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The nation-state, identity management, and indigenous crafts: Constructing markets and opportunities in Northwest Costa Rica

Frederick F. Wherry

Abstract

What are the roles of international tourism and global markets in the economic development of indigenous communities producing traditional “authentic” handicrafts? To what extent do state economic and cultural-political interests intervene in the structuring of cottage-industry markets? Are opportunities to enter the global handicraft market limited to communities “blessed” with indigenous artisan traditions? To answer these questions, the article presents ethnographic and historical evidence from two Costa Rican communities comprising about 1,200 individuals. These communities produce ceramics representing the Chorotega tradition and generate most of their incomes from selling handicrafts. The article contributes to the sociology of markets by documenting the historical contingencies and cultural understandings that facilitate and constrain opportunities in the global economy.

Keywords: Costa Rica; cultural commodities; indigenous peoples; national identity; Chorotega; ceramics.

What are the roles of international tourism and global markets in the economic development of indigenous communities producing traditional ‘authentic’ handicrafts? To what extent do state economic and cultural-political interests intervene in the structuring of cottage-industry markets? Are opportunities to enter the global handicraft market limited to communities ‘blessed’ with indigenous artisan traditions? To answer these questions, this article presents ethnographic and historical evidence from Costa Rica.

This study describes the experiences of two Costa Rican communities comprising about 1,200 individuals. Of mixed blood and no longer speaking their native tongue, they affirm their native-ness through their craft arts. Moreover, these artisans do not boast the remarkable success of the Otavalan traders of Ecuador (Kyle 1999), the indigenous Guatemalan weavers in San Pedro Saquetepequez (Perez-Sainz and Andrade Eekhoff 2003), or the Amate painters of San Agustin, Mexico (Cowen 2002). In this way, they represent those communities of artisans who have weak ties to their indigenous roots and who have not reaped the benefits of globalization.

The Costa Rican artisans under study produce and sell pottery to tourists, souvenir shops, boutiques, and a few foreign intermediaries. As international tourism has increased, the artisans have carved out a niche for themselves in the tourist craft markets by using their household labour and pre-Columbian techniques to manufacture souvenir items and larger crafts. Tourists and retailers have bought these goods, not for their use but for their symbolic values (Graburn 1976; Appadurai 1986; Spooner 1986; García Canclini 1990).

If the cultural reputations of indigenous artisans increase the market demand for their goods, that would be a finding with significant policy implications. Handicrafts generate a large and growing share of world trade. In 1999 crafts accounted for 20 billion dollars of the global economy (Howkins 2001, pp. 94–5). And in countries such as Morocco, handicraft exports (19 per cent of GDP in 1999) surpassed those of agriculture (16 per cent of GDP) [Afrol News 2002]. Nation-states have become increasingly concerned with monitoring and promoting this sector because numerous case studies have demonstrated that handicrafts now provide the main source of cash income for an increasing number of communities (UNESCO 1998). Implicit in these studies is the notion of comparative advantage: communities rich with indigenous culture more easily enter the handicraft market. Countries lacking these cultural endowments enter the non-cultural sectors of the world economy.

Traditional notions of comparative advantage posit that countries should utilize whatever geography and historical accident have given them. A country whose climate favours coffee or rice cultivation should export coffee or rice. A country rich in copper, gold, or tin deposits must take advantage of those natural endowments. These endowments correspond to the international division of labour in the global economic system. As each country realizes its natural potential, the whole system thrives (Todaro 1977).

Michael Porter (1990) warns that such naturalistic accounts of economic development hide a complex set of institutional arrangements that make specialization possible. A country's natural endowments do matter, but so too do the relationships among government

agencies, local firms, and other agents. Countries not blessed with natural endowments can create them (Brenner 1976; Zeitlin 1984; Senghaas 1985; Amsden 1989; Evans 1995). This article examines the institutional arrangements that enable Costa Rican handicraft artisans to realize the potential of their cultural endowments.

Following the logic of comparative advantage, one would argue that countries rich in cultural patrimony should export cultural goods. With the demand for such goods rising, everyone benefits from doing what each does best. For the 'liberal' (*laissez-faire*) economist, the market unleashes the forces of freedom, creativity, and change (Cowen 2002). For the economic sociologist, the market itself is full of numerous actors and institutions that struggle to promote (sometimes) contradictory or unrelated goals. The contingent character of market outcomes requires the analyst to understand both the structural conditions that promote economic development and the tendency of the actors and institutions to support and protect these indigenous cultural expressions.

Some governments are not disposed towards certain types of cultural commodities. The market for cultural goods must contend with the state's sense of what types of goods represent the national character. Therefore, the ministries of culture, tourism, and/or education must certify which ethnic crafts contribute to the nation's cultural heritage. The state's self-perception leads it to view some cultural endowments with pride but others with shame. Most institutional analyses assume that nation-states attempt to increase their growth rates and select the sectors most likely to achieve that goal. No doubt, such instrumentally rational calculations motivate development policy. However, states do not live on instrumental rationality alone.

Social prestige also motivates government policy. For example, to demonstrate that the nation-state has entered the modern world, the state creates and expands its educational systems to mimic the systems of wealthy Western nations (Meyer and Hannan 1975). The nation-state acts to create a modern image and constantly engages in status comparisons with similarly positioned others. By choosing to promote one economic sector or to suppress another, the state can align its interests and its reputation with the image of modernity instead of the stigmatized image of an indigenous, 'backward' Other.

The state agencies most important for managing the country's international identity are its tourism and museum institutions. These agencies tell the outside world what the national character is, which villages or towns best represent that character, and which ethnic groups have contributed to the nation's cultural coffers. Tourist maps direct tourists to some locales and their corresponding markets, but

not others. And museum exhibitions verify the claims to authenticity that the producers of indigenous crafts make.

Ironically, these state agencies not tasked with promoting economic development (e.g., the Ministry of Culture and Education) have assumed a critical role in assisting the economic development of communities tied to globalization. When tourists enter small villages in search of authentic crafts, new markets and new opportunities emerge. As micro-enterprises establish tourist services or produce crafts for the tourist and retail markets, peasants can lay down their hoes, leave the haciendas, and creatively encounter the global world. Women can earn as much, if not more, income as the men in their villages and insist on more decision-making power in the home (Nash 1993; Little 2002). The prospects of globalization seem too good to believe.

This study sheds light on these dynamics by presenting ethnographic and historical evidence from two villages in Northwest Costa Rica. The Costa Rican artisans under study live in either the villages of Guaitil or San Vicente and are descended from the Chorotegas of Nicoya. These mixed-race artisans do not speak an indigenous language and claim their indigenous heritage through the type of work they perform.

