

## *Taquile Entretejidos*

### Identity Construction and Presentation in Touristy Taquile Island



**Master Latin American and Caribbean Studies**

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Research Location: Taquile, Peru

Research duration: January 31 till 3 May 2010

## **Abstract**

This study provides an insight in how the local Peruvian community Taquile experiences and responds on tourism. A demonstration of the local voice contributes to a better understanding of the social, economical and cultural impact of mass tourism on host communities in the modern globalizing world of today. Key concepts are identity, authenticity and commoditization. In literature the tendency is to consider commoditization as a negative effect of tourism, however, in this study it will become clear that commercialization of culture does not stand equal to cultural devaluation, because there are many dimensions of identity and authenticity. On Taquile tourism was seen as a new strategy to survive, and on the longer term, to create a better future, to modernize. The interaction between Taquileans and tourism related others like tourists, guides, agencies, NGO's etc. had forced the islander to reflect upon themselves and to actually define their cultural identity: who are we, and how do we present ourselves? The presentation of their cultural identity is constructed through a negotiation between the islanders and tourism related actors about the preferences, expectations and interpretations of concepts like cultural identity and authenticity.

**Key words:** Tourism, Identity, Authenticity, Commoditization, Performance, Front and backstage, Globalization, Modernization

## Preface



**R**esearch about the Self has existed as long as humanity can reflect upon him/herself and will always exist, because apart from the fact that it the most interesting thing to try to understand, it is intangible. Just when you think you grabbed the essence of the Self and try to verbalize it, it has already evolved. It is therefore inevitable that a researcher will have to generalize if he talks about social identity or about an impact on local identity. However, this doesn't make the data irrelevant. In this study local collective identity is shaped by the personal voices from the Taquileans, which together represent the variety of mindsets and shows how time is being fought or allowed to change things. Like every identity, it is subjected to time and time is a condition for change. Time is running fast and because of globalization and technological advances, change might take place even quicker.

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## Introduction



In 1960 an American adventurer traveled the Peruvian waters in a sailing boat from cane. After a long and exhausting journey of twelve hours on the Titicaca Lake he reached the beautiful Island Taquile. He didn't receive a very warm welcome, since the Islanders had been through a bloody and repressive history. The Incas were conquered by the Spaniards and for a fair period of time they lived under the regime of several Spanish harsh rulers, and later by despotic powerful *hacendados*, landowners. In 1930 the islanders started a court battle to claim back legally their land, and only in 1970 they gained officially title to Taquilean terrain. Euphemistically stated, they weren't really happy with this new white outsider. The Taquileans were afraid that this man could influence the weather, bring bad luck and even cause a bad harvest! However, there were three men who saw an opportunity in his visit. An opportunity to make money, to progress. And so it went, Alejandro Flores and two friends built facilities for the few tourists who followed later, they didn't believe in the negative intentions of these tourists, but in the opportunity to build on a better future.

Tourism is probably one of the quickest growing modern industries in the globalizing world (Simons 2008). For national and local governments of developing countries is the expansion and development of the tourism industry an important aspect of policy and considered as an alternative income-strategy instead of the heavy industry (Simons 2008). Despite its widespread global influence and constant expansion, tourism has become only recently a research subject by anthropologists (Burns 2004). For a long period of time, tourism was considered as an 'activity of economics, rather than of people' (Burns 2004:2). The main tendency in early literature was about the negative economical effects of tourism. Anthropologists like Turner & Asch (1975), Smith (1978) argued tourism to be a negative case because the economical benefits did often not 'trickle down' into the local host community (Burns 2004: 5). They claimed that when the tourism industry is managed by external

actors, 'tourism becomes a form of imperialism and may develop into neocolonialism' (Burns 2004:5). These authors write as if exploitation is something that overcomes the local people. Later studies have included the cultural impact of tourism. Authors like Greenwood (1989) and Turner and Ash (1975), again mainly focused on the negative effects of commercialism of culture. The literature about tourism is mostly a statement about positive and negative effects. The authors rarely or don't write about local participation in modernization processes and their responsibilities. I will try to understand the interaction between both, local actors and non-local actors.

The impact of tourism penetrates into all aspects of society and therefore I agree with Burns (2004) in her statement to approach tourism as an all-encompassing phenomenon that has effect on economical, political cultural and social level and should be understood in the context of globalization and modernization. My focus in this thesis will be on the social, cultural and economical aspects of society. I will reveal on which manners these aspects of society are characterized by tensions between traditional features and modern demands, which arise under the influence of tourism.

The social relevance of this study is the actuality of the theme. Globalization has always existed; think of the 'discovery' of America and the centuries old pilgrim routes. However, the last decade's globalization is an accelerating process in which the cultural impact is sensible in even the smallest communities in the world. Taquile is one of the many Peruvian communities that use tourism as a survival and development strategy. The majority of the inhabitants are nowadays depending on tourism.

### **Globalization and cultural change**

As culture in earlier times was considered to be indissoluble connected to a place, a territory, nowadays it is unreasonable to think of culture in strict localized terms, or to view it as 'a natural property of a spatially circumscribed population' (Ida & Rosaldo 2008:13). We see two tendencies to approach the globalizing process with respect to culture. On one hand, anthropologists conceptualize this process as 'deterritorialization' of culture, which refers to a general weakening of the ties

between culture and place. This means that 'cultural objects and subjects are becoming disconnected from fixed locations in space and time and can transcend territory boundaries' (Ida & Rosaldo 2008:14). This however, does not mean that globalization leads to some homogenous global culture (Beck 2000:54). Although mass production of cultural symbols like the M of MacDonald or Coca Cola are world widely recognized, they are localized and accessible in very specific space and time contexts. On the other hand, anthropologists speak of 'reterritorialization' of culture, which refers to 'relocalizing' culture in specific cultural environments. They argue that 'although the ties between culture and place are weakening, the connection will never completely break' (Ida & Rosaldo 2008). With other words, culture continues to have a territorial existence, though a relative unstable one. In this study I will attempt to find out under what conditions certain cultural features stay, which transform or even disappear and which new cultural features are adapted.

### **Authenticity and Commoditization**

There are many types of tourism and many types of tourists. The type of tourist I focus on is the 'ethnic tourist': someone who is actively searching for 'the ethnical and exotic' in the undamaged and most authentic form. This is also the way Taquile is promoted in travel guides and promotion folders and in their own promotion video. The host community reacts on this authenticity request. There are different opinions about how authenticity should be approached. MacCannell (1973), who introduced the concept in tourist studies, presents an essentialist approach: he ascribes the authentic to objects, places and other times as it was an essential feature of these and not an idea or experience of contemporary Western culture (Olsen 2002:161). Other authors however, like Bruner (1994, 2001), Cohen (1988) and Olsen (2002), prefer a constructional approach: they argue that authenticity is a socially constructed concept that is not given but 'negotiable'. They say that authenticity is something that emerges and can change in social processes. Wang (1999, 2000), though, argues that an existentialist approach to authenticity is more valid, because authenticity is also about the 'state of being', about what tourists *believe* to be authentic. This brings us to 'staged authenticity' (MacCannell 1991), which means that tourists only see a *part* of 'real life' of indigenous people. But the locals decide which part and how it is presented. They might present a cultural trait as

authentic, part of real life, while in reality, it is a performance (Goffman 1959) invented for tourists. With other words, authenticity is a construction that is influenced by subjective personal and social experiences and ideas of tourists and locals and by more general views on creativity. MacCannell, Bruner et. Al. and Wang all talk about different dimensions of authenticity, which don't exclude one another. But how do we use this concept in research? Cohen (1988) suggests that this concept is only useful if one investigates whether the local people use the concept, and if they do, how do they interpret 'authentic' and 'authenticity' in their context?

The quest for authenticity in tourism can lead to commercialism from culture, in literature indicated with the term commoditization. Commoditization is the 'process of making something, an event, ritual, performance or even people into commodity, an article of trade, evaluated in terms of their exchange value' (Kosters 2008:15). Tourism is the industry that sells so-called authentic experiences, and it is therefore interesting to see whether the meaning of products and experiences change once they become commoditized under the influence of tourism. Cohen (1988) states, that 'commoditization can lead to a revival of cultural and traditional elements and give them new meaning as soon as they become touristy attractions. On the other hand, tourists are selective in what they want, which can lead to a loss of cultural meaning in terms of concrete objects and rituals, and can finally turn into loss or change of cultural identity' (Cohen 1988:380) Greenwood (cited in Cohen 1988:381), argues that 'as soon as cultural products become commoditized it loses its intrinsic meaning and significance for the local people, which consequently lead to less enthusiasm for producing it.' Cohen argues that researchers should assume that the impact of commoditization on the meaning and authenticity of products, to be destructive, but should be looked at 'within an emic, processual, and comparative framework' (1988:383). The question that rises here is: what is the role and responsibility of the local people in the commoditization process, and how do they experience the fact that their culture becomes their work? In this study I will analyze in what context commoditization is taking place and what this means for the daily life of local people.



### **Identity construction as a basic principle**

The basic principle of this study is the concept identity construction. The constitutive elements of local identity will form the red line through the thesis and serves as a framework through which I approach the concepts of authenticity and commoditization in the tourism context. The dynamics of the constitutive elements of local identity are based on a compilation of theories about the Self from several authors as I will explain. According to Larrain (2000) identity should be seen as a social process of construction, consisting of three constitutive components. First, individuals identify themselves with some qualities in terms of culturally determined shared social categories such as gender, class, religion, sexuality, nationality or profession. Secondly, material elements, including the body and other material possessions provide the person vital elements of self-recognition. The third constitutive element in the construction of identity is 'the other', which has two functions: we internalize opinions, expectations or attitudes from others we find important and we use the other to distinct ourselves from (Larrain 2000). Erikson states that in the process of identification 'the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him' (Erikson 1968: 22). He is emphasizing the importance of the environment that not only surrounds us but is also within us. With other words, the construction of identity is an inter-subjective process of mutual recognition (Larrain 2000: 27).

According to Honneth (1995), self-recognition has three forms: self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. Simultaneously, there are three forms of dis-respect that can damage the self-recognition and can lead to reevaluation of one's own culture or adaptation to the dominant culture. The first form of disrespect is 'physical abuse or threats to the physical integrity of a person can affect the self-confidence of the subject.' Second, 'systematic and structural exclusion of a person from having certain rights can damage the self-respect.' The third form is 'cultural devaluation of certain modes of life or beliefs, which are considered to be inferior or deficient. This prevents the subject from giving social value or esteem to his or her contributions and abilities' (Honneth in Larrain 2000: 27). The three forms of disrespect form the base of struggle for self-recognition. Honneth explains this by the distinction between Me and I. 'The Me reflects expectations others have of me, while the I actively seeks a wider recognition of my rights as part of a future ideal

community' (Honneth 1968: 77-85). This idea also reveals a time dimension in the construction of identity, which is not only formed by *that what is*, but also by historical occurrences and future desires.

My theoretical objective is to provide an insight in how local communities experience and respond to tourism and not to solely demonstrate the positive and negative effects of tourism. It will become clear how tourism affects identity construction and identity presentation. Furthermore I will provide insight in where tourism creates social, economical en cultural tensions. To do so I will base myself on the results of my case study with the central question: What is the social, economical and cultural impact of tourism on identity construction and presentation of the local inhabitants of Taquile Island?

There are several motives why Taquile is a suitable place. Taquile is one of the many communities in Latin America where tourism is flourishing. Taquile is part of the Gringo trail in Peru and is located between the famous touristy places Arequipa, Cuzco and Copacabana- the latter is located in Bolivia. In the last decades the amount of visitors increased from about 5.000 in 1990 till 50.000 tourists in 2000 and onwards (Vassi 2004). In the last fifteen years is the population duplicated. The scarcity of land for private consumption forced the Taquileans to look for alternative ways to survive. Tourism embodied this new alternative. Its geographical location adds an interesting dimension in the study about the impact of tourism on identity and representation. The simple fact that they are 3,5 hours in distance away from the modern mainland may affect the rapidness of modernization on the island in physical and material sense, but also *in the mind* of the inhabitants. Another interesting aspect of Taquile is the strong communal organization of society. The modern tourism industry, regulated on the principle of the free market is testing the community sense of the islanders.

### **Research Population & Methodology**

The main research population is the islanders. However tourism is a communal resource- which means that everybody of the community is obliged to work one week in the communal restaurant and two weeks in the communal handicraft market- some are more active than others. In the 90s and 80s tourism increased

rapidly and almost all inhabitants started to build facilities for tourists. In the late nineties agencies changed their offer with the result that tourists are now visiting the Floating Islands (Uros), then they stay overnight at the biggest island Amantaní and finally visit the neighbor island Taquile solely to have lunch. This means that the majority of the accommodation facilities on the island are out of use. The main focus in my research is on people who are mainly actively participating in tourism: people who own a restaurant, accommodation, or transport, but also people who are preparing a future in tourism. They could tell me how they experience the new professions and developments and they could give me insight in the social relations between them and tourism related others like guides and the NGO. I included also people who were less active in tourism to get a completer image of what had changed so far, and how they experience changes.

