, in Mexico, transport heavily relies on particular vehicles or taxis, causing frequent traffic collapse. In some way, improving this might be one of the biggest challenges in both cities for urban and tourist policies.

Concerning the parallel activities developed during their stay in Oaxaca, most people answered that they attended cultural events (57%), went to restaurants (42%), and went shopping (34%). In Guanajuato, most people answered that they attended cultural events (75%), went to bars and discos (64%), and went to restaurants (52%). These data contribute once again to evidence the role of the Festival Internacional Cervantino as a reason for young people to meet and have fun.

When asked about the emotions experienced during the Guelaguetza, the most repeated answers were that they felt emotionally recharged, they experienced closeness, they wanted to revive it later, and they felt that the event was different from others. In the Festival Internacional Cervantino, the most repeated answers were that they were excited, they wanted to revive it later, they learned something, and they were active. These data together with the overall high qualifications to the events suggest that emotional experience is a major factor in both events even when they differ in content.

Finally, when asked for adjectives that define each city, for 50% of attendees Oaxaca is a historic, colonial, and traditional city; for 14% respondents it is also a conflictive city. For 73% of attendees, Guanajuato is a colonial city, 61% think it is a historic city and 47% consider it is traditional. Therefore, visitors emphasize the colonial and historic character of the cities, both of them founded in the 16th century and included in UNESCO's World Heritage List. People also defined Oaxaca as being conflictive due to frequent street blockages and its characteristic political unrest, as explained above.

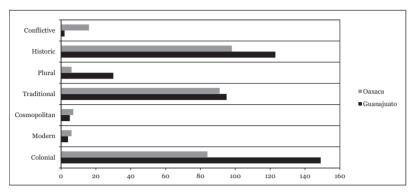


Fig. 4: Adjectives that better define each city. Source: the authors.

6. The Locals' Perception

As already explained, a considerable number of visitors to both festivals were residents. This data allowed exploring perceptions in comparison to those of visitors. Tourists tend to have less knowledge about the culture they are visiting, they only stay for a limited amount of time, and they have prejudices about "what should be seen" (BALBUENA VÁZQUEZ 2014; URRY 2002). On the other hand, locals tend to associate cultural festivals with their own identity.

Open interviews with people from Oaxaca showed the idea of unity within diversity. Even though the state of Oaxaca possesses different cultures, languages, traditions, and material culture, all of them are perceived as part of a single cluster. This way, different cultural elements such as dances, dresses, and gastronomy form part of the culture of Oaxaca in a broad sense, even if they have diverging geographic or historic origins. Tehuana dress, mezcal beverage, and Pineapple Dance constitute examples of concrete items perceived as part of such a great cultural heritage. The Guelaguetza also produces a sense of pride and dignity. This idea seems to be frequent, especially highlighting the indigenous past. People insisted on the importance of keeping traditions alive for transmitting them to new generations.

In contrast, in Guanajuato, those interviewed do not highlight the indigenous elements, even when some native handicrafts are recurrent in souvenir stores all over the city. Instead, the argument emphasizes elements of Spanish origin such as mining, Catholic traditions, or baroque architecture. The figure of Cervantes is also mentioned, under-

stood as an adaptive element, and yet it is used to enhance the Spanish ancestry of the city. However, some of these elements are not necessarily described as Spanish, instead, they are considered "Mexican." While the Guelaguetza imaginary looks deeply into the distant past, in the Festival Cervantino people perceive modern elements as part of their heritage. This way Guanajuato's identity seems to be rooted in a less distant past and at the same time stays open to modern worldwide trends. This relates to the event program itself, which contains classic performances as well as novel artistic manifestations.

7. Conclusions

Results show both similarities and profound differences between the analyzed events. At first glance, tourist profiles show coincidences, for example, the proportion of national vs. foreign visitors. However, a closer look allows the distinction of sociocultural differences. While Guanajuato has a young audience devoted to leisure, Oaxaca may have a more mature and educated public interested in deep aspects of culture.

Both cities revert constantly to their identity discourse to produce new tourist products. While doing so, they encourage cultural changes, but also keep profound attachments to their respective histories. A conspicuous difference between both symbolic arguments relates to the social construction of their "indigenous" (Oaxaca) or "Hispanic" (Guanajuato) identities. Creativity expresses in both cases as a result of adaptation to contemporary demands and is highly determined by the historical backgrounds. While Guanajuato shows a great capability to directly incorporate Western discourses (Cervantes, Quixote and contemporary art expressions), Oaxaca tends to modify the contemporary demands in order to relate the new products to tradition and indigenous identity. Even when the research highlights tourist pressure as a culture change factor, further studies may engage in other topics such as cultural authenticity during the festivals or cultural management in general.

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