Moreover, the 'indigenous' Costa Rican artisans under study deviate from the Costa Rican created image of the folk artisan, occupying the countryside, enacting the pastoral participatory democracy. It is widely believed that most Costa Ricans in the Central Valley grew coffee on small plots of land and that the more equal land distribution among coffee growers promoted the participatory democracy defining the national character (Edelman and Seligson 1994; Yashar 1997; Wilson 1998). From the Central Valley have come the brightly coloured oxcarts used to transport coffee beans. These oxcarts represent the national craft. Upon arrival in the capital's international airport terminal, one encounters the brightly coloured oxcart prominently displayed in the centre of the baggage claim area. In the national imagination, the country folk, *not* the Indians, represent the nation.

The heart of Costa Rica's folk arts can be found fifty-two kilometres outside of the Costa Rican capital, San José, in the town of Sarchí. In the early 1990s an estimated 130 craft workshops thrived as ten to fifteen tour buses brought Costa Rican and international tourists to their doorsteps (Pérez Sáinz and Cordero 1994, p. 42). To speak of Sarchí in Costa Rica is to speak of handicrafts because the town has become closely associated with the folk traditions of its artisans.

The folk arts of Sarchí and Grecia contain no indigenous elements. Instead, one finds oxcarts brightly painted in full and miniature sizes, hammocks, rocking chairs, wooden kitchen ware, and rustic furniture. With their handiwork, the artisans evoke images of pastoral life – images compatible with the nation's perception of itself.

Handicrafts incompatible with the nation's self-perception find themselves sorely disadvantaged. In the case of the Chorotegan pottery artisans, the Costa Rican state inherited cultural endowments it did not want. To cast away colonialism and to enter modernity, Costa Rica portrayed itself as a Hispanic nation. As a result, indigenous tribes were ferreted away from the centre of national attention, and the indigenous crafts, for all intents and purposes, did not exist. However, changes in the global economy forced the nation-state to put all of its riches on sale. And the indigenous crafts became a major source of income for some communities, literally by default. As the country's international debt destroyed some of its old industries, the global economy created opportunities for new ones to emerge. Although indigenous crafts fly in the face of the image the nation-state has projected of itself, these cultural traditions could no longer be suppressed as free market forces were unleashed. Indigenous cultural traditions and the crafts they inspired did not enter the global market, however, in any way they pleased.

Handicraft artisans have faced numerous structural barriers to succeeding in the local and the global markets. David V. Caruthers (2001) has examined the economic performance of handicraft artisans among thirty-two workshops in Michoacan and Oaxaca, Mexico. High levels of social inequality within the society reproduce themselves in the village craft economy. For example, those who own the clay, other sources of raw materials, or the machines are those who have always been in the landowning classes (p. 359). And the middlemen who market the products capture the surplus value of the artisans' labour, so the artisans become trapped in a low-level equilibrium of subsistence production. These structural inequalities also debilitate the Costa Rican artisans under study who depend on a local landowner for access to clay.

Handicraft artisans also find themselves disadvantaged in capturing the surplus value of their labour at the point of sale. When demand is high, the middlemen reap the profits from greater volumes and higher prices. When demand is low, the producers absorb the losses because they bear the full costs of production and fail to recuperate their costs in sales. Unable to remove the middleman from the negotiations, the artisan sells cheap and suffers dearly (Allen 1983; Lozano 1997; Pérez Sáinz 1997; Cohen 1998). However, in communities that attract independent buyers, handicraft producers are less reliant on middlemen buyers.

In Ecuador, handicraft artisans have bypassed the middleman altogether by engaging in transnational migration. David Kyle (1999), Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld (2002) Lynne Meisch (2002), and others document this phenomenon. The artisans occupy at least two

social spaces nearly simultaneously. They frequently travel between the foreign countries in which they sell their work and their home villages.

Unlike the transnational entrepreneurs of Otavalo, the Costa Rican artisans we are studying do not migrate to sell their products and are not, in any sense of the word, transnational. The Costa Rican case resembles the Otavalan one in that economic globalization has revitalized local traditions and turned the local power hierarchy on its head. The ethnographic case will show that women gained an upper hand in the village when their incomes surpassed those of their husbands. The artisans also found themselves with the ability to leave lowly-remunerated farm work and to grab the attention of public officials who had previously been beyond reach.

Like the Costa Rican artisans under study, the Otavalan ethnic identity gained greater salience because of the region's interactions with the global market. The Otavalans also benefited from the interaction of various international organizations and national government agencies. In 1964 Peace Corps volunteers assisted in marketing and design (Meisch 2002, p. 60). Other international organizations, such as Andean Mission and the International Labor Organization, intervened to construct local and global market opportunities for these artisans (p. 34). None of the outcomes or interactions in Ecuador was inevitable but resulted from the state-influenced (and chance) encounters among various actors with latent, manifest, and emergent goals.

This article makes those interactions and their outcomes explicit by comparing two neighbouring villages and asking how their indigenous crafts entered national and global markets. The analysis demonstrates that 1) having indigenous cultural traditions is not sufficient for entering the tourist market. If the state's self-perception is incongruous with the indigenous images, the state is less willing to promote export and marketing opportunities. Likewise, international consumers are less able to recognize that such cultural endowments exist. Moreover, 2) changes in the global economy can release indigenous artisans from their dependence on the state's official approval; however, the communities most likely to take advantage of international tourism and global markets have superior infrastructure and other material resources at the local level.

Finally, 3) the Schumpeterian notion that market forces create new forms in the place of obsolete ones gives no solace to artisan communities. If Schumpeter is taken for his word, the same dynamics that have made it possible for producers of handicrafts to enter national and global markets will threaten to undo them. As the owner of the clay mine in San Vicente threatens to prohibit the artisans from buying it any longer without buying the entire plot of land in which it is deposited, the artisans have declared a state of emergency. Their way

of life (pottery production) spurred by a financial crisis now confronts new threats to its existence. The history of indigenous crafts in Costa Rica illustrates these dynamics.

Endowments of indigenous arts

In the late 1800s, Costa Rica possessed a number of indigenous arts that brought its modernizing project no reprieve: Indigenous peoples and their relics occupied the national territory. In the eyes of the world community, the indigenous peoples of Costa Rica differed little from those in the neighbouring countries.

In 1892 Costa Rica entered the Columbian Historical Exhibition of the World's Fair with one of the largest and best organized collections of archeological artifacts. As a contributor of pottery to the Columbian Historical Exhibition, Costa Rica found itself in the company of Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Costa Rica contributed several thousand pieces to the exhibition, and the ornamentations were praised by the experts for their originality and tastefulness (Hough 1893; Peralta and Alfaro 1893).