The key informants were members of the one and only NGO -consisting of a Danish part Xcis, and its Bolivian partner Praya-, and Arrufo, head of the anthropology department from the University of Puno. Kristina, Jonas, and Jacob from Xcis gave me access to join their activities now and then and could introduce me to some important locals, which later became also my informants. We exchanged experiences, which gave us insight in the influences of our personal biases and we helped each other to get rid of this, as far as possible. Mauje, who worked for the Bolivian partner of Xcis gave me permission to join weekly reunions from young guides. Some of the guides became informants. Arrufo, experienced anthropologist, gave me insight in the ways the Taquileans are related to the NGO's and the university.

I used several methods to obtain my data for different goals. One research method was *open observation*, or *participant observation*: a method 'in which the researcher participates in daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as on of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture' (De Walt &De Walt 2002: 1) Participant observation is thus a way to create a network, collect data, to recognize social relations and to develop a sense for space and *ambiance*. Besides, it gives me the opportunity to compare my material from interviews with the 'reality'.

Taquile and Andean communities in general, is known for its closeness, which explains why one should sometimes invest time and effort to obtain more personal information. A fair amount of my time during the first week was spending on walking around on the island to have *informal conversations* and *interviews* with people I met on my way, on the plaza, in the shops or in the communal restaurant and handicraft market. These informal conversations, “in which the researcher is not necessarily directing the topics for discussion, but is following the points raised by another person during the natural flow of conversation”, contributed to a general image of the Island and its people and their daily activities. Apart from the informal conversations I had with random people on the island, I stayed with four different families for a longer period of time (1-2 weeks). The duration of my time with the families created mutual trust and interest. This gave me the possibility to have more in depth conversations with family members about all kinds of personal, familial and communal matters. In week two I could participate in Carnival in traditional clothes. Unfortunately, my condition wasn't that well to participate all day, walking and drinking till midnight, but the reaction of the people was positive and gave me recognition. I could join and observe about ten performances people gave for tourists and had the opportunity to cook with the different guest families. The access I gained to their kitchens gave me an insight in how backstage live is organized.

If I met someone who I wanted to ask more than time permitted at that moment we made an appointment to have *structured or semi structured interviews*, which means that “the researcher has a plan for the interview and a guide with questions to increase the likelihood to cover the topics in all interviews more or less the same way” (De Welt & De Welt 2002:159). On the island, this method contributed to a more official image about me as a researcher and not just someone who is interested. Especially for authorities this was important because I noticed that they took me more serious. However this reputation could also have worked against me in some cases, if they experienced this as more threatening than when they considered me to be just an ordinary person, who won't need their comments for personal interest. It was a useful method to have with people living in Puno, because there was a bigger change that I would not see them more than once.

One method I used was *visual ethnography*. This is a method in which the researcher makes use of photography or video. The images contribute to the production of ethnographic knowledge. (Pink 2002) I handed over five throw-away cameras to my informants with the final objective to achieve inside information about important aspects of their lives. I asked them to make pictures of anything that is meaningful for them on personal and social level: of what is important for them in their house and in the village. I had two young informants and three older informants who did the assignment. The reason I picked them was because I knew from three of them that they could handle a camera. With the other two, I had a really good relation and they wanted to help me. I developed the pictures and discussed the images in *semi structured interviews*. This way they will give me their own interpretations and narrative and give ethnographic meaning to the images, which I could use as information about the constitutive elements of identity construction on personal and social level. These together give me information about the construction of a 'local identity'.

### **Structure**

The thesis consists of two parts: The construction of the Self and The construction of Authenticity. In **Part I** I will elaborate the most important building blocks of Taquilean local identity which are under the influence of tourism in state of revision. In the first section I will describe their *worldview* from which the fundament of their society is derived. Reciprocity, community sense and the control of change are three important phenomena that undergo change. In the second section I will describe the importance of '*the others*'. The others are tourists, tourism related actors and the other within the community. A description of the others will give a better understanding of the local Taquilean identity because 'the other' is mirroring the Taquilean. I will show how the local people are searching for a balance between traditional traits and modernity, between community sense and individual interests and between local preferences and demands from actors outside the island like tourists, NGO's and agencies.

In **Part II** I will analyze how the meaning of authenticity has been changed under tourism. It seems that authenticity before tourism was something they fought for, something that was threatened under the repressive regimes of the Spaniards and landlords. Tourism however, is actually searching and questioning for authenticity. In

the first part I will describe on what way Taquileans use the concept authenticity by analyzing aspects of live that occur backstage, in the private spheres, and frontstage, the space accessible for the tourists. In the second section I analyze the impact of commoditization on daily live and what this means for their perception of authenticity and identity.

# I

## Construction of the Self

*No somos nada sin turistas*

*(Santiago, Taquile 2010)*

## Worldview



The solar panel, battery and connection cables lay on a table. On the ground Esteban and his wife had spread out the price they were going to pay for the light: textiles; hats, bags, jumpers, gloves, cloths and blankets. Years of work of the family were now rewarded for years of light. For the first time in his life they were going to have artificial light in the chilly evenings. Esteban opened his *chuspa*<sup>1</sup>, took a handful of coca leaves and put it in the pocket of Samuel, who did the same. As a reaction everybody opened his or her bag to grab some leaves to put the hand in one others bag as proof of friendship and happiness. This ritual was repeated many times. When Samuel and his wife Teira decided what textiles they would bring home, the agreement was celebrated with soda and beer. A bottle of Coca Cola filled a plastic cup. Esteban dropped some on the ground to *Pachamama* as proof of respect and gratitude. He drunk a little and then threw the rest of the soda with an elegant but firm wave of his arm on the ground outside the room. We followed his example. When we all thanked *Pachamama*<sup>2</sup> we had to bless the technological miracle. Esteban had a small cloth with coca leaves he put on the table. He studied the leaves, picked the three best looking and fondled the solar panel, quietly mumbling prayers in Quechua. I prayed the solar panel would never be hit by lightening. When this finished, the coca bags were opened again, hugs were given and a spontaneous applause arose. In the next round we blessed the solar panel by splattering Cola and beer with our fingers, saying one more prayer. The whole ritual took two hours; every part of the ritual was practiced with patience, great attention and love for mother earth. The concluding piece of the celebration was a big lunch for us all. At noon, we wanted to go for another appointment, but we were seriously begged to stay. We were not allowed to leave before lunch, and the sincerity in their eyes made us stay.

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<sup>1</sup> A small bag, woven by the islanders in which they carry coca leaves. When men greet each other they take out some leaves and put it in the others his cocabag. It is a gesture of kindness and trust and exclusively belongs to the Island.

<sup>2</sup> *Pachamama*: mother earth.



Jacob, a Danish anthropology student, and I were invited by two Americans, Samuel and Teira, to join the solar panel trade. They have been traveling to Taquile many times and traded more than a dozen of solar panels to Taquilean families.



*Foto 1. Esteban is blessing the Solar Panel with Cola. In olden times it would have been 'Chicha', brewed in various degrees of alcoholic strength. However, it takes several days to brew Chica from various grains. Nowadays bringing Gaseosa y Cerveza from Puno is so easy, with boats traveling daily, that few people bother to brew their own. Image taken by the author, Taquile, March 2010*

In this illustration, modernity and the Andean tradition come together. According to Quijano (1993) modernity in Latin America was brought with the arrival of the Spaniards. An important change implemented by the Spaniards was the mind shift from the past to the future. Modernity is still characterized by its focus on the future (Quijano 1993). On Taquile identity construction is characterized by a constant navigating between old traditions and adaptation to new circumstances. But what are these old traditions? According to Quijano (1993) Andean social institutions and forms of thought, based on the Pre Colombian empires, are established around reciprocity and solidarity, community sense, the control of change, connection to the world. This is also resulting in my case study as I will elaborate in this section, however, as I will show, under influence of tourism, which can be considered as a

local source for modernization on Taquile island, the meaning and interpretation of these concepts have been changed in the new context of tourism.

### 1.1 Reciprocity

During an interview with Señor Zenong el Tipo<sup>3</sup>, manager of tourism on Taquile, he told me that the Taquilean community is socially organized on the principle that “when I help you, you help me”. Out of which the help exists depends on the participants. Zenong explained that he once helped a friend building his house in Puno on the mainland. Now Zenong helps his friend to build a house on Taquile. “Reciprocity between islanders never involves money but is about *mita*, tasks, effort, manpower.”<sup>4</sup> One will practice reciprocity by helping a friend or family member with a task that costs about the same effort. Zenong wasn’t really happy that he had to contribute to the construction of this friend’s house because it is made of concrete, a material that is officially forbidden on Taquile because it would damage the authentic image of the island.<sup>5</sup> Zenong doesn’t like the fact he makes his house of concrete, but because he has this social contract with his friend, based on the reciprocity principle he feels obligated to contribute. “I was chosen to bless the house, although I am against concrete, he helped me too, and so I couldn’t refuse when he asked me.”

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<sup>3</sup> Interview, 3 March 2010 with Zenong el Tipo, immigrant from Amantaní, the neighbor island. He is an authority: manager of tourism

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Zenong el Tipo. 3 March 2010.

<sup>5</sup> I will deepen the theme authenticity in the second part of the study.



*Foto 2. Image taken by Zenong el Tipo, Taquile March 2010. Left in the blue and white striped shirt is Eliseo, his friend.*

Within the community, reciprocity is based on a strong social fundament. In the tourism sector however, I noticed that they give a different meaning to reciprocity: more business orientated. The more business oriented interaction takes especially place between Taquileans and others from the mainland. If Taquileans have to arrange tourist related business between islanders, than the social component predominates. This means for instance, that a family with a lack of space distributes a group of tourists over its family, friends and godparents. Not the money is spread, but work. However, in case of envy or conflict people can act more businesslike and lack the moral codes of social reciprocity. Elias<sup>6</sup>, my guest father told me one day that his uncle Carlixto, always excludes him and his wife in the distribution of tourists, because he has a bad relationship with his dad (the brother of Carlixto).

Based on the results of the many interviews and conversations I had with people who are active in tourism, we could make a distinction between active and passive reciprocity: reciprocity within the community is active, because the effort people make is concrete and visible at the moment of transaction, while reciprocity in relation to the outside world is passive, for the following reason: the reciprocal relation is no longer between friends and family with whom you have to maintain an

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<sup>6</sup> Conversation 3 April 2010. Elias was my first guest father. 17 years old.

active relation on the island, but with (often unknown) actors from different places and different mindsets, which enlarges the social distance and decreases the intensity of the relationship and, consequently, of the reciprocity. The economical transaction is abstract and although money is produced by energy, it is not active and visible at the moment of transaction. I'll come back to the reciprocity principle in the section 'tourists and Taquileans', and provide an elaborated concrete example of this phenomenon. The relation between tourists and Taquileans can change from passive to active when tourists spend a longer period with a family. After three weeks I developed three photos for my first guest family. I saw they were very happy. Then they looked at each other, said something in Quechua, went away, and came back with a great pair of colorful gloves. Towards foreigners who have spent a longer period of time with a family, social reciprocity becomes one way of expressing their feelings. Their textiles are an expression of gratitude and friendship.

## **1.2 Community sense**

Taquile is a community in which the community sense is important. The community sense means that all inhabitants contribute to the community in different ways. One way is that men and women do all kinds of physical work to benefit the way of living on the island. They work together to construct and improve infrastructure on the island. The community sense also refers to the social dimension of reciprocity as I explained earlier: family and friends help each other to build houses, toilets, and kitchens. The community sense is still a strong component in the relative new touristy context: together they build accommodations, stores and restaurants.

Another dimension of community sense in the tourism context is the forming of cooperatives. In the late seventies, the islanders pooled money to buy boats from local shipbuilders. The Ministry of Tourism and the Peruvian Coast Guard licensed them to carry passengers and regulated fares. The Taquileans were striving for absolute control over the transport to their Island and but have no longer the monopoly on transport (Zorn 2004: 114). Apart from transport they also created communal business including overnight stays by people at home on a rotary base, a communal restaurant and a textile market.

Another interpretation of community sense on Taquile is collective thinking. This is especially visible in the tourism context. Curious is that the island counts more than 35 restaurants which all offer one and the same meal every day. They all serve *quinod*<sup>7</sup> soup with bread and *aji*<sup>8</sup> as starter, trout or kingfish with rice and potatoes as main dish and tea or coffee to end with. During my stay Xcis, in cooperation with the authorities and the restaurant association, have been implemented a rotation system, which means that all restaurants around the plaza (36) are divided in *abajo* and *arriba* (lower located restaurants and upper located restaurants). Each week half of the restaurants around the plaza are open to receive a group of tourists. This collective way of organizing is partially explained during an interview with Arrufo<sup>9</sup>, he said that when one Taquilean does something that has success, others will follow on exactly the same way. Mourik<sup>10</sup> added in a different interview that this copy behavior is coming forth from the necessity of a strong collective certainty. 'Efficiency is for them not the highest feasible profit, but means a more general social and economic certainty to survive every week and to be accepted by the others in the community.' They rather do the same, which will always be accepted in the community, than take personal economical risks that might threaten the community sense. When I asked Taquileans why they all offer the same meal every day, they answered 'es típico y es costumbre, todos lo hacen.' But this doesn't restrain Taquileans to negotiate secretly with guides to realize personal interests. Collective thinking and the will to make personal profit creates a field of tension as I will elaborate in the next paragraph.

Apart from the strong collective sense and acting, individuality also forms part of their identity. In material sense, land, houses, stores, restaurants, cattle and transport are personal property. During my stay, several Taquileans I spoke told me that, in the nineties tourism changed *el rumbo* (course) which led to individualism *in the mind* of taquileans. As Zenong<sup>11</sup> explained me:

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<sup>7</sup> Quinoa is a type of grain which can be found on the Andean tableland. Quinoa is very nutritious because of the superabundance of proteins.

<sup>8</sup> *Aji* is a small hot pepper. They serve it with red onion and lemon.

<sup>9</sup> Arrufo Alcantara, head of the Anthropological department from the University of Puno He works with and for Taquile for more than 20 years. Interview 7 April 2010

<sup>10</sup> Dutch water engineer, studied in Wageningen, Holland, and works for already 25 years in Peru. Related to the institute: Bartolomeus de las Casas, in Cuzco.

<sup>11</sup> Interview on 3 March 2010 with Zenong el Tipo

We wanted the monopoly on transport and had our own strong will. Tourism agencies decided to change the island package offer and went to Amantaní to stay over night, now they only come here for a quick lunch.

Nowadays Tourists are no longer spread over the community which was common, but the few independent travelers are captured by Taquileans who live near the dock and the main square and bring them to their houses, when it is a big group they distribute them over their own family or maybe their godfathers. People who live far away have no time to walk up and down every day and are therefore forced to think of different manners to obtain tourists. The amount of private restaurants, shops and weavers is still growing even though the offer is still the same, which. My guest families complained about increasing competition and ‘people who only think about themselves’<sup>12</sup>. Where did this come from? A plausible explanation is that tourism is a modern industry, regulated on the principle of free market, functioning in a neo-liberal system, which is especially noticeable in the urban areas. Since the Taquileans are more and more in contact with the mainland to organize their tourism management, the individual mentality also entered the *minds* of Taquileans. I don’t imply that individualism was not part of their identity before tourism; it was just not the dominant mentality on the island, since Taquile was organized on strong socialist principles. On Taquile this means a conflict between a communal and individual property and mentality. In this section I will reveal the area of tension between the strong traditional community sense and a slowly developing process of individualization

### **Field of tension: community sense versus individualism**

As I already mentioned, the restaurants near the plaza are divided in two shifts *abajo y arriba*. This rotation system is implemented in order to prevent individualism and competition. But this doesn’t restrain the Taquileans to play within the normative frame of the community. The restaurant- and accommodation owners make secrete

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<sup>12</sup> Informal conversation with Santiago, restaurant owner of Los Angeles, 5 April 2010.

deals with agencies and guides from Puno to satisfy their individual interests. An example is that underpaid guides make agreements with Taquileans about the price tourists pay and how many percent they get. They are struggling with, on one hand the desire for more and quicker profit and, on the other hand, their communal conscience. This mental contradiction is revealed by an interview with Sergio<sup>13</sup>

**S:** I want that the guides rotate, that everybody has the same. I like the control. There is envy among us. Some have more, some have less. We want to unite but everybody is criticizing one another. Some guides are not listening to Felipe they say that there is not enough fish and they take the tourists to the restaurant with which they have a deal or return to Puno. The authorities should practice more and better control (...) The guide who worked here today is really good I want to work more with him, he doesn't ask commission.

**I<sup>14</sup>:** But the guide asked 20 soles from the tourist, while the official communal price is 15 soles.

**S:** Yes... that is swindling. But he is really a good guide, the way he demonstrates our culture. I want to extend my performer repertoire and do more demonstrations.

On one hand Sergio is pleading for more and better control to maintain the rotation system and abandon corruption, on the other hand, he wants to keep his deal with the guide out of fear that the guide might not return. Besides, he said, he is not suffering from a lower income, because the on-charged expenses are paid by ignorant tourists. The restaurant association was during my stay discussing about the commission and an how to handle the pressure of the guides. Santiago, member of

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<sup>13</sup> Restaurant owner of Flor de Coca, 5 april 2010

<sup>14</sup> I: interviewer

the association, told me that the majority agrees about 1, 50 or 3 soles commission<sup>15</sup> from the 15 soles. ‘The ones who don’t agree are afraid that their guides won’t go to their restaurants anymore, but they are ruining it for the rest.’<sup>16</sup> Xcis, the Danish NGO, has had interviews with all the members of the restaurant association. Their conclusion is that they all say to be in favor of control and an honest community based rotation system, but as long as this control isn’t practiced seriously by the authorities in question, the restaurant owners have and take the space to make deals with guides in silence.

According to Xcis is the main difficulty to convince the mayor of the importance of the rotation system. ‘The mayor does not accomplish the official laws himself, and was not willing to contribute to communal fairness of the rotation system, because his daughter has a restaurant, that is open every day and is working with a big agency called Jumbo traveling.’ The people I spoke about this problem, mainly members of the restaurant association, all emphasize the lack of control by the authorities, and as long as the authorities don’t react, individualization has full scope. A reason for the lax reaction of the authorities might be that since a few years, an authority post is a paid position and no longer a rotation and social obligated post. This changes the motives to become an authority. As Juan<sup>17</sup> explains, ‘before, it was a social obligation but it also gave you prestige, it was an honor. Now there is corruption, because they want the money for themselves’

There is not only competition in the catering facilities, but also in the textile production. Nowadays 415 people weave and are allowed to sell eight products a person in the artisan market. 5% of the money goes to the community, 95% goes to the producer. The competition is enormous and the change to sell a product is therefore smaller than ten years ago. Because of the competition, a lot of families who receive tourists call all their family members to sell their products in private, sometimes for a lower price. I could join a group of Norwegian tourists who stayed with the same family as me. The family gave a demonstration about weaving, washing wool with natural soap and ended with all their textiles to sell. When the guide told the group that they didn’t had to buy anything, because they would go

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<sup>15</sup> Employee of Xcis

<sup>16</sup> Santiago, 4 April 2010

<sup>17</sup> Juan, member of restaurant association



later to the communal market, Carlixto<sup>18</sup> (the contact person of the family) became really angry with the guide, because he wanted the tourists to buy only from him and his family.

During an informal conversation with my first guest family about what had changed in the last twenty years, they mentioned that there is a lot of envy, within and between different families. Elias told me that ‘nowadays there is more jealousy, 15 years ago, tourists were spread, now they are captured near the dock by only a few of us, it is not fair.’ Other informants and guest families affirmed this and opined this to be a negative change. I understood from my research findings that envy had always existed on Taquile, however the experience of envy had increased under the last decades of tourism because people are more focused on quick money making. They have had a taste of economical success and are eager to expand the touristy possibilities.

The dominant voice in anthropological research about tourism is that tourism maintains or engraves the inequality between rich and poor. On Taquile tourism has accentuated differentiation. People with capital could invest in facilities and became richer on the longer term than people without capital and the possibility to invest. But researchers go further. As Paul Gonsalves states, ‘modern tourism is an extension of colonialism (1993: 11). Bruner (1994: 440) insists, ‘colonialism and tourism were born together and are relatives’. This statement is over-generalized, since there are also communities who actually choose voluntarily to implement tourism as a strategy to progress in economical terms, which is the case in Taquile, according to Alejandro Flores, one of the initiators’ of tourism on the Island. Jost Krippendorf (1984:56) states, ‘if nothing changes, tourism will always be ‘a special form of servility in the developing countries’. These authors state that disruption of communities is something that overcomes the local people. As if they are passive and not responsible. However, as I have shown, the relationship between Taquileans and others is created through a process of interaction. Taquileans are active participants and co-decide on what way tourism should be managed and are responsible for the choices they make. As I have shown, they permit guides to ask permission and therefore actually allow economical differentiation on the Island.

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<sup>18</sup> Carlixto, uncle of Elias, performance on 28 March 2010

Zenong, Santiago, my second guest father and ex authority Santiago emphasized all three that is has been their own responsibility that guides and agencies can exploit Taquileans the way they do now. However, Global and national forces are very aggressive. Besides, one should understand that not everybody has the capacity to overlook the consequences of certain choices. But as the three men state, the will - and therefore also responsibility to modernize by using tourism as a development strategy and the way this is practiced- comes from the local communities.

In the case of Taquile, tourism was in the late seventies a new *necessary* communal economic recourse. In 1993 Taquile had 1300 inhabitants. In 2010 it passes the 2000. The growing population had several consequences. First, all the land -which is personal property of the islanders-, is divided under families, and the increasing population led to insufficient land for private consumption. The scarcity of land in Taquile and the impossibility to develop resources for high agro-production, due to the ecological limitations, led to the investment of other economical activities, related in this case with tourism (Gascón 2004). Before tourism the inhabitants already had a relation with the capitalist market in Puno and elsewhere. In tourism this relation grew stronger. As Gacón (2004) states correct, tourism did not lead to socio-economical segregation of the population, but maintained or accentuated the already existing differentiation. The development of the tourism industry has generated change in material sense but also in the *mind* of the people. We could speak of growing difference between the theoretical communal behavior and the actual behavior that also favors personal interests.

### **1.3 Control of change and Connection to the earth**

To understand how the will to control change and the connection to the earth are related to each other we should go back in history. According to Quijano (1993), the images of the universe and the hope for humanity came from the past. The orientation to the past came to an end when the Spaniards arrived. (Quijano 1993) Taquile was one of the last locations in Peru to capitulate to Spanish domination during the Spanish conquest of Peru. It was confiscated by the Spaniards for Carlos V and eventually passed to Count Rodrigo of Taquila, after whom the island was named by colonists. With the conquest of the Spaniards in the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Catholic Church aggressively imposed the Catholic belief (Doctor, final

report 2010). With that, also a new *worldview* emerged. Hope was no longer only drawn from the past, but also from the future. (Quijano 1993)

The Spaniards took disastrous measurements out of craving to convert them and to maintain control. By taking away an important part of their cultural identity, they were hindered in their *being*. As Honneth (1995) stated, ‘cultural devaluation of certain modes of life or beliefs which are considered to be inferior or deficient prevents the subject from giving social value or esteem to his or her contributions and abilities’ (Cited in Larrain 2000: 27). This means that the Spaniards reduced the power of the incomprehensible other, the inhabitants of Taquile. The Spaniards wanted them to adapt to their culture, but treated them unequal. Although the new religion was enforced by a negative ‘other’, the Islanders have adapted the religion. In the beginning out of fear, but remarkably, when the threat was gone, they didn’t reject it. Like in all Latin American countries it became an integrated part of their identity. The cultural adaptation to the Spaniards is no longer an issue of fear; ‘es costumbre’, a lot of people said, about the meaning of certain catholic practices like the celebration of eastern. However, this doesn’t mean that they abandoned their nature religion, which has never disappeared. The two were and still are practiced together. They exist next to each other as the following description on the website of *Munay Taquile* shows:

Celebramos la Semana Santa con la bendición de palmas el Domingo de Ramos, el Viernes Santo sahumamos la casa y el Domingo de Pascua hacemos el pago a la Madre Tierra *Pachamama*, en Mulsina Pata, todos los taquileños pedimos su bendición para las cosechas y todas las actividades de nuestras vidas.<sup>19</sup>

Apart from the modern Saints, *Pachamama*<sup>20</sup> is one of the most important figures in their Worldview to whom they offer and direct their prayers about harvest and other activities in their lives, under which tourism. The importance of *Pachamama* illustrates

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.taquile.net/taquile/fiesta.php>, consulted on 16 June 2010

<sup>20</sup> Mother earth

the strong and dependent connection to the earth, which is never broken. The Andean, nature religion is so important because it has a closer relation to their lifestyle, which is dependent of nature. As Arrufo explains:

The Andean and Catholic rituals are practiced with great discipline and attention. The two are not mixed, instead they are living together. Each has its character and in both there are faithful believers. They are actually practicing intercultural society. They respect everything in both religions. However, the Andean Cosmo- vision seems to be more complete and stronger, because it is about the cycle of the year, it encompass all that is alive, plants, land, animals, harvest, coca and houses.<sup>21</sup>

A concrete example of the inter-cultural society, Arrufo is talking about, is that children go to the church in the early morning to decorate wooden crosses with beautiful flowers. The crosses are placed on some places on the island and serve as a symbol to ask *Pachamama* for more or less rain.