The Costa Rican exhibition highlighted the ceramics of the Chorotegas, one of ten indigenous groups currently recognized by the Costa Rican National Commission on Indigenous Affairs (Tenorio Alfaro 1990). Exactly when the Chorotegas came to settle in the Nicoya peninsula has not been precisely established (Corrales Ulloa 2002, pp. 21–9), but the hieroglyphs painted on their ceramic works link them to Mesoamerican and Maya civilizations. Scholars disagree on which civilizations have most influenced the indigenous peoples of the Nicoya peninsula in Northwest Costa Rica (Scott 1999). The indigenous cultures of Nicoya were either 1) a peripheral element of the Olmec empire (Soustelle 1984; Lowe 1989; Sharer 1989); 2) an outpost of the Maya (Lines 1978); or 3) a trading zone in which neither group dominated (Pohorilenko 1981).

The third hypothesis emphasizes Nicoya's contested place within Mesoamerica. Based on his analysis of fifteen pre-Columbian artifacts found in Costa Rica, Anatole Pohorilenko (1981) argues that 'the presence of Olmec-related material found in Costa Rica does not warrant the incorporation of the Nicoya Peninsula within the Mesoamerican cultural sphere' (pp. 310–11). Pohorilenko adds that some of the Olmec pieces found their way into Costa Rica through trade with the Maya and that some of the Olmec-style glyphs became incorporated into Costa Rican artifacts before the arrival of the Olmec and without regard to Olmec representational systems. In the contested periphery of the Mesoamerican cultural space, Costa Rica remains (Creamer 1987).

Although the Chorotega's cultural affiliations remain contested, the quality of their pottery lies beyond reproach. During the colonial period, Don Gonzalo Fernández Oviedo y Valdez, a visitor to the Nicoya peninsula in 1529, wrote, 'The ceramics of Nicoya are distinguished first and foremost by their beauty' (Fernandez Leon 1907 cited in Hernández and Marín 1975, p. 15). Don Gonzalo's praise for the Chorotegan artifacts exemplifies the high regard visitors had for these artisans. It should come as no surprise that the ceramics of Nicoya were so highly regarded at the World's Fair in 1892. Less than a century after the fair, however, the Costa Ricans found themselves severed from these ethnic associations.

The nation-state

To hear the Costa Ricans tell it, they are a nation of white people. They possess Spanish blood, and the clarity of their Castilian confirms the fact. Moreover, their currency portrays either images from classical antiquity or depictions from European port, plaza, or pastoral scenes. Only one bank note printed in 1942 depicts Chorotega pottery (Chacón Hidalgo 2003). By contrast, such countries as Mexico proudly display images of their indigenous culture on their currency: 'The Mexican-ness of Mexico comes from the feeling and expression of *indigenismo*, i.e., that which is Indian and not European' (Graburn 1976, p. 115).

The essence of being Costa Rican lies in expressing all the most civilized elements of its colonizer. After being granted independence from the Spanish Crown in 1821 without a fight, the Costa Ricans established a liberal programme to modernize the country and to promote a national image of the exceptional, civilized nation. General Tomás Guardia led a group of authoritarian leaders known as 'The Olympians'. Iván Molina and Steven Palmer argue that the Olympians promoted hygiene, science, patriotism, and racial purity in order to verify the country's whiteness (Molina and Palmer 1990, pp. 65–6). Costa Rica's assimilation strategy obscured the presence of non-Hispanic groups. Realizing that dark coloured skin and Negroid features imposed economic and social liabilities, some Caribbean blacks inter-married with Hispanic Costa Ricans so that their children would have *piel claro* (light-complexioned skin). And although Costa Rica maintained good relationships with majority-black countries and supported the anti-racism positions of the United Nations, the nation-state had pushed two of its indigenous groups, the Bribri and the Cabecares, to its southern mountains and had practised social apartheid during the 1930s in Limón: the municipality instituted segregated seating in cinemas, separate recreation hours, and a

separate bathing complex for 'whites only' (Purcell and Sawyers 1993, p. 312).

Ronald N. Harpelle (1993) writes: 'People of African descent were described as "pedantic" and "stupid" and some influential Costa Ricans advocated sterilizing the entire community [of Limon] to prevent its spread' (p. 104). In the 1930s the nation-state's official voice on the population, the director of the National Census, disparaged West Indian migration in an article to *La Tribuna* (Ibid.). Philippe Bourgeois (1986) reckons that the society's phenotypically-based discrimination prevented the West Indians from assimilating fully into the Hispanic nation.

Based on the outright discrimination against blacks and the silence regarding the indigenous population, one can assume that being indigenous was not 'in', so everything associated with the ethnic was defined 'out'. Costa Rica's international image left its indigenous peoples and their arts in the shadow of respectability. The nation and its culture had been whitewashed; the value of its ethnic arts, deflated.

Global politics also contributed to Costa Rica's image of herself as a white, European country. United States President Taft famously referred to Costa Rica as 'the Switzerland of Central America' because of her tendency to remain neutral when other Central American countries warred. And when Costa Rica's social programmes were established in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, the state came to think of itself as a northern European social democracy (Melendez and Quince 1977; Harpelle 1993).

Those living in the Central Valley almost forget the indigenous reserves or the large concentration of Afro-Caribbean people ghettoized outside the valley (Kutsche 1994; Rossi 2002).¹ A few splashes of colour notwithstanding, the Costa Ricans have historically portrayed themselves as a racially homogeneous group. Unlike the 1970s when the state established its first cultural ministry promoting a Europeanized national identity, the 1990s brought new opportunities for non-white Costa Ricans. The state now acknowledged and celebrated the Indian, the Afro-Caribbean, the Guanacastecan (Cuevas Molina 1999, p. 261). In 1994 the 'Day of the Cultures' (*el Día de las Culturas*) replaced the 'Day of the Race' (*el Día de la Raza*).² The nation had officially recognized the cultural contributions from the many. These celebrations coincided with changes in the global economy.

Creative destruction

Moments of economic crisis force nations to re-assess the value of everything it owns, be it natural resources, its labour force, or its cultural traditions. Costa Rica's dependent insertion into the world

economy precluded autonomous industrial growth and reinforced the country's economic vulnerability to crises. In the late 1970s, Marc Edelman (1985) laments: '[F]or every \$100 worth of output, Costa Rican industries required \$80 worth of imported inputs and equipment' (p. 38). The gap between imports and exports grew, with imports gaining the upper hand. This exacerbated the balance of payments problem. As the government experienced shortfalls in foreign exchange, the central bank borrowed from international financial institutions.

In 1979 the oil price hike jolted Costa Rica for a second time in the same decade. Two years later, Costa Rica defaulted on her debt. A year later Mexico also defaulted. After Mexico coughed, so to speak, the rest of Latin America caught the cold.

By 1982 inflation was nearly 100 per cent and the currency devaluation was 450 per cent compared to 1980 levels. The nation's 3 per cent GDP growth in 1978 fell to a nadir of -9.8 per cent four years later (Edelman 1985, p. 40). Meanwhile, 'the cost of servicing the debt had risen from a manageable US \$60 million in 1977 to US\$510 million in 1982' (Wilson 1998, p. 153). After 1979 the economic growth rate became its rate of contraction, reaching its nadir of nearly -10 per cent in 1982. Costa Rica had no choice: she turned to the International Monetary Fund.