*Foto 3. Image taken by the author, Taquile March 2010. The cross decorated with flowers has the function to ask Pachamama for more or less rain, depending on the needs of the lands.*

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<sup>21</sup> Interview Arrufo Alcantara, anthropologist, 7 April 2010

Furthermore, Arrufo explains how both religions are respected, although the Andean belief is more penetrated in daily life because it is related to the cycle of the year. This is an important remark because it reveals the field of tension Taquileans experience between the traditional lifestyle and the modern condition. Taquile has been an agricultural society for centuries. The rhythm of the earth determined their way of surviving. Sowing and harvesting is what their life was about, their creativity was limited to the laws of nature. They were depending on nature and its whims. In order to maintain control over the weather conditions, *Pachamama* had to be satisfied. In the modern and urban condition, in which tourism takes an important place, a new sort of creativity is required in a new context with new actors like agencies, guides and NGO's. In the modern condition, success is depending on others; on the market, supply and demand, and there exists competition. As Arrufo explains, this doesn't mean that their connection to the earth is weaker than before. They do not only combine agriculture and tourism as two economical resources, they also intent to combine the modern body of thought with their nature belief. While the tourism industry is increasing, the connection to mother earth is still strong, as the following observation shows about the Eastern Celebration during Semana Santa on the highest point of the Island:

Although the tourists were welcome to join the celebration, the attendance was very little, since the climb is long and the boat to Puno leaves at three o'clock. On Sunday, after the catholic miss, the majority of the people went in a line uphill to the most saintly place on the Island: *Mulsina*. This is an Inca ruin, located on the highest point, 4100 m, above sea level. You have a breathtaking view of 360 degrees. On the melodies of the drums and flutes, authorities and other strong people carry dozens of kilos of food, coca leaves, beer, wine and other material uphill to offer to *Pachamama*. They ask *Pachamama* not only to bring a good harvest, a good health, and luck but since three decades, also to bring more tourists. They ask her to let tourists stay longer, like in old times, when independent travelers stayed for a week or more.

I asked several Taquileans how they would explain the little amount of tourists this year, and they all related it to *Pachamama*. As Julia<sup>22</sup> said, ‘if she is displeased she might bring us less tourists. But not only we, also big agencies and companies relate a tourist crisis to *Pachamama*. Edgar<sup>23</sup> even referred to the landslides around Cuzco. ‘Something happened that made *Pachamama* angry, therefore she caused this natural disaster and now they are having trouble because there are no tourists.’ When I was passing through Cuzco I went by a Shamanist agency who told me that the landslides were caused by the *Piseños* (inhabitants of the stricken village Pisac), because they gossip too much, which created negative energy and made *Pachamama* angry. Zenong el Tipo told me, ‘if we want more tourists we have to be better for them, and we should not only think of the money. Julia explained that *Pachamama* can actually cause a bad economical year if the people ‘deviate.’ Deviation is associated with a lack of respect for mother earth and ‘mother earth is in everything.’<sup>24</sup> Deviation is associated with that goes against the norms and values of the community. During my presence I once joined a class of the primary school. The children learned the virtues of life: solidarity, honesty, loyalty, solidarity, reciprocity, tolerance, respect, love and equality.<sup>25</sup> The Inca principles, on which, according to Dora, the community is established, are: work hard, don’t lie and don’t steal. Based on these findings we could imply that deviation is behavior that goes against these virtues and principles.

It is interesting that they relate natural disasters and bad behavior to the amount of tourists and that they lay the responsibility for these crises by themselves and not by external forces. Based on these remarks we could say that it seems that as long as they lay the responsibility by themselves, they have the feeling that they have control.

Another way of executing control is expressed by a variety of rituals with coca leaves. Taquileans drop coca leaves in the lake to bless the boat and water in the hope for calm weather; they exchange coca leaves as salutation and as proof of trust and respect; they offer the best looking coca leaves to *Pachamama* during rituals and celebrations; coca leaves are used to bless material possessions; they burn and eat

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<sup>22</sup> Conversation Julia, 23 April 2010

<sup>23</sup> Conversation Edgar who has family near Cuzco, 24 years, 28 February 2010

<sup>24</sup> Conversation Julia, 23 April 2010

<sup>25</sup> Class observation and interview with teacher Dora. 5 April 2010

coca leaves as medicine for any physical complaint; They chew coca leaves all day long against tiredness, hunger and altitude sickness. Furthermore, they drink coca tea, which they also offer to tourists. When a coca leaf falls on the ground with the bright side up, it brings luck. Otherwise: bad luck. As Arrufo<sup>26</sup> said, ‘they read life with coca leaves.’ coca leaves are a way to execute control.

Another way of controlling life is doing *pagos* to *Pachamama*. A *pago* is a payment to the earth and can be done on different ways. Small *pagos* consists of soda, alcohol or coca leaves. But a bigger *pago*, like they do with Easter, consists of big packages full of food, coca leaves and drinks. Each *pago* often has its own rituals. When I was joining the solar panel trade and the eastern celebration at the sacred place Mulsina, it was important to give *Pachamama* the first and last swig of your soda.

First you give *Pachamama*, than drink a bit yourself and you poor the last bit on the ground again. It is common to do this with soda and alcohol but not with food. Food is only for a bigger pago as you have seen with eastern, then we offer food and coca leaves.

Edgar Elias<sup>27</sup> took for the visual assignment a picture of Mulsina and another ruin on a different part on the island. He told me that these places were very important for him because ‘this is where the tourists come for’ he said and because it has a great power:

E: Once I was playing with some boys around Mulsina. We all had kites and did a match ‘whom’s kite is going the highest’. The kite of the boy fell into the sacred part of Mulsina, without thinking he ran into the holy part to grab his kite. Few days later he was sick, and a few months later he died. I have heard of another man who was drunk and fell asleep at the other ruins, near my

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<sup>26</sup> Interview Arrufo Alcantara, anthropologist, 7 April 2010

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Edgar Elias, 18 years

house, he got a tumor and died too. These ruins have a great power.

I: Do you think tourists come to the ruins because of this magical power?

E: I don't know... I think so yes. And because they are Inca ruins.

Edgar said that tourists can go the ruins, but they can't just enter the sacred parts they have to do a *pago*, otherwise the possibility exists that they can become sick with a fatal end. 'You also have to show respect by doing a *pago*' he said. The inca ruins are promoted in travel folders, its magical power however, is not a selling point yet.

We could say that despite the influence of modernity brought by tourism, the connection to the earth is still a fundamental part of their collective identity. All kinds of rituals are meant to maintain control about all activities that occur in and outside the physical borders of the island. This section illustrates how local, national and international developments are tried to understand on local level and how these changes are always seen in relation with *Pachamama*. In the next section I will elaborate the role of others in the construction of Taquilean identity.



## The Others



With a freshly washed head and a heavy backpack I jumped into a noisy and slow mototaxi which brought me to the dock of Puno. Before I could even get out, men shouted. “Amantani, Uros, Taquile? I am your captain.” Politely ignoring the touts, I found my way to the dock where I bought a ticket for independent travelers. It was no problem that I wanted to stay for a long time, and they would arrange something, they said. It seemed that the touristy boat had already left, because solely Taquilean families accompanied me. A man with a North Face jacket and a Taquilean hat indicated me a place surrounded by bottles of beer, sodas and rice. Old and young men, wearing the same Spanish looking black trousers with a nice and fine woven belt and a hat, talked the whole 3, 5 hours journey long in Quechua. I couldn’t distinguish any word and the hard sound of their language seemed so contradictive in comparison with their friendly and elegant appearance. The few women were hid into their black capes, one asleep and one replacing the cloth diaper of her child. The latter woman was my new guest mother, Elizabeth, seventeen years old. She and her boyfriend Elias (20) told me in excellent Spanish that I could stay at their place as long as I wanted to. Arriving at the dock I was stunned by the blueness of the lake and the sharp colors of the landscape. We had to climb half an hour uphill, since there are no roads, the only paths were made of big flat stones, all constructed by man power. I was the only one wearing boots; they all walked on sandals made of tires. The view and the altitude were absolutely breathtaking. As the only tourist I went twice as slow as the islanders while they were carrying twice as much kilo as I did. Only the idea that they had to carry everything uphill, not made out of clay, stone and water, made me exhausted. This must be a special people I wondered, happy I could stay longer than two hours and see more than only a glimpse of their culture like most tourist do. They are just people like we are, but so different I thought. Would they think the same about me, or about us? Tourists? What is their idea of tourists and how do they anticipate on them?

In the last four decades, when tourism was developing, several people entered the Taquilean scene to execute influence some way or another. The interaction between

these actors and Taquileans has shaped the way Taquileans behave in the touristy context. But apart from the others outside, the definition of the other inside the community also contributes to a better understanding of the local Taquilean identity. I will elaborate 'the others' in the following order: tourists, the other within the community and tourist related others.

#### **1.4 Tourists and Taquileans**

Tourists have had a very important social-economic effect on the self-image of Taquileans. After hundreds of years of repression and discrimination, the islanders internalized a negative self-image, which is still visible. The half – Taquilean women Carmen<sup>28</sup> explained that the reason some women walk with their head down, and that they whisper and cover their faces, is caused by discrimination and fear. In his book *The Anthropology of Latin America and the Caribbean* Sanabria (2007) explains that the stereotype of negative indigenous identity was affirmed again when national policy considered indigenous culture as a boundary for modernization. Tourists were the first group from outside that actually embraced the different and traditional culture from the indigenous people. The boost of self-esteem made the people proud to show them their culture (Zorn 2004).

However, this pride is strongly related to, and depending on, the local context. The geographical location of the island is a social binding factor. On Taquile they feel safe, equal and proud. They can be who they are, and are even admired by curious tourists. But when they travel to Puno they change clothes. Puno is no longer their unique trusted world but is an unknown diverse place including all kinds of people with different cultures and social economic statuses. Several people, from children to adult, told me that they change clothes because they are afraid to be robbed. "People who recognize us know that we carry money to do shopping." Others have been offended by Puneños<sup>29</sup> who called them Father Christmas<sup>30</sup>, referring to their red colored hat, or asked them whether they are out to dance, because of their decorative clothes. These negative impulses from the mainland are avoided by adapting to the urban clothing style of the mainland. In her book *Het*

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<sup>28</sup> Carmen, 36 years, originally from Aymara speaking Peninsula, she owns a restaurant, Interview 17 April 2010

<sup>29</sup> People from Puno

<sup>30</sup> Rodrigo (feigned name), 22 years

*Pisac theater: presentatie en beleving van authentieke Andescultuur en toeristisch Peru* (2008)  
Simon calls this contradicting experience of identity a “pride-shame continuum”. This pride–shame continuum is probably created under the Spaniards but continued under the modern regimes in Peru. The pride-shame continuum is illustrative for the way Taquileans internalize expectations from others. It seems it depends on ‘the other’ and the context whether they feel safe and proud or threatened in their *being*. In all informal conversations resulted that in general they feel safe and proud in the presence of tourists, since they come to visit *their* territory on which they reign, while they feel less safe and comfortable in other’s territory like Puno for instance. The Island, the geographical location is therefore an important part of their identity.

Apart from the social effect, tourists are of economical importance. Tourists are welcomed as people bringing fortune: luck and richness. The prices in the stores are determined by the appearance of the clients. With a quick scan they see whether someone is Taquilean, Latin American, Peruvian or a Western tourist. The latter always pays the most. After a while I wanted to be considered as one of them, to pay a normal price for bottle of water. The reason that I *would* stay for a long time wasn’t valid for Loes Marie<sup>31</sup> who was attending the store; first I had to *be* there a long time. After two weeks I joined two Danes, working for the one and only Danish NGO on Taquile, to the same shop, again for water. “trescincuenta para ti, y cinco para ti.” (3,50 for you, pointing at Kristina<sup>32</sup>, and five for you, pointing at me), said the Loes Marie. I still had to pay more. It seemed like the degree of integration was demonstrated by the price of the bottle of water. Two weeks and a few chats with the Loes Marie and her friend later, the price was reduced to 3,50 soles. I got the new price for several reasons. First, they believed after a while that I would stay longer because I came back several times. Secondly, if I met them on my way to the plaza I always had a chat with her and her friend and helped them once with their homework. The fact that I became ‘visible’ for them and that I had no judgment about them, changed my label from tourist to Sofie. This illustrates the way islanders relate tourists to economical benefit. It also implies something about integration and acceptance. First I was only the ‘touristy other’ who is good for money. While after

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<sup>31</sup> Loes Marie, 13 years

<sup>32</sup> Kristina and Jonas, are employees of the Danish NGO Xcis, they started in February and stay till June.

my social efforts such as helping with homework, I was accepted and integrated to a certain degree<sup>33</sup>. Since most tourists stay only for two hours and are mostly curious to buy something as a souvenir, tourists are strongly related to 'spending money'. A consequence of this perception is begging children on the main plaza. They sell bracelets, made by themselves or their mothers, to buy sweet. Since not all children are used to brush their teeth, this leads to serious dental problems. Once, three girls whispered to buy them a trout and a soda. When I asked what they had eaten that day and with whom, they said 'trout, with my family.' When I asked why they wanted it again from me, they answered, 'because you have money.' They didn't really seem to care about the food, but about the fact that I could spend money on them.