The International Monetary Fund [IMF], the World Bank, and US AID offered several structural adjustment loans and a new policy paradigm to aid Costa Rica. Costa Rica appealed to the IMF for a bailout loan in 1981. In return for the bailout, the government agreed to devalue its currency, decrease spending on social programmes, remove price controls, reform the tax code, and increase tax collections (Wilson 1998).

Costa Rica focused on the export of nontraditional goods and services rather than import substitution industrialization. At first, the international finance institutions excused Costa Rica from totally dismantling its welfare state so long as it paid attention to nontraditional agricultural exports, tourism, and assembly manufacturing (Itzigsohn 2000). As the export-led strategy began to bear fruit, there was no longer any reason to slow the march of neoliberal progress (Chronicle of Latin American Economic Affairs 1995).

The debt crisis forced the state to pursue new economic growth paths and created opportunities for the tourism sector to grow. With agriculture becoming more disadvantaged in the global economy, people in rural areas had to seek alternative sources of income. They adjusted to the changed market conditions by transforming what had been a traditional craft performed by women into their main source of cash income.

Tourism by default

It should come as no surprise that the state promoted tourism directly and indigenous crafts indirectly after the onset of the financial crisis in the 80s. Costa Rica turned to tourism because it saw its natural beauty as the only resource that it had not exploited. In the 1970s and 80s tourists hardly knew Costa Rica, but by 1991 the revenue from tourism accounted for nearly one-fifth of the value generated by exports. During the debt crisis of the 1980s, few tourists entered Costa Rica. Between 1984 and 1994 the proportion of tourists from North America had doubled; the proportion from Europe, tripled (Costa Rican Tourism Board 2000). The tourism sector declined relative to other exports with the advent of Intel (Américas 2000, pp. 3–4). However, the total revenues garnered by the tourism sector continued to climb. By 1999 tourism generated \$US 917 million.

In Costa Rica, tourists arrive for the purpose of experiencing the rain forests, nature reserves, and beaches. Surveys conducted by the Costa Rican Tourism Board confirm that most tourists visit the beaches and the rainforests. The survey does not even mention handicrafts. 72.5 per cent of the tourists come to Costa Rica to enjoy its beaches. Just over half of the tourists come for eco-tourism. 12 per cent come to surf.³ While visiting the beach, for example, the tourist discovers the indigenous handicraft hawkers and the small souvenir shops. If there is enough time, s/he might take a half-day cultural tour, but the cultural portion of the holiday is an afterthought, not the purpose for which the trip was taken in the first instance. Moreover, the national tourism authority officially recognizes only a few handicraft production centres.

Indigenous pottery

Costa Rican Tourism Board has mapped the country's handicraft centres. In the Nicoya peninsula, the board only recognizes Guaitil as a centre for handicrafts. The tourism board's map designates the remaining handicraft centres in the greater metropolitan area of San José: North Sarchí, South Sarchí, Escazu, San Vicente de Moravia, and Turrialba (Costa Rican Tourism Board 2002).

Guaitil's neighbouring rival, San Vicente, finds its name on this map, but the handicraft designation does not accompany it. Several artisans in San Vicente have remarked, 'We are not on the tourist map. People always visit Guaitil but not us. We make the same things'. Costa Rica's national reputation and state agencies hide these indigenous crafts from the international market. But what explains the difference in market access from one village to the next? How does

one place one's village *on the map*? In short, under what conditions does the global economy create while it also destroys?

The limited success in Guaitil and occasional failure in San Vicente offer some clues to the dynamics of creative destruction. The villages are located two kilometres apart in the Nicoya peninsula, and 90 per cent of its residents either produce or sell Chorotega pottery. The artisans create small, medium, and large-sized ceramics. The small ceramics are the size of saucers and the largest vases stand three feet tall. Most of the pottery is meant for tourists who spend between \$US 5 and \$US 30 per item, many of them replicas of the artifacts discovered in the Chorotegan ancestral zones. In the tourist season, most workshops earn between US\$100 and US\$ 300 each month. Most earnings cluster near the US\$100 or the US\$300 level. The artisans operate out of their homes and work in groups of two or three (sometimes more). The home workshops are sometimes detached from the house and are often open-air structures, a roof with no walls. Some of the artisans arrange their pottery on the dirt in front of the house, where they would have set flowers or shrubs, otherwise. The artisans also build kiosks from bamboo, thin trees, and plywood to display and sell their goods.

Ask an artisan from Guaitil about the artisans in San Vicente, s/he would probably tell you that the people of San Vicente are poor. Then s/he would probably qualify her/his statement: 'It is not that we *aren't* poor. It's just that we are *less poor* than they are' (Field notes). The difference in economic development between the two villages manifests itself in the local food shop. In the centre of Guaitil the corner store (*pulperia*) offers juices, sodas, bread, canned food, household cleaners, and other goods. Periodically, small delivery trucks visit the store to replenish the stocks. By contrast, the corner store in the centre of San Vicente has few items on its shelves, cannot easily change bank notes, and does not stock its shelves with food that will spoil (Field notes).

The observable economic activity among the workshops confirms that the artisans of Guaitil enjoy a greater demand for their products than do the artisans of San Vicente. Large and small tour buses enter Guaitil; the artisans conduct demonstrations of their craft several times a week to tourists who then purchase souvenirs; and groups of five to ten artisans gather in one workshop to complete pending orders from hotels or souvenir shops. By contrast, few tour buses take the unpaved road from Guaitil to San Vicente; the artisans do not conduct demonstrations on a regular basis; and the pending orders from hotels or souvenir shops do not result in large groups of artisans working together (Field notes). A field survey of forty-three workshops in the two villages confirms that the workshops in San Vicente earn less money in monthly sales compared with the workshops in Guaitil. Why

is there such a big difference in the local economic development of these two villages and the monthly incomes of their artisans?

Settlement patterns

One finds some answers to these questions in the characteristics of the villages. Guaitil benefited from its more dense population, its lower illiteracy rate, and a greater propensity to engage in artisanal production among the people of its district. Population density differentiates Guaitil from San Vicente. Guaitil's core radiates out along the figurative spokes of a bicycle wheel. This outward-radiating-spoke formation contrasts with the small core, ringed by the disconnected periphery (*el rincón*) that one finds in San Vicente. In Guaitil the houses and workshops are located in closer proximity to one another. From one's front doorstep in Guaitil, one can see where the buyers stop and how one's neighbours interact with the various passers-by. In San Vicente, there are two families located in the centre of the village. The others can be found scattered along the outer perimeter of the village's boundaries or huddled in clusters between the centre and the periphery. During my fieldwork, I would walk for ten to twenty minutes between one cluster of workshops and another.