Since the contact with tourists is really short, the economical influx is the most important contribution of tourists; this input generates change on social, political and cultural level. With other words the social component between tourists and Taquileans is inferior to the economical component. The relation tourists have with the islanders is based in the beginning on an economical transaction; consequently a social relation can be constructed. An example is the common phenomenon *compadrazgo*, referring to co-parenting. In Peru it is a phenomenon to create a not sanguine relation between the parents of the child and the godparents to establish a mutual exchange of service and goods. It resembles a reciprocate relation. (Montes del Castillo 1989) But, as Jorge Gascón (2004) makes correctly clear, reciprocity does not imply symmetry. Foster (1972) was the first who indicated the distinction between the normative discourse and actual behavior. The first reflects social education, in which godfathers have mutual respect and maintain an equal relation. While the second reveals that the individual participants have economical and political strategies to benefit maximum and to reach certain goals. The socio-economical status of the participants plays an important role. Mintz Y Wolf (1950) indicate a distinction between horizontal god-parenthood, which is a relation between *campesinos* (people living rural areas), given that they have more or less the same economical possibilities. A vertical relation is between *campesinos* and external

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<sup>33</sup> It is very unlikely that a tourist will ever be fully accepted as a taquilean, since it is not possible for foreigners to buy land. As long as you don't live there, you are not one of them.

actors with a superior status like authorities or foreigners, like tourists. To be godfather is seen as a social obligation and as an honor. To accept to become one implies compensation in materials, goods and work. The father of the child has the privilege to pick the godmother. He will prefer to pick someone with a higher socio-economical level (Mintz Y Wolf, 1950)

In Taquile god parenthood is common in the community between inhabitants and between them and tourists as well. During my fieldwork in Taquile I was asked several times to become godmother. Once I was helping two girls carrying their load of food for the sheep. When we arrived at their home, their father asked me to become godmother of his almost three-year-old son, as soon as he heard I came from Holland. Several tourists told me that they have been asked to become godmother. My reaction, which I heard later was also the reaction of some other European tourists, was that I had to think about it. Because I only wanted to be a godmother of a child I had a close relation with. Mourik, a Dutch water engineer, who already lives in Peru for 25 years, told me that the social close relation would be constructed after you agree to become godmother/godfather. As soon as the agreement is made, both parties will investigate in the social aspect of the reciprocal relation. To become godmother doesn't have to mean an explicit economical transaction, but the agreement does create mutual expectations about reciprocity. To have a relation with a NGO is apart from the economical benefit also prestige. I noticed that this change in the social meaning of a vertical reciprocal relation is especially under the older generation, not always appreciated. In an interview with Zenong<sup>34</sup> he said:

Before tourism in its recent form one had prestige  
when he was a brave and honest man and contributed  
as much as possible to the community, now it is about:  
who has more?

Assuming that foreign godfathers have good intentions to their families, they also create indirectly differentiation. On the first place, in material sense, but

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<sup>34</sup> Zenong el Tipo, manager of tourism

consequently also in social sense, since prestige is no longer related to concepts as solidarity and honesty. A new dimension of prestige implies people to be superior when they possess more, which is more related to success, than to character or good intentions.

Tourism has influence on the purchase of food and consumption patterns of the locals. The stores are apart from the basic needs on the island, tourist oriented. After a The NGO's made restaurant owners clear, that if tourists stay longer, you need to offer them varied meals. Some people are willing to experiment. One day I was having lunch with the people from the NGO's. Because we were a bit tired of eating the same for already two months, we had some avocados and curry sauces to add some new tastes. A group of tourists next to us preyed on our vegetable and sauce addition and asked the same to the restaurant owner. He came to us to ask for the recipe because he wanted to offer his next group the same. Carmen explained us that she also wants to experiment with different food and Alejandro Flores, the first one building the first bar on the island hadn't really thought about the offer of food yet, but mentioned pizzas as an option. Some people only capture these new ideas about food because more or different food might also mean a different price. A higher price is not lucrative if the communal price is fifteen soles (about 4 euros). Besides the option to surpass the community norm is, as I mentioned before, a social risk.

Since tourism is a new economical resource it is associated with income. I asked different families about their experience with tourists or the meaning of tourism in their lives. The answer was mostly economical related. This means that in the *description*, Islanders refer to the importance of tourism for their income as a community and as an individual. They describe tourists as good people and all of my informants want more of them, because they are their complementary income, and a guarantee for, as several informants emphasized: a 'better' future. Sylvano<sup>35</sup> owns an accommodation and works with an agency. Visitors can give feedback to the agency that passes the good and bad comments to Sylvano. On this way he is trying to improve his facilities. He told me that most visitors complain about the lack of water

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<sup>35</sup> Sylvano, owns an accommodation. 18 April 2010

to flush the toilet or hygiene facilities like soap. He is content about the feedback because and doesn't consider this to be negative, "it helps me to improve and progress in the future".

As the quote at first page of this part states: *No somos nada sin turistas*, 'we are nothing without tourists.' Santiago's quote has multiple meanings and covers the elaborated sections. The literal signification of the phrase is that they are nothing without tourists, and if you are nothing, than you don't exist. Without tourists they wouldn't mean anything in the world. Tourists have given them a form of self-esteem and respect because they positively recognize them and they have given meaning to their lives. Tourism was for Taquileans a necessary resource to survive, since self sustainability was impossible because of the scarcity of land. The expression also implies that they economically depend on tourists. Without the economical influx, more people would be forced to leave the island to work, which would make them less Taquilean than when they could live on the island.

### **1.5 Tourism related Others**

Since the rise of tourism Taquileans and outsiders have bend over the Taquilean case to decide about the best direction the island should navigate in order to be successful in social, cultural and economical terms. In this section I will show how the different outsider actors have different perceptions and ideas about how tourism should be managed on the island and how Taquilean culture and identity should be presented to the outside world. The other actors are the NGO, the University of Puno, particular initiatives and guides and agencies. If we analyze the way Taquileans and tourism related others interact, we can get a better understanding of how Taquilean identity is constructed.

Because of its beauty and authentic culture, Taquile is a popular and attractive place for tourism related actors. But their strive for control, their communal organization, the lack of Quechua speaking correspondents and the lack of regular connection on the island self and with the outside world, makes it hard to communicate and to set up an initiative quickly. However, several projects are going on or have been realized. Since 2006 the Danish NGO Xcis, hired a Bolivian NGO

Praya to set up together a community based tourism agency, called *Munay Taquile*<sup>36</sup>. They are educating motivated islanders to capacitate them to run an own tourism agency, which can compete with the hundreds of others from the mainland. To enable Taquileans to realize the tourism project, the Bolivian NGO organizes English courses, reunions, and provides then the know-how of the tourism sector. They are motivating young and elder people to participate by making them conscious of the consequences of commercial tourism. But one of the difficulties they face is a lack of commercial strategy and marketing insight. They have a hard time to capture tourists on the mainland for four reasons: first, *Munay Taquile* is not located in the main street, but outside the small city centre in the street directing to the dock. As long as their location is not known in the prominent travel guides, the change that tourists will find it by change is very small, since tourism is concentrated in the centre. Second, they are all still used to their traditional lifestyle and feel resistance to leave the Island for a longer period, because of their work on the island and care for the children. Third, according to Arrufo, the mentality of the Taquileans is awaiting, they have a reacting attitude instead of being pro-active and act out of a short-term principle. A fourth reason is dissension within the NGO's, between the NGO's and the government, representatives of *Munay Taquile* and Arrufo:

Munay doesn't function; they are waiting for the tourists to come. We need a marketing strategist and someone who speaks Quechua. But once I offered a free translator, a student, Praya didn't want her because they want to organize things on their own way. (...) But Praya is slow and has no experience in terms of marketing. Because I am observing these deficiencies, I am considered to be threatening, blamed of paralyzing the business<sup>37</sup>

The NGO's have to reach some important goals in 2011; otherwise the money input will be unplugged. A difficulty in the cooperation of the NGO's with the Taquileans

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<sup>36</sup> Beautiful Taquile

<sup>37</sup> Arrufo Alcantara, head of the Anthropology department from the University of Puno , 7 April 2010



is that they have a different vision on how Taquile and the agency should be organized. The NGO's put a lot of effort in the foundation of a tourism agency, but now after four years of investigation, Taquileans want result, and quick. The new governor asked Kristian, (the founder of Xcis) "Why do you give the money to the Danish and Bolivians and not directly to us? You should give the money to us, so we can practice the work the NGO's are doing now." The islanders don't see satisfying result, and because the money should benefit them in the end, they prefer to organize it themselves. The main goal of the Danish NGO Xcis is to make a community based tourism policy. The most important group is the restaurant owners. Xcis is trying to unite the owners in order to make a clear front for the aggressive agencies and guides from Puno. During interviews with restaurant owners I found out how the opinions differ from each other about the goals of the NGO's. On one hand, restaurant owners agree to work on rotary base, all asking the same price. On the other hand, some want to decide themselves what is best and prefer to work on individual/familiar base, with guides from Puno and variable prices. During my stay it occurred that an authority did not pay another authority post in order to buy more beer for him self. Xcis<sup>38</sup> confronted him with his misstep. He felt guilty and being watched.

Another actor that entered the Taquilean Theater and influences the pre mentioned actors is Victoria, a business women. Since Taquile has only tourists who stay for a few hours and *Munay Taquile* isn't very successful yet, the islanders are open for more possibilities in the sector that could bring more tourists. During my stay Victoria, from Arequipa introduced herself on the Island with the plan to begin mystical tourism. On the boat to Taquile she told me her story: Her grandma lived in Puno and had always loved Taquile. When she was in Arequipa to create a project of mystical tourism, she only doubted about the place. It had to be near the water, because one of the things she wanted to construct is *La Virgen Del Agua*, The Virgen of Water. She had a dream about a star that crossed the Titicaca Lake. Because of her grandma's love for the Island, she knew that it had to be Taquile Island. She made her red of contacts with the authorities and the University of Puno and with their

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<sup>38</sup> Danish NGO on Taquile

cooperation they arranged<sup>39</sup> a space for the community to start an agency in Jirón Lima, the main street in Puno. Victoria and *Munay Taquile* will both operate in the new space.

Discussions are still going on about how Victoria will cooperate with *Munay Taquile*. Victoria presents herself as a benefactor for the community by predicting to bring more tourists to the island. She has her ideas about the way the space should be used has certain conditions about how many percent she would get from the profits of transport and accommodation. However, Xcis Praya, Arrufo and *Munay Taquile* state that if Victoria wants to start a new type of tourism on Taquile and to make use of the new space, which belongs to the community, 80 or more percent of the profit should benefit the community. The negotiations about these issues are still going on. Unfortunately I can't predict the future, so new research will have to investigate the result of the cooperation between the Taquileans, Victoria and the University of Puno. However, the relevance of these recent developments is that it illustrates the willingness of the islanders to let people from outside in, also with commercial purposes.

The authorities, Arrufo, the Danish and the Bolivian NGO and the Taquileans in charge of running *Munay Taquile* all have different ideas about the women and her ideas, and about Taquilean culture. It is remarkable to see that the NGO's considered her in the beginning as a threat for *Munay Taquile*, because they think that if Taquilean authorities agree with Victoria's conditions, they will hand over the power and independency they reached in the last years, which makes them afraid that their work will be considered less valuable. Victoria is mobilizing and has a lot of knowledge and contacts. Her attitude is pro-active which might turn out to be more successful than *Munay Taquile* so far. Arrufo thinks that this might hurt the people working for *Munay Taquile*, because 'it reveals their lack of knowledge and commercial competence.' Besides, Praya doesn't consider mystical tourism as a true part of the Taquilean culture and are afraid that Amantani, the neighbor Island might consider this project "as the last desperate attempt to attract tourists."

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<sup>39</sup> See: Convenio Específico: entre la comunidad campesina de la isla Taquile y el Instituto Andino de antropología

In their eyes Taquilean culture as it is now should be maintained as much as possible. Influences from outside who could change this status quo would damage the authenticity of the island. However, Zenong and Marleni, both working for Munay Taquile said that “if this woman has success, we will embrace her, and eventually mystical tourism might even become part of our culture” If not, we don’t want her. Zenong added that the reaction of the Bolivian NGO is out of envy. “They can’t stand it that this woman is progressing and is having success with the authorities.” Other Islanders I spoke barely heard of her. They said, “If she brings more tourists than it is fine, we’ll see how it goes.” Some laughed about the new Virgin, but also emphasized that if she is successful and benefitting the community, we’ll see. This implies that the Taquileans are open for new influences, on condition that it benefits them in economical sense. Mystical tourism and the construction of a Virgin of Water are not threatening in the eyes of the islanders because it is an assimilation of Catholicism and Andean religion, which they practice and respect both.

As I have shown above, the interests and responsibilities of the different actor are sometimes vague. Arrufo is driven by his background as anthropologist and personal relation with the islanders. He observes and acts according his ideas, shaped from an anthropological perspective. Victoria has an emotional relation with the island via her grandmother and is searching for commercial possibilities. The goal of the Bolivian part of the NGO is to manage, encourage and educate Taquileans to contribute to a well functioning community based agency *Munay taquile* and the goal of the Danish part of the NGO is to investigate and unite the islanders to form a front against aggressive commercial competition on the island and against actors outside the island. They are depending on European money and therefore have a special agenda, even though they might see things on the island that could be more important. And then finally, the most important actors are Taquileans. The interactions between Taquileans and the above mentioned actors have shown how different interpretations of culture and identity come about and how Taquileans are open for change and cooperation, as long as it brings economical benefit.

## 1.6 The Other within the community

During research it became clear to me that not only others from outside the island, like tourists play an important role in identity construction of Taquileans, but the role of the other within the community is just as important. The way they define and describe the positive or negative other within the community explains where and why social tensions arise and how this is translated in the way they manage tourism on the island.

The long lasting negative domination of the Spaniards explains the drastically measurements of the law<sup>40</sup>, that prohibited to marry people from outside the islanders borders. As I explained in the first section, Taquileans have a strong will to control their lives. This law is one way to do so. The law was implemented after a long struggle to regain their lands that were then owned by *hacendados*<sup>41</sup>. ‘The Community Law of Peru’, created in the 1970s<sup>42</sup> gave Taquileans absolute control over their lands. They have always resisted selling land to outsiders and didn’t permit anyone to hire or build on their terrain (Ypeij & Zorn 2007). After the long struggle about land, but also about culture and identity, the two laws gave them the legal possibility to exclude other from the island, which gave them back the feeling to have control over their lives. These laws have a serious consequence. Taquilean blood circulated for almost forty years on the Island, which means that inbreed is a common phenomenon. The doctor and the director of the secondary school affirmed that inbreed is a serious issue, especially if they continue marrying each other. The director told me that they are making effort to make the people aware of the consequences of inbreed. After several generations, the majority of the inhabitants are family related. Arrufo<sup>43</sup> explained what this means in terms of communication. Although the social cohesion and control is very strong, criticizing family members and godparents, whether with negative or positive intentions, is seen

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<sup>40</sup> implemented in 1968

<sup>41</sup> Landlord

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,COUNTRYPROF,PER,4562d94e2,4954ce0b2,0.html>

‘The Leader in refugee decision report’ consulted on 4 august 2010

<sup>43</sup> Arrufo Alcantara, head of the Anthropology department from the University of Puno , 7 April 2010

as a proof of no respect. This is consequently leading to passivity, fear and ignorance that lead to social silence in the community.

Now that people are aware of this problem, they have to be more open. They are conscience of the fact that they will have to leave the Island or let more foreigners in. They afraid that this new openness will make it difficult to maintain the Island culture, however, they fear 'people from outside' more than increasing tourism. But do they mean when they say 'people from outside'? When I asked Edgar what he would think of a Taquilean marrying a NGO, he said 'that would be great!

**S:** Why?

**E:** That would benefit the whole community!

**S:** In what aspect?

**E:** economically of course, that would be great!

**S:** But the fact that she has a different background, other habits and thoughts and skin color is not important?

**E:** Taquileans don't care about that. You can marry an African and nothing happens.

He says that Taquileans wouldn't feel threatened if a European or any other 'gringo' would live on the Island, assuming that they would always be rich and investigate their money in the community. That the outsider would contribute to the community is assumed since the community sense is part of being Taquilean. Later I asked Santiago, Zenong and Moises<sup>44</sup> about how they would receive immigrants from the more nearer parts of Peru like Cuzco or the neighbor Peninsulas, they are less enthusiast. They all say that it doesn't have to be a problem if they all adapt completely to the Taquilean cultural principles. These principles include clothing, working on the land and, to contribute to the community. It is remarkable that if someone has parents not originally from Taquile, any impediment is related to the fact that 'he or she is not really from here.' Señora Carmen told me how she is been

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<sup>44</sup> Informal conversation with Santiago, who was my second guest father, on 5 April 2010. Interview with Zenong, immigrant, manager of tourism, 3 March 2010. Informal conversation Moises, sun in law of Santiago, 10 April 2010.

discriminated for years, and that her otherness was related to her origin and her language, Aymara:

My parents come from two different places, one from Quechua and one from Aymara. And in Taquile they have always discriminated Aymara. They were like racists but then based on language. They would say, 'o she is 'cara,' which means 'from outside'. It is not a very strong word, but Aymaras always felt a bit inferior. They would say to my mother 'o she is Aymara' because she had a loud voice, like I have. As you have seen the women here whisper. There is a difference...I don't know how to explain... It is not that we scream, but I always answer questions, not just saying yes or no. And I don't cover my face like women did and still do here. <sup>45</sup>

Carmen noticed that she was different when she was young, because of her speech. She explained that Taquileans were forced to whisper in Quechua under the Spanish and their repressive successors. The fear to speak out loud seems to be internalized and turned in to a new custom. For the same reason women probably still wear their black capes, not only to protect their heads from the sun, but also to hide their faces when they feel unsafe, which is also called timid. Feeling a bit inferior has made Carmen to change her way of life conscious and unconscious by adapting Taquilean norms and values through time. As she said:

On Taquile you learn a lot of things. You learn to share with people, to be the equal, to be like them.

That she had to learn to be equal implies in this sense, that she had to adapt to Taquilean culture in order to be accepted and respected. She internalized the expectations of the community and makes effort to accomplish these. Because her parents were not both from the island, they don't owe enough terrain for private

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Carmen, restaurant owner 36 years, 17 april 2010

consumption. The income of her restaurant is therefore very important to survive. The rotary system of the restaurants is in the case of Carmen and Alfredo difficult to obey, since they don't own any land. Another rule is that all restaurant owners have to be present during meetings. Once Carmen could not be present, she was insulted in public by the head of the restaurant association who emphasized her origin, that she from outside, and demanded her to close for one week. This illustrates that origin is a strong component of otherness and often related to a lack of community duty. It is remarkable that otherness is emphasized when one can speak of a personal or social conflict.

The sister of Carmen, Jenny thinks different about integration. She states that 'nobody is the same so why would she adapt?' In every aspect Jenny thinks and behaves different than the unwritten community laws do expect from her. She wears different, more urban, clothes, and make up. She works for community and private transport and never closes her restaurant. She doesn't work on the land and she has ambitions to grow personally and economically as she told me. Her lack of interest in the community makes some people angry. Santiago commented annoyed on Jenny's lifestyle, emphasizing her origin:

A damned woman who doesn't understand, who doesn't want to understand the community sense. It is the ones from outside who thwart.<sup>46</sup>

Remarkable is that Jenny doesn't obtain self-respect and self-esteem by the recognition of the community, but by giving herself the space to choose how to organize her life. She didn't choose to adapt to Taquilean norms and values, but is practicing an own interpretation of Tequila culture. The general judgment about outsiders has a deep impact on the person in question but on his or her partner as well. Elias told me once that people called him a sort of traitor because he is married to someone from Cuzco. His wife, Elizabeth is therefore very carefully in talking with people, and after 3 years still feels resistance to go to public places like the main square and stores. Even after a long time, origin can still be an issue. Señor Zenong lives for already thirty years on the Island and is a great help for the community, although the people adore him, "it still is a minus point that he is not originally from

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<sup>46</sup> Interview with Santiago, restaurant owner, 10 april 2010

here.” Three years ago, Zenong ran for mayor. A strategy of the current mayor to win votes was that he recalled that such an authority should be someone originally from the Island. Zenong lost with one vote. When immigrants have different ideas than authorities about how tourism should be controlled, than origin becomes the explanatory factor of their rebellion. These cases illustrate how the few immigrants I spoke (The exact number of immigrants is unknown, but probably not more than 15) experience their ‘otherness’ and on what way they compromise between adaptation and assertion of certain cultural features.

The other within the community doesn’t always embody someone that opposes the personal and social values of the community; it can also present, as explained by Larrain (2000) and Erikson (1968), an example with whom they do identify and from whom they internalize expectations and ideas and behavior that are considered to be good, this can be anyone: a big brother, a godfather, a mother, etc. For Carmen, Zenong el Tipo embodies an example of an “outsider who adapted to the new environment and internalized the cultural thought. Besides he is ambitious, occupied several authoritarian posts and is willing to learn and to reflect upon himself and the community, Interaction between people in and outside the community is a process of mutual recognition and can lead to tension or fraternization. Tension, whether related to economical, cultural, political or social issues, enforces people to reflect upon themselves and upon the communal body of thought, and make them adapt to new circumstances or strive to maintain things the way they are. Consequently this affects the relation between Taquileans and tourists, tourism agencies and guides, the way people practice their profession. Furthermore it is modifying the relation between Taquileans and other actors who maintain a relation with the island like the NGO, Arrufo and the University of Puno.

In this part we explored the fundamental building blocks of Taquilean local identity. We have seen that under the influence of tourism certain features of their societal structures have evolved under the influence of tourism. In the next part I will demonstrate the local responses on the quest for authenticity. In this part I will refer to the others of this section and their role in the construction authenticity and Taquilean presentation.



## II

### **Constructing Authenticity**

*Poco a poco cambiamos pero siempre quedamos Taquile*

*(Santiago, Taquile, 2010)*

## From struggle to quest for Authenticity



Authenticity is strongly related to identity. The signification of the word refers to ‘the typical quality of a people’. The history of Taquile shows how they have been struggling against people from outside who wanted to change their lifestyle. Repression of culture in this sense means to lose authenticity.

On local, national and continental level, indigenous identity is discriminated for centuries, and as I have explained in the first section, they still suffer from stereotypes. For a long time, indigenous identities were seen as a barrier to modernization. But when tourism started a confusing shift took place: the struggle for authenticity turned into a quest for authenticity. For the first time, people from outside valued their lifestyle. Tourists respect their culture and are even interested.

Kristian and I were looking through the window. We could see how a group of exhausted tourists was looking for a place to sit on the patio of their house. Because the patio was reserved for a group, I was asked to sit inside, in their restaurant. They served me the same meal as they served the group. Kristian stayed with me and we were looking how they ate and talked. “When they finished their meal, I am going to dance for them”, he said. “O, do you like that?” I asked “Hmm” He murmured affirmative. “Kristian, come here, get dressed” commanded his dad. In a few minutes they transformed in good looking traditional Taquileans complete with head and belt, ready to give a dance performance.

*To be* Taquilean has become their work. They present who they are which means that they have to maintain the authenticity of their culture and to provide insight in the cultural practices. Parts of their culture has been ‘commoditized’, which means ‘that an event, ritual, performance or even people turn into a commodity, an article of trade, evaluated in terms of their exchange value’ (Kosters 2008:15). Dance, music, food has become part of the cultural package Taquile offers its audience.

Goffman (1959:244) explains that local people concede the search of the tourist by reacting on this, giving a performance that represents an idealized view of the situation, which stresses the traditional values of the society (1959:54-55). The belief in the performance is crucial, both for the spectator as for the performer. Although the authentic experience might be enacted, this does not mean that the tourist experiences authenticity less. With other words: a good illusion is not less real. Goffman (1959) argues that the role of the tourist is divided into a conceptual division of a front-stage and a back-stage. The front-stage is where the performance is given and is the accessible space for the tourist. The back-stage is the place where the 'other' is not expected to 'intrude.'(Goffman 1959: 116) However a tourist, especially a cultural tourist will desire to penetrate into the backstage to experience an even more authentic feeling, he is often kept outside. Simultaneously, MacCannell (1991) writes about 'staged authenticity', which means that tourists only see a part of 'real life' of indigenous people.