Guaitil and San Vicente experienced different settlement patterns. The original settlers of the Guaitil village possessed small plots of land on which they farmed. After the village was settled, Joaquín Sánchez, a rich man from neighbouring Santa Barbara, arrived. He purchased much of the surrounding plantations and gave the village men needed work. What is known of those early days was told to anthropologists twenty-five years ago by the children of the first settlers:

Doña Carmen Briceño Villareal, who is ninety-five years old, and doña Cata Villafuerte González, who is ninety-four, are the oldest women in the village and are related by marriage. They assert that their families were the first to arrive in Guaitil from Santa Barbara. First came don Jesús Villafuerte and doña Paulina González. Many of don Jesús' brothers also moved into the village and married women from outside of the village. Doña Paulina was a native of Liberia, the daughter of a Nicaraguan man and a Los Angeles [Costa Rica] woman Other early settlers came from Santa Bárbara, San Vicente, Florida, Chira, and other villages near Guaitil These first settlers were happy to receive new settlers so that the village would grow . . . (Hernández and Marín 1975, pp. 12–3)

This pattern of outside settlement with the wealthiest persons arriving last is the opposite of how San Vicente was settled.

The first two families in San Vicente in the early 1900s were the Grijalbas and the Acostas. They shared some 400 hectares of land between them. Arriving later were the Ruiz, López, and Chavarría families. In contrast to the Grijalbas and Acostas, these latecomers had been dispossessed of their land and had come to San Vicente to settle anew. In the centre of the village the landed families are found today. The dispossessed are dotted along the periphery (Román 1994, pp. ca 7–8).

The different settlement histories highlight two themes: how myths emerge and how land distribution affects economic development. The villages have been settled for only a century, but the villagers lay claim to a 4,000 year old ancestry. They justify their claim by pointing out their somatic features. Unlike the Costa Ricans of the Central Valley, the Chorotega have darker complexions and different facial features. The village residents see themselves as having reclaimed ancestral lands. The indigenous burial ground unearthed in San Vicente and the arrowheads excavated near the clay mine verify the authenticity of their claim.

While the timing of their settlement raises questions about how local myths emerge, the pattern of their settlement raises questions about how local economies grow. In Guaitil the physical centre of the village also served as its economic centre because small landholders settled in the village before the wealthiest inhabitants arrived. By contrast, the physical centre of San Vicente also served as its economic centre because the large landholders settled in the village first, and those without land later settled in its outskirts. As a result, when tourism promoted the economic development of Guaitil's centre, these infusions of cash were shared more widely between the village's physical periphery and its physical centre. In San Vicente, those on the geographic periphery have remained in the economic periphery as well (Field notes).

Different starting points

The differences at the village level are mirrored in the district level statistics. In the 1970s a larger percentage of workers in the Santa Cruz district (where Guaitil is located) considered themselves as artisans rather than as workers in the Nicoya district (where San Vicente is located), 13 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively (Costa Rican Census Bureau 2000). The 1970s are important because that is when handicraft production became an income generating activity in the two villages. Likewise, the 1980s are important because that is when tourism started accelerating in Costa Rica in response to the debt crisis and in Guaitil as a means to promote women's empowerment and rural development.

The residents of Guaitil also enjoyed higher literacy and better wellbeing among its children. In 1973 the illiteracy rate for persons ten years old or older stood at 14.7 per cent in the district of Nicoya compared with 8.1 per cent in the Santa Cruz district (Costa Rican Census Bureau 1975). Nearly a decade later, the illiteracy rates fell in both districts, but the gap between the districts where San Vicente and Guaitil are located remained significant, 9.6 and 4.9 per cent, respectively (Costa Rican Census Bureau 1987). Between 1996 and 1998, the rate of diarrhoea per 1,000 inhabitants was 20.17 in Santa Cruz but 41.68 in Nicoya (Ministry of Planning 2001: 50). Moreover, the infant mortality rate was 48.7 in Nicoya per 1,000 inhabitants in 1999 but only 39.1 in Santa Cruz (Ibid. 48).

These statistics demonstrate that Guaitil occupies a district that enjoys a higher standard of living. Such factors as education, health, and infrastructure affect the capacity of local villages to enter the tourist market. And these success factors themselves result from policy decisions made for contingent reasons. The more successful village has more resources in its district upon which to draw. Proponents of international tourism as an antidote to rural poverty would do well to take note of these different social and economic endowments in Guaitil and San Vicente. Likewise, to understand how these villages obtained access to the tourist market one cannot ignore the amount of state-sponsored interventions that brought Guaitil a paved road, some marketing expertise, building materials, and inquiring tourists.

Market access

How do tourists find handicraft villages, and why do some villages appear on official tourism maps but others do not? One would be naïve to assume that the best village wins: the market rewards high quality crafts with discerning (or, at least financially equipped) tourists. Such a view is naïve because markets do not emerge of their own volition. An institution (usually the state) creates the market interface where tourists and artisans communicate. The importance of the state cannot be overstated in the case of Guaitil and San Vicente.

The state significantly intervened in the handicraft market 1) when it severed the handicraft producers from the main circuits of commerce in the late 1960s but re-established an artery of exchange for only Guaitil in the 1980s to the exclusion of San Vicente. The state also 2) promoted the women's ceramics cooperative in Guaitil in the late 1960s and early 1970s and 3) offered marketing assistance to the same cooperative in the early 1980s. San Vicente also stands to benefit from tourism with the state's latest attempt to draw attention to the cultural traditions of the village by giving its approval for a museum to be built

in the village; however, the state's intentions have outpaced its capacities as a result of reductions in social spending and a greater reliance on free-market dynamics. Finally, the dynamics of the market threaten to undercut the very basis of the artisans' success: the owner of their primary input (clay) has grown tired of the meagre profits he obtains from selling barrels of clay and wants to sell his land to the highest bidder. These market dynamics begin with the great highway linking Santa Cruz to Nicoya.

The new highway

The construction of paved roads harbingers modernization and its twin, development. According to the state's logic, roads should connect dense populations, and in doing so use the shortest routes at the lowest costs (Hernández and Marín 1975). For local economies, such logics can wreak disaster (Scott 1998). Paved roads redirect traffic patterns and commercial attention away from some areas in favour of others. The well-intentioned road construction projects in the Guanacaste province imposed great costs on the handicraft villages of Guaitil and San Vicente by removing them from the main highway route. While Guaitil has managed to reduce its disadvantage by acquiring a paved road linking the village to the main highway, San Vicente remains isolated. This problem began in the modernizing 60s.

In 1968 the state planning agency contracted the Rawcon Company of Costa Rica to build a highway linking Belén to Nicoya. The highway covers fifty-four kilometres with its final stretch of road (twenty-three kilometres) connecting Santa Cruz and Nicoya. Between Santa Cruz and Nicoya are Guaitil and San Vicente.