*Foto 4. Image taken by Edgar Elias. Taquile April 2010. Taquileans are dancing with tourists. They show their traditions and let the tourists participate to give them a more authentic experience.*

Even though the islanders don't use the word authenticity, they do use the different meanings and dimensions of the word as I have explained in the introduction: First, in line with MacCannell (1999) they give meaning to certain *objects* that have an

authentic value, for them and for tourists, mostly because it has an historical background, like their weavings, food and cloths. Secondly, in line with Wang (1999, 2000) they have certain events that are an authentic *experience* for them and for tourists, like dances, *pago* rituals and celebrations. And third, as Cohen suggested (1988) they are aware that authenticity is negotiable, knowing that tourists are looking for something ‘typical or traditional’ and that the island should look ‘*rustica*’<sup>47</sup>; they make a selection of cultural authentic practices that have importance for them, and satisfy the quest for authenticity of tourists. During my stay it became clear that the meaning of authenticity is shaped by the interaction between Taquileans and tourists. The interaction is an exchange of expectations about subjective interpretations of authenticity.

In the first part of this section I will sketch how Taquileans present themselves fontstage in their households, in performances and in the promotion video, made with the help of NGO Xcis, meant for the webpage of the community based tourism agency *Munay Taquile*. Each time we will take a look backstage how they give meaning to their activities. In the second part of this section I will describe how Taquileans experience commoditization of the textile production.

## **2.1 Front and Backstage in the households**

During the first days of my stay I noticed a clear division between front and backstage. My family gave me a private room to sleep and a special room to eat. The kitchen and their rooms are not mentioned for tourists for several reasons. First, they see the division as a service; they think that the tourists want their privacy. Second, they think that tourists have a different life standard and might consider their rooms and manners as non hygienic or uncivilized; as they do not eat from plates, cook with wood in a dark room without tables, chairs and cutlery. This also implies that they prefer curious tourists to stay outside in order to keep their privacy. After two weeks on Taquile I suggested my guest mother to cook together. Elizabeth was enthusiastic; she wanted to learn some new dishes. We sat in the kitchen and prepared the meal. I asked her whether I could stay in the kitchen to join her for

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<sup>47</sup> Rustic, with this word they refer to authentic and tranquil.

dinner. She said I could also eat in my room, but when I insisted she was ok with it. She said she really liked it to talk and learn new things. When she found out that I was completely comfortable sharing dinner on the ground in their kitchen. She said:

The division is a service; *a costumbre* like everybody does on the island. (...) I trust you now, but in the beginning I wasn't sure, you people have different kitchens and you might not like it or think it is dirty.

The majority of the people, who do have a restaurant and a kitchen, don't eat there, but make use of their traditional kitchens to cook and eat with the entire family. The reason they don't do that is because they are not used to it, in the traditional kitchen it is nice and warm because of the fire, besides they only eat soup at night so don't need a nice covered table with plates and cutlery. They are used to sit on their legs and therefore don't need chairs. Remarkable is that they serve tourists in ceramic tableware in order to literally serve an authentic image. They think that tourists will be less satisfied if they drink and eat from plastic bowls, which the inhabitants do backstage. They prefer plastic bowls and plates because it is less vulnerable.

It was interesting to see what my guest families served me and what they ate. It is common to serve pancakes and *tochtoti's*<sup>48</sup> in the morning. Some made delicious sweet pancakes with jam and baked as much as you wanted; some made only one flat flavorless piece of dough and then hurried back to their private kitchen to eat bowls of soup. Pancakes are a touristy meal, but have become more a common part of their own breakfast as well. Usually they eat potato soup or *tochtoti's*, but if they are baking pancakes for tourists, then they mostly bake some more for themselves. At lunch time, they only serve the traditional touristy meal for tourists, while they eat again most of the time soup. And at night they serve soup or again the entire touristy meal. The Bolivian and Danish NGO have an important role in the way families, who are a member of *Munay taquile*, present themselves to tourists. Mauje<sup>49</sup>, employee of the Bolivian NGO Praya, told me that she had given workshops in which topics like food, facilities and service were central. 'We are trying to make Taquileans aware that

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<sup>48</sup> Fried pieces of dough

<sup>49</sup> Mauje, employee de Praya, Bolivian Ngo on Taquile

if they want tourists to stay longer in their houses, they will have to offer more variety in food. Tourists love to eat something typical once, but not everyday if this is the same.<sup>50</sup> They also state that members of *Munay Taquile* should have a table to serve food, cutlery, toilet paper and soap, a candle for at night and clean sheets. The NGO's are striving for a combination of comfort and authenticity: very basic but not primitive.

Many times I have attempted to ask the mayor whether there is a tourism policy on the island. Unfortunately I never made a successful attempt. Other Taquileans told me that there is no real policy because it is the mayor who doesn't accomplish any law. As I mentioned before in the section about reciprocity, it is forbidden to build with concrete, because that would damage the authentic image of the island. This unwritten law is accomplished by the majority, but if someone rejects this collective opinion, he wouldn't be punished. The meaning and importance of authenticity is not for everybody the same.

It is interesting that the quest for authenticity has a limit with respect to the construction of housing facilities for tourists. Santiago made a picture<sup>51</sup> of his new toilets for the photo assignment.



*Foto 5. Image taken by Santiago. Taquile April 2010.  
Toilets of Santiago, roof of cane, tiles inside.*

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<sup>50</sup> Informal conversation with Mauje, 10 March 2010

<sup>51</sup> Image taken by Santiago. Toilets with a roof of cane and tiles inside.

When we discussed the pictures he told me cheerful that he was so proud on his new toilets that have a roof of cane and tiles inside. '*Rústica* and modern, what the tourists want.' The toilets for tourists are indeed different than their own. Their toilets are small constructions of corrugated iron with in the center a hole in the ground. Tourist toilets are mostly made of *adobe*<sup>52</sup>, foreseen of a ceramic po. Taquileans always use their own toilet because they are use to it, as Sylvano – owner of a hostel and restaurant- told me. Besides, and this is even more important, it economizes water and paper. The ceramic toilets are installed under pressure of tourists and agencies, because tourists wanted 'something to sit on'<sup>53</sup>, as Sylvano explained me. Sylvano continued, 'The majority of the tourists are elder people, between 20 and 70 and they want more comfort than younger people.' Alejandro Flores, one of the first who started tourism on Taquile explained me during an interview that the visitors in the seventies didn't ask much. 'They slept on ground like we did, in their sleeping bags; they wanted to live like us. The people now want more.'<sup>54</sup> It seems that comfort is something that people appreciate of modernization and that this doesn't limit the authenticity of the experience.

Cohen (1998) stated that commoditization can lead to a revival of cultural and traditional elements as soon as they become touristy attractions. Years ago roofs of cane were on Taquile the norm, because they could not afford a roof of different material. When the people had more to spend, they all bought the more sustainable corrugated irons. According to Anna<sup>55</sup>, this was modern, a step forward to modernization. However, tourist agencies are now requiring roofs of cane for esthetical reasons. They prefer the island to keep its 'authentic look'. A lot of islander I spoke agrees that this is more beautiful, but it is less sustainable than iron and takes more work. This example shows how the meaning of authenticity is negotiable and how new interpretations of the concept arise trough the interaction between Taquileans and other actors, like tourism agencies and guides.

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<sup>52</sup> Adobe is a Construction of clay and stones.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Sylvano, 11 April 2010

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Alejandro Flores 16 April 2010

<sup>55</sup> Anna, 17 years, 28 February 2010

## 2.2 The performances

Since tourists only stay for lunch, the restaurants offer traditional performances of their dances, music and weaving skills. For a tourist it is hard to find out whether the dance performance really belongs to the island, or if it originally comes from a neighbor peninsula. But as explained earlier, as long as the tourist *believes* in the performance, he is satisfied in his quest for authenticity. But as many tourists have told me: even if they are not sure of the authenticity of the performance, than the new entertaining experience becomes authentic.

In the next picture Carlixto<sup>56</sup> is demonstrating how Islanders wash their wool with natural soap.



*Foto 6. Image taken by the author. Taquile, February 2010. The guide explains how Carlixto (in front) is washing wool. The women behind demonstrate weaving skills. In his story he tells about the textile tradition and what the shape, colors and motifs mean. Carlixto: "I don't speak English like the guide, but I hope he is saying the right things. Some guides just make things up."*

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<sup>56</sup> Carlixto, uncle of Elias, father of my first guest family.



The guide was telling that this magnificent plant is growing on Taquile and is daily used to wash wool before spinning. Later Carlixto told me that this process takes too much time, and because of the short boat trip it is easier to buy wool that is already washed, spawned and colored. “But”, he said, “This is what tourists like to see”<sup>57</sup>. In all households I have been, they use soap and shampoo bought in Puno, on the mainland. But even though they might not use everything anymore they demonstrate, the majority selects objects and events that have meaning for them, they can identify with, because it has once belonged to their culture. Although, there are exceptions. One day I was having lunch in the restaurant of Sergio<sup>58</sup> called *Flor de Coca*. A guide was showing the weavings and the plant used as soap. After the demonstration a musician in Taquilean clothes started singing ‘typical traditional songs’ in Quechua and Aymara. Taquile is Quechua speaking and therefore is a song in Asmara not typical Taquilan. Nevertheless, the entertainment is contributing to the authentic experience of the tourists. After lunch he explained in an interview that he wants to extent his demonstration repertoire, because “that is what tourists like, and we want them to know who we are, because they only stay for two hours, so they leave, without knowing enough.”<sup>59</sup> Although he wants tourists to know who Taquileans really are, he also chose to add a performance frontstage, to something that has no cultural meaning backstage. This way he is showing a different local identity than other Taquileans might do.

From July the 25<sup>th</sup> till August the 8<sup>th</sup>, there is a special tourist festival on Taquile, called Santiago. During these days there is an artisan market on the main plaza were all the families expose their textiles for sale and give performances. Every day they demonstrate a traditional dance in which everybody participates. During this festival they are showing their typical and traditional practices and are supposed to represent ‘true’ Taquilean culture. Malvina, the daughter of Santiago-owner of accommodation Los Angeles<sup>60</sup>-, told me that they are all instructed to wear traditional clothes and

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<sup>57</sup> Informal conversation with Carlixto 3 April 2010

<sup>58</sup> Sergio, restaurant owner of *Flor de Coca*.

<sup>59</sup> Interview Sergio, 15 March 2010

<sup>60</sup> Hostel were I stayed for about two weeks

sandals, even though this is the coldest period of the year. July and August are for Peru touristy high season and is therefore the best period to capture tourists. The Taquilean calendar offers eight traditional festivities through the year. Most of them are announced on posters that are hanging in every room and restaurant.

During my stay I could join Carnival and *Semana Santa*. I noticed that there were very few tourists joining the one week during carnival celebration, but one woman who did, experienced something interesting. She said to a dressed up Taquilean that she thought that the big ceremony was supposed to start at twelve, and that it was already late, whereupon the Taquilean astonished replied: "This is our party señora, not of tourists!". However, tourists are welcome to participate. My guest family asked me to join them in traditional cloths. I was helped into a very short itchy legging and four skirts. After denouncing my sweater I had to wear theirs, just like their sandals of size zero. I was accepted by other Taquileans and some even found it entertaining. The general message was: you can join us, but we do this for ourselves. Carnival is a performance, but the audience is the locals themselves.

During *Semana Santa* again few tourists were joining the celebrations and ceremonies in the church. Although tourists were welcome to join them, they didn't encourage or promote it to the outside world. It became clear that although they announce their festivities on the website of *Munay Taquile* and use them as a tourist attraction, the events are realized by Taquileans and are meant for Taquileans. The events belong to their interpretation of their culture and identity.

At the end of my stay I joined a 4 days during festival called *Trajes de luces*, Moises told me that this festival comes officially from Puno and is imported to celebrate the finishing of a new communal principal path in direction of the beach. The Taquilean population worked on this path for weeks and the men and women were paid by the district Amantaní.<sup>61</sup> The money they earned was spent on a great dance contest party. They hired four professional big bands and official glittering costumes. For a week they practiced the dance choreography on the plaza and on the football field next to the primary school. Just like Carnival this party was meant for the hard working Taquileans and not for tourists. When the festival began, the island was four days long a musical bubble. The few tourists that were present were

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<sup>61</sup> Taquile belongs to the district Amantaní, also the name of their competitive neighbor island

welcome and could join them, but the celebration was organized for Taquileans. They didn't use the event to expand business, or attract more tourists. On the contrary, the majority of the money they had made was immediately spent on beer, costumes and the big bands, Moises told me

It has become clear that there is a difference in performances that are given for tourists and performances meant for themselves. The performances for tourists are considered as part of their work. These performances or objects have been commoditized. These performances are given frontstage and are constructed backstage. The performances for themselves however, like Carnaval and Semana Santa do not know the conceptual division front and backstage because they embody the audience themselves and the event has no economical purposes.

### **2.3 Front and backstage in the Munay Taquile Promotion Video**

During my presence a promotion video was in the make. This video will soon be found on the official site of *Munay taquile*. The community based tourism agency, co-organized by the NGO Xcis and Praya is offering *turismo vivencial*:<sup>62</sup> a type of tourism that includes the participation of tourists with the daily activities of the Taquileans. This was common in the eighties and nineties, but since the majority of the tourists only stay for lunch or maybe one night, this type of tourism doesn't exist anymore. The few tourists that do stay overnight will be called when diner is ready and eat in a separate room. *Munay Taquile* offers this type of tourism in the hope that tourists will choose for this sustainable and responsible experience, which is more 'authentic' than the regular tours, because you come closer to 'Taquilean reality.' They offer the possibility to join them in their work on the land and to participate in cultural practices like dancing and offering. During my stay Xcis and Praya worked on a promotion video in which they present Taquilean identity.

I could join the reunion in which the seven minutes during concept version<sup>63</sup> was demonstrated in which Kristina and Jonas played the leading parts. I noticed that some parts were romanticized. The video start with short descriptions

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<sup>62</sup> *Turismo vivencial*: participant tourism

<sup>63</sup> The concept version can be found on youtube.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgAP15qclss>

of the sphere: 'On Taquile there is no noise, no internet and no cell phone connection'. One can experience real silence on the island, nevertheless Internet is about to come and on some higher places you have phone signal. The majority of the Taquileans has cell phones and communicates via Extel with the mainland to control tourism. The next line in the video is: 'crime does not exist'. Many guides emphasize the absence of crime on the island and point at the doors without a lock as proof of evidence. However, almost all doors are actually foreseen of locks. Elisabeth told me that "stealing was not common because we earn about the same, but this is changing."<sup>64</sup> Physical crime is indeed rare on the island as far as I know, but this is something that happens between the walls. But there are forms of social and economical exclusion on the island. The envy between families about economical progress can tend people to exclude others in their economical sharing. But for the tourists this will not be visible. Since crime will not be part of the experience of tourists, it is considered legitimate to state this in the promotion video. The reaction and comments were interesting. When the video stopped there was silence, as if the material had to sink in first. Then somebody commented that the shots of the Floating Island, which is part of the route to Taquile, had to be shorter. Another suggestion was to add more Inca ruins, and the question rose why only Kristina and Jonas participated as tourists. They didn't like the shots with cloudy weather, but in general they were happy about the way their cultural identity was represented. It was interested to observe the negotiation about Taquilean identity between the video makers - whose goal is to make an attractive promotion video for foreign tourists, who care about sustainable and fair tourism-, while the Taquileans discuss about who they are and want to be.

On the video, tourists are warmly welcomed and are given a flower as proof of gratitude. Although this performance is not the normal procedure, it is what tourists can expect if they book the trip via *Munay Taquile*. Besides, tourists will be incorporated in daily activities, such as weaving and working on the land. This means that the guest families are no longer facilitating accommodation and food, but also an entertaining activity. They might have to change their normal routines in favor of the tourists, because that is what they are paid for. Indeed, it is possible that active

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<sup>64</sup> Informal conversation with Elisabeth, 25 february 2010

participating tourists are actually contributing to personal or communal tasks, but this will only be the case by simple tasks on the land. It is obvious that tourists cannot learn the weavings they produce in a few hours.

It seems that the Taquileans and the video makers moreover agreed on the presentation frontstage of Taquilean culture and identity. They have negotiated about how to present an authentic culture Taquileans can identify with. The result is selections of images that have an authentic value both, for them as for tourists. Some parts of the video are romanticized. However, this can be truly experienced if Taquileans actually adapt their behavior and body thought conform the video as soon as Taquileans are about to receive tourists via *Munay Taquile*. I cannot say whether they actually do, because until I left, there haven't been tourists who booked via Munay Taquile.

## Commoditization of textiles



Sylvano opened the cloth on the ground. The *chuspas* (small woven bag in which one keeps his coca leaves, made by women), *chullos* (hats with earflaps, knitted by men) and *fajas* (belts, woven by women), were spread out so I could all see them well. I was looking for a *chuspa* so I could join the salutation ritual between Taquileans. I saw a difference between old and new textiles. Sylvano explained that the personal and communal taste of people change, and also the taste of tourists. “What are you looking for?” He asked “the more traditional colors and motifs or do you prefer the bright colors?”



*Foto 7. Image taken by the author. Taquile, February 2010. Men during Carnival, decorated with a lot of 'chuspas', coca bags in which they carry some money to buy beer or they serve to carry a bottle of water. Men's hat refers to his social status. Red means married, red with a broad white stripe at the bottom means single. Authorities wear a different shape in all colors of the rainbow. During the festivities men and women wear their best clothes. On the rhythm of the drums and flute, played by men, women dance all day.*

Under the influence of tourism, weaving has become commoditized, which means that weavings are no longer solely made for personal use, but also for sale. To be able to produce weavings on bigger scale, the textile production underwent a transformation. An example is that the yarn is no longer natural and natural colored, but bought in Puno. In 2005 UNESCO declared the textiles of Taquile as “Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.” The declaration of UNESCO put the small island on the world map and in every travel guide. In this section I will elaborate the consequences of commoditization and describe the way commoditization is experienced.

#### **2.4 Consequences of commoditization**

The Taquilean weaving skills obtained recognition via international ways on global scale. At the entrance of the cooperative textile market stands a big announcement with the following explanation:

This title is recognition to the artistic, cultural, anthropological and historical value of the weavings, made by the inhabitants of this island. The economical activities created thanks to tourism have permitted the reinforcement and affirmation of the cultural identity of the Taquileans. On this way, the preservation of textile art, from 1970, (the era in which tourism activity began) turned into the main economic resource of income of the inhabitants. However, contemporary, the income the families receive for the sale of their weaving doesn't cover their basic needs. Therefore, the habitants, especially the younger ones, find themselves urged to realize other activities for living. This forms a risk for the preservation of the textile art. New generations Taquileans will no longer be dedicated to this activity, and the textile art will die with its grandfathers.

This is why, dear tourist, it is important that you know that by buying a textile on the island, helps to keep the ancestral art alive.

This explanation encourages tourists to buy their textiles, because this is the only way to prevent an ancestral tradition, and with that, a part of the Taquilean cultural identity, of dying. This is not entirely true. Weaving is an ancestral activity they have practiced for centuries before tourism started to develop, and won't just stop as soon as tourists stop buying their textiles. However, tourism does encourage Taquileans to produce more textiles than ever before. Weavings have become a commodity and the increasing tourism industry requires weaving production on a bigger scale. Consequently this led to a transformation not only in the textile production process but also in quality, colors and motifs. As Carlixto<sup>65</sup> told me, they buy manufactured woolen yarn from people from the mainland "because that is easier and not expensive, we don't have time to do the whole process by ourselves". Because the yarns are no longer colored naturally, the result is different. We can also see a difference in quality; some weavings are less fine. The little reduction in quality can be explained by the fact that tourism encourages work diversification. Some women and children for instance, spend more time in their restaurant, or attend transport service. Others, who cannot live of tourism, choose for temporary migration. It is common to work in a chicken farm in Lima or Tacna.

Another consequence of this proclamation is that the textiles know a higher status and therefore a higher price than the textiles in the rest of Peru. While the number of artisans grows (now 415), few are selling. Commoditization and the declaration of UNESCO have led to a transformation in textile production, but the impact goes beyond the textile production. Commoditization of textiles has changed the power relation between men and women. Slowly gender relations are evolving, also under the elder people. As Fortunata Huatta Flores observed years ago:

Women there were not important... Neither in assemblies nor in community reunions did they speak...

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<sup>65</sup> Carlixto, uncle of Elias my guest father in the first two weeks, 5 March 2010



Now that they earn their own money, it seems that in assemblies they decide issues regarding the sales of their textiles. (Matos Mar 1986: 392)

Women weave and men knit. Commoditization gave the women the opportunity to sell their textiles and gain money. The weavings of women are much more elaborated and take more time. The price for their textiles is therefore higher than the textiles of men. During my presence, the communal market offered more textiles made by men than by women. Although the women's weavings have higher prices, the offer of men's textiles is greater and more accessible for tourists to buy, since these are cheaper and wearable like gloves and hats in comparison with woven belts and bags. The earnings of the textiles women make, is a form of empowerment. As Honneth (1995) explains, systematic and structural exclusion of a person from having certain rights can damage the self-respect. The women's right to participate in the economical activities, to take responsibility for these activities and being contributory in the way the family is organized is contributing the women's self respect. An example of this growing self-respect is Carmen who wants to become mayor, which is at this moment, very unlikely to happen, but she is taking herself serious, which is the start. She embodies the increasing self respect and esteem of women on Taquile. Another example is Marie Loes who, sales representative of *Munay Taquile*. Authoritarian functions used to be solely fulfilled by men. She spends more time in Puno to attend tourists. This implies that she is acting outside the traditional norm of Taquilean women in order to develop her talent.

## **2.5 Experiences of commoditization**

In literature commoditization is mainly considered as a negative effect of tourism. As Greenwood states: 'culture is packaged, priced, and sold like building lots, rights-of-way, fast food and room service, as the tourism industry (inexorably) extends its grasp.' (Greenwood 1989:179, in Burns 2004:6) And he wrote about the 'use and abuses of 'local color' by tourism industry' and argued that 'commoditization of local people culture resulted in them being exploited.' (1989:172, in Burns 2004:6) However, there are authors that strike a different note, such as Cohen (1988), he says that 'If a product is only made for consumption on bigger scale and to make money,

it doesn't necessarily mean that the product loses its meaning, or that producers are less proud on their product and less motivated to make. A commodity can also turn into a meaningful symbol, on which people are still proud to show and to sell to foreigners' (Cohen 1988:380). To get a better understanding of the how commoditization can change the meaning of weaving, it is important to investigate how Taquileans experience weaving.

*Nos gusta hacer eso, estamos orgullosos de eso.*" (This is what we like to do, we are proud on this), said Moises to me when he showed me his unfinished "*chullo*". Sylvano told me that men and women are proud and happy when tourists buy something and recognize the value of their skills. During my presence I was given a pair of gloves and a *chuspa* (little flat bag) as proof of gratitude. At this moment their handmade textiles were a meaningful symbol and a way to personally express themselves. In each piece of textile, the motifs and colors tell a personal story.

The work pressure for men and especially for women is higher since they have to produce on bigger scale. The tradition is that women make a new belt for their husbands for each event. As soon as the men possess a new belt, he can also choose to sell it. It takes about a month to produce a fine woven *faja*. (Belt) and when it is sold, he expects from his wife to produce a new one. Although the work pressure is higher than before, this doesn't have a negative effect on the experience of Taquileans. An important note though, is that Tourists only stay for a few hours, which might affect the production and sale. Each week I spoke other Taquileans in the Artisan market and they all stated that they want more tourists, so they could produce and sell more. This wish comes probably forth out of a negative side effect of commoditization, which is the increasing competition of weavers and sellers.

## Conclusion



Tourism is one of the quickest growing industries in the globalizing world of today. The impact of this growth can be felt on both macro and micro level. There is a lot of literature about the negative and positive effects of tourism, but what is missing is the local voice of the host communities. This thesis is about the impact of tourism on local identity and presentation in Taquile in order to provide insight in how local communities experience and respond to tourism, understood in the context of globalization and modernization. Doing so, I used the concept of identity construction as a basic principle of my thesis to investigate: the social, economical and cultural impact on identity and presentation of the local inhabitants of Taquile Island.

### Identity

Honneth (1995) states that self recognition has three forms: self confidence, self respect and self esteem. These three forms of Self recognition can be damaged by three forms of disrespect: physical abuse or threat affects self confidence; structural exclusion of a person from having rights affects self –respect; cultural devaluation of modes of life or beliefs affects the self-esteem. These forms of disrespect can lead to reevaluation of one’s own culture or adaptation to the dominant culture. Under the regimes of Spaniards and repressive landlords Taquileans have experienced all three forms of dis-respect which damaged their self-recognition. On one hand this led to adaptation of certain cultural aspects to the dominant culture like clothes, language and belief. On the other hand, their nature belief and strong social principles have survived or have later been reevaluated. Tourism has played an important role in the recuperation of their self-recognition. Taquileans and their way of life complied with tourist’s search for an authentic experience. Their local cultural identity was now positively recognized, beyond the local and national boarder.

Historical occurrences are one reason why Taquile closed its boarders for a long time; others were kept outside as much as possible. The scarcity of land in combination with a duplication of the population and increasing inbreed enforced

Taquileans to search alternative ways to survive and consequently enforced them to open up for outsiders, new others. Tourism was a welcome solution to survive and, later, to develop and improve in economical terms.

When tourism started to develop on the island a lot of new people entered Taquile. These people consist of tourists, tourism related actors and immigrants, all with their own ideas about how tourism should be managed on the island. As Larrain (2007) stated, the internalization of 'others' are an important element in the construction of identity. What we have seen is that under the influence of tourism the local identity of the islander is constantly in state of revision. Others make the islanders reflect upon themselves and to position themselves over and over again. This change condition is translated into social, economical