The Rawcon Company had to choose between taking the shortest and most cost-effective route or the longer and most locally-sensitive one. The locally-sensitive route would have taken into consideration how local people use the roads and for what purposes. For example, many villagers near Santa Cruz would travel the fourteen kilometre road from Santa Cruz to the village of Guaitil and then onwards twenty-two kilometres passing San Vicente to Nicoya. When the highway was being planned, the most efficient route seemed obvious. A direct route from Santa Cruz to Nicoya required twenty-three kilometres of road; a locally-sensitive route required thirty-six kilometres. The savings from not pouring thirteen kilometres of concrete made the decision 'obvious'. The new road linked together large ranches and disconnected the small farms and handicraft production centres from the new circuit of exchange (Hernández and Marín 1975, pp. 8–9). Cost-effectiveness required it. The old dirt road remained intact, but only the locals used it.

The residents of Guaitil would eventually witness road construction connecting the village plaza to the main highway. Those of San Vicente would not find themselves similarly linked with a road to opportunity. Guaitil's rise resulted in part from the cooperation between the women of Guaitil and San Vicente with the US Peace Corps volunteers.

The women's ceramics cooperative

The US Peace Corps sent several volunteers to Guaitil and San Vicente. These early volunteers encountered villages producing pottery for daily use but not adorning the pottery with the pre-Columbian designs used today. The distinctive ceramics made by individual potters were typically piggy banks with figurines of country folks (Stone 1950, pp. 271, 279). Yet, it was the pre-Columbian designs that the tourists would most want.

The pre-Columbian motifs had nearly disappeared among the pottery makers of Guaitil and San Vicente. Anthropologist Jim Weil reckons that these motifs and the physical forms of the pre-Columbian pots lay dormant for several centuries before being revived in the late 1960s (Weil 2001). The reappearance of these motifs and forms coincides with the entry of two fondly-remembered Peace Corps volunteers.

Joy Danielson came to Guaitil in 1969, followed by Richard León in 1970, as Peace Corps volunteers (Hernández and Marín 1975, p. 28). They worked with the women of Guaitil and San Vicente to establish a women's pottery cooperative, Coope-Arte in Guaitil. By combining the talents of the women in the two villages, the cooperative would achieve economies of scale; the investment required to produce the first pot is always high because of the cost of buying raw materials and any needed equipment. After the first unit is produced, however, the average cost of each additional unit falls because the benefits to large-scale production are realized. With economies of scale in mind, the cooperative required its members to work together under one roof instead of working in a decentralized way from their homes.

Luring the women out of their homes, the men argued, disrupted family life. When the women worked at home, they could also care for their children and their husbands. The cooperative required a more rigid time schedule for work and reduced the amount of time the women spent performing their domestic tasks, but the women had to obey the cooperative's rules. The artisans would pool their earnings and would make regular contributions to the group in the form of equipment or supplies. The cooperative's more rationalized work-system would make it easier for the cooperative's coordinating committee to monitor the quality of the artisans' works and to ensure that production volume remained adequately high. As the cooperative

began to sell larger volumes of pottery, the women became the breadwinners in their families. Their husbands' incomes as plantation and small farm workers paled in comparison. In the late 1970s Doña Hortensia Briceño Villafuerte, the manager of Coope-Arte, declared, 'We really put the men in their places! (*Ahorita tenemos a todos los hombres sentados*)' (Hernández and Marín 1975, p. 10).

Eventually, Coope-Arte became the victims of their own success. A road and other services came into Guaitil because it was the site of Coope-Arte. As others in the village saw the group's sales increase, they too entered the market. The men changed their attitudes towards pottery production and began to challenge their wives. Managing the cooperative became more difficult, and most of the members returned to their homes to work. Coope-Arte dissolved, but the spirit of pottery sales was alive and well.

The entry of these women into the tourist market brought about great change for the village and for their cultural practices. Not only was Guaitil having more contact with outsiders, but the villagers were also having more dialogue about what the 'original' Chorotegan designs looked like. In the early 1900s it was said that a village woman, auntie Ildefonsa, began experimenting with black clay after the rains ended and made an *olla* that resisted the fire very well (p. 14). Her daughter learnt the craft from her, and the practice began to spread. There is no linear transfer of the craft from their indigenous ancestors. The villagers had to learn anew the indigenous origins of the craft. The Peace Corps volunteers, and later the state, simplified and disseminated the findings from the archeological digs; the tourists entered the village with a yearning for authentic cultural commodities (Graburn 1976; Baudrillard 1981; Appadurai 1986; Spooner 1986; Bendix 1997); and the artisans revived their pre-Columbian motifs (Weil 2001).

The economic development of Guaitil underscores the importance of cumulative causation, a notion introduced by Howard Becker (Portes 1995, p. 17). The state-assisted marketing efforts brought a new group of consumers to the artisans' doorsteps.⁴ The attention that tourists brought to the cooperative and its surrounding environment made infrastructure development a priority for Guaitil. With so many foreign tourists visiting the area, a paved road linking the village cooperative to the highway became necessary.

A paved road to the highway

The Santa Cruz government supported paving a road from the main highway to the village of Guaitil. The local government wanted to promote itself as the centre for folklore. Within its jurisdiction lay a valuable cultural resource, artisans crafting pottery that claimed a

4,000 year old tradition. Moreover, the artisans themselves were women.

The female congresswoman, Odete Hector Marín, from Guanacaste supported the bill to construct the road to the cooperative.⁵ Although the villagers did not have traditional political connections to make the road a reality, the cooperative's objective to empower women gave it a ready ally in the congresswoman. She intervened on behalf of the village to have the road construction approved by the central government. The first woman to be elected to congress from her district, Congresswoman Héctor Marín targeted the well-being of women and children in her legislation. She served during Alberto Monge's administration (1982–1986). The road was built circa 1983.

The new road gave the artisans access to tourist markets. A retired artisan in Guaitil recalls that the paved road changed the local economy by facilitating the entry of tour buses (Informant interview, 15 February 2003, Guaitil). The paved road stopped at the village square where the women's cooperative was located. The extra two kilometres to San Vicente would have crossed the district's administrative authority; moreover, there was no women's cooperative there. The social identity of the cooperative gave the cooperative symbolic capital that they converted into transportation infrastructure. Buying agents, tour buses, and other resources more easily arrived in Guaitil, products more easily travelled outwards, and more buyers returned. Guaitil's new road privileged its artisans in commercial markets.

An eco-museum for San Vicente?

No such demonstrations are regularly performed in the neighbouring village of San Vicente. San Vicente is not on the tourism maps, one informant explains (Informant interview, 1 April 2003, San Vicente). The tour buses usually go to Guaitil listed on the local tourist maps. The paved road from the main highway stops at Guaitil's village square and most international tourists do not want to drive the extra two kilometres along an unpaved road to see more of the same.

San Vicente's relative disadvantage might change if political promises can be believed. One informant predicts that a paved road will come to San Vicente in the next few years. He also anticipates that a museum on Chorotegan history, art, and culture will be built in the disadvantaged San Vicente. *Almost nine years ago* the legislature approved the museum's construction. And government officials now say that a road will be paved linking San Vicente to Guaitil. If the state backs up its plans with economic resources, 'the last shall be first and the first last': 'The tours will come here for the museum and to see demonstrations of how the pottery is made. It will finally be *our* turn' (Informant interview, 3 April 2003a, San Vicente). The artisans

themselves recognize that the possibility of markets depends largely on the physical infrastructure that links the village to larger circuits of commerce and the promotion of their village's name by such large organizations as the state's tourism authority. Otherwise, the artisans have an abundance of products but a scarcity of markets.

The clay crisis

Just as generously as the market has given these artisans new economic opportunities, it greedily threatens to snatch them away. Classic liberalism claims that small governments and more open markets will lead to economic freedom and local development. However, these artisans find themselves under a Tantalusian curse. To punish Tantalus for his misbehaviour at the dining table, the gods confined him in a pool of water that drains away whenever he bends to drink. Above Tantalus hangs ripe fruit, but the wind blows the branches away from Tantalus' up-reaching hands. Paradoxically, the notion that global markets necessarily lead to economic freedom has left many of the artisans under the Tantalusian curse. The artisans can see the fruits of the global market but lack the means to touch them. With each effort to realize globalization's promises, the artisans find the fruit tauntingly visible and inaccessible.

Left to the whims of the market, these indigenous artisans find the paths to economic opportunity blocked. An informant in Guaitil described the obstacles to upgrading his enterprise:

[In the late 1990s] there were lots of tourists. Some of them wanted us to export our goods to the United States. So we started making an application to get an export code from the government over a year ago The application isn't difficult, and with the code we can get help from the government to export Then came the clay emergency. The place where we have always found our clay is owned by the Solorzano family. . . . The clay from other places is of lower quality. The price keeps going up, but we pay for it. Now the owner insists on selling us the entire mine. He wants 70 or 80 million for it. How can we afford that? So now we have to deal with the clay problem and have put the application for an export code on hold. What good is an export code if we don't have clay? (Informant interview, Guaitil, Costa Rica, 15 March 2003)

The clay at the traditional site is of higher quality. Other sources of clay are available, but the pottery made with such lower quality clay explodes in the kiln more often. The clay mine is located near the indigenous burial grounds, and so the mine is associated with those inputs that *have always been* used. Finding substitutes is more complex

than the stated 'quality' complaint suggests: the artisans have invested meaning into the clay mine because of its proximity to the ancient Chorotegan burial ground.

The clay seems to have always been a point of contention. Doris Stone's investigation in San Vicente in the late 1940s reveals that the locals complained about the price of the clay. Leonista Acosta owned the mine in the 40s, and arguments would erupt because she allowed some families to extract clay for free, while others had to pay. The villagers felt that extraction was a community right for all the artisans (Stone 1950, p. 272). Now everyone pays to extract from the mine. However, the present owner, don Marcos Solarzano, considers the price so low that it might as well be a gift.

A 'gift' grudgingly given, the clay has not improved the economic well-being of the present landowner. His mother struggled to buy the land and has now passed the land to him. She is in her nineties and deserves something for her life of toil, don Marcos reasons. She and her descendants should benefit financially from owning the land, and since only the villagers of San Vicente and Guaitil are using the mine, they should buy it. He owns little; more would be better:

They are the ones who benefit from the mine. Is it right that they benefit, and I get nothing? Is it right that we are poor [while some of those who use the mine are not]? It is not *just*. And I own this mine. I have a right to do with it as I please. (Interview with don Marcos Solarzano, San Vicente, Costa Rica, 8 April 2003)

The villagers have asked the government to purchase the mine as a gift to the artisans in both villages. They are willing to pay for the use of the mine, but they cannot afford to buy the mine. Even the government has declared the price too high. The villagers fear that they will lose this valuable resource and have embarked on a campaign to save the clay.

The campaign has taken the villagers to the capital city in protest. A group of sixty people took the four and a half hour trek to San José to meet the Minister of Culture on 24 October 2002. If this primary input is not protected, residents argued, Guaitil and San Vicente would be confronted with unemployment, large-scale emigration, and the associated problems of drug addiction, alcoholism, and prostitution. Moreover, in an area that perpetuates part of the national heritage, there is more at stake than a few unfortunate artisans (Hernández Cerdas 2002, p. 6). At stake is the nation's cultural heritage.

On the basis of cultural heritage, the newspapers and television stations have drawn attention to the clay emergency. In a televised interview, the President of Costa Rica declared the heritage of the Chorotegans a precious, national resource. Like the natural environ-

ment that the nation holds so dear, Chorotegan culture requires national protection.⁶ While the government agrees that the village crafts are unique and merit special assistance, material assistance has not materialized. In a downsized state, nothing can come of nothing.

Conclusion

As the villagers confront their clay crisis, they come to understand what Joseph Schumpeter meant by creative destruction. The global market creates new opportunities for economic advancement, but these opportunities draw into the competitive field other artisans, suppliers, tourist companies, governmental and nongovernmental agents. The artisans' success has made them more vulnerable as the owner of the clay mine now wants to sell them the mine rather than parcels of clay. How the artisans wage the battle to maintain their access to the clay depends on the nation-state's changing image of itself and its newfound desire to celebrate the different cultural traditions occupying the isthmus.

The nation-state's image of itself has resulted in individual behaviours and state-level interventions that maintained that image. Before the debt crisis of the 1980s, the national newspaper's silence on indigenous crafts would indicate that in the national imagination, indigenous crafts were neither contributing significant income for local communities nor fostering any growth of national pride. The reason for this way of seeing indigenous crafts would be that the indigenous peoples were few and their craft traditions simply did not stand out in the international market as historically significant, when compared to neighbouring El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. But this definition of the situation ignores the pride of place Costa Rican crafts held at the World's Fair at the turn of the century and takes for granted the state interventions meant to isolate indigenous peoples and to fortify a single national identity.

The debt crisis of the 1980s was one of the early vales of destruction blowing through the isthmus bringing new opportunities to the artisans and forcing the state to change the way it defined itself culturally. The state relied on international tourism to provide its coffers with foreign currency. As tourists entered Costa Rica's beaches and jungles, they discovered the indigenous crafts. As subsistence farming became less viable, the tourist craft market moved in to replace it and to provide rural inhabitants with a means to survive.

The sale of indigenous crafts to tourists put the nation's identity on trial. Well known for its democratic traditions and its protection of social and human rights, the state had to reconcile its recognition as

being the Switzerland of Central America with its silence on indigenous people within its own territory. By 1994 the state was ready to define itself as a multicultural Republic and to recognize the contributions of the different ethnic groups to the richness of Costa Rican history and social life. This recognition made indigenous crafts visible to tour operators and to the public at large. For a long time, many Costa Ricans simply did not know that their indigenous crafts provided them with a historical link to the Chorotega and the Olmec.

As the appreciation of the Other increased, so too did the state's interventions in indigenous communities. To maintain their country's international reputation as a northern European type of social democracy in the middle of Central America, and to fulfil their moral obligation to social equity, Costa Rican politicians shrewdly targeted the most vulnerable elements of society for intervention. Although the cultural richness of indigenous groups had come to the attention of the state, the state's logic for intervention did not depend on ethnic or racial imperatives. Instead, gender equity and the urban-rural divide drove policy interventions. In the context of indigenous pottery, the sex of the artisans gave the villagers one of their first breaks—a paved road to improve commerce.

The greatest difference between the two villages is the paved road that links Guaitil to the main highway at the exclusion of San Vicente. Although information about how Guaitil obtained the paved road is scarce, political connections do not seem to be an important factor. Congresswoman Odette Hector Marín lobbied for the paved road on Guaitil's behalf because she wanted to support the women's ceramics cooperative. In other words, the mission of the cooperative to empower women resonated with the congresswoman and with the nation's self-perception. The artisans received market support for the women's empowerment mission, not for a revitalization of indigenous culture.

By coincidence, the cultural-political interests of the state (gender equity) and the composition of the pottery cooperative in Guaitil (mostly women) led the state to intervene in the cottage-industries of Guaitil. As more outsiders encountered the women's cooperative in Guaitil, the villagers came to understand the cultural significance of 'authentic' indigenous pottery and to use cultural pluralism as the basis for the village's importance to the nation's identity and, therefore, its worthiness for financial assistance. In response to changes in the macro-economy and to the influx of tourists who themselves valued indigenous pottery, the cultural-political interests of the state evolved to include the preservation and promotion of indigenous cultures. These goals and the evolving national identity that gave voice to them could not have been predicted before the various actors and institu-

tions came into contact with one another. The goals were emergent and the means to achieve them improvised, yet the nation-state's cultural identity served as the overarching framework influencing which communities the state would target and in what ways the state would intervene in them.

To conclude, the article has offered ethnographic and historical evidence to document how changes in the global economy can overturn national and local hierarchies and can revive local traditions. However, as the literature on the sociology of markets has shown, market forces are not impersonal, devoid of human foibles or protected from historical contingencies. A motley collection of actors and institutions puts the dynamics of creation and destruction into play. At close range, one observes how artisans, international tourists, and government institutions respond to macro-level changes in the economy and to overarching understandings of the nation's identity. In managing how it represents its cultural heritage, the nation-state offers new tools to actors and institutions for constructing niche markets and for mobilizing scarce resources that would otherwise have lain dormant. These new opportunities soon give way to new threats, prompting grassroots responses. As the actors improvise and muddle through unforeseen scenarios, they may develop other goals, try new tactics, or even change course. Some might react to these changes by intensifying production or finding ways to lower their production costs. Others might respond creatively, acting outside the realm of existing practices and incurring greater risks. Neither triumph nor doom is guaranteed.

This study does not deny that international tourism and global markets can revive local traditions and community economies; however, the revival is shaped by the conditions under which the communities labour and by the state's commitment to maintaining, protecting, and presenting the nation's identity. In the case of Costa Rica, the community with the better infrastructure and with more favourable government interventions is also the site that benefits most from the new crafts market. Therefore, those who claim that global markets promote creative freedom and community development should remember that talented individuals are limited by their local infrastructure and by the national consensus concerning the group's contributions to the nation's cultural heritage.

How the nation defines its cultural heritage affects the structure of opportunity for its inhabitants, especially those poised to enter cultural commodity markets. These understandings adapt to changes in the macro-economy, but the manner in which the adaptation occurs is, in part, a product of the nation's identity. With reluctance, the Costa Rican state has recognized indigenous culture as a national asset and has thereby given the artisans a basis to make claims on the state.

Earlier understandings of national identity gave the state the rationale to provide the community with the physical infrastructure to build a marketplace. To the extent that the nation's identity allows indigenous artisans to be seen in a positive light (if seen at all), the state equips the artisans to confront the vale of destruction with some likelihood of success.

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Notes

1. The recent prize-winning novel, *Limon Blues*, focuses on the Afro-Caribbeans and the racial ideology in Costa Rica, Ana Cristina Rossi, *Limon Blues* (San José: Alfaguara, 2002); During my field study (February to April 2003), dark-complexioned Costa Ricans would comment upon my blackness as an African-American and would inform me of the subtle racism they have experienced, especially when encountering inhabitants of the Central Valley.
2. Law Number 7427 promulgated 18 August 1994.
3. Institute for Costa Rican Tourism [ICT] 2000. '*Encuesta Aérea de no Residentes en Costa Rica: Temporada Turística Alta 2000*' (Microsoft Word document, sent to me by email from Hazel Mendez, ICT, 5 May 2003) Based on 1,500 interviews with residents of the United States, Canada, and other parts of Latin America. '*Las múltiples actividades practicadas por los vacacionistas enfatizan el concepto de Costa Rica como destino con múltiples productos turísticos. Un 72,5% realizó actividades de sol y playa; las actividades relacionadas con el ecoturismo presentan porcentajes significativos, un 53,8% de los vacacionistas realizó caminatas por senderos, un 48,2% hizo observación de la flora y la fauna, un 35,9% observación de aves. Otras actividades importantes son el Surf (un 12,3%), el buceo (14,2%), los rápidos de los ríos (10,8%). En esta ocasión, se aprovechó la encuesta para conocer el porcentaje de viajeros bajo la modalidad turismo de incentivos, sólo un 1,3% respondió que viajaba bajo esta modalidad*' [3].
4. Researcher: *Cuando ya estaba Coopearte ya empezó el turismo? Informant: Sí ya empezó el turismo porque ya esto lo vio el gobierno y todo salió, salió a otros países y el turismo vino. Si así fue pero ya después de que nosotros el turismo siempre viene. Y ahora poco a poco está viniendo, ahora vienen una o dos busetas. Unas compran, otros no pero siempre viene gente así . . .* [Informant interview 21 March 2003, Guaitil]
5. Congreso 1982–1986; *Una de las Diputados de Guanacaste*, Odette Héctor Marín.
6. Wendy Cruz, 'The Seven Days Series of Teletica News' 2002. The author thanks Ms. Cruz, the news anchor, for her help and her insight. The author also thanks Vivian Solano from the Department of Education at the Gold Museum, San José.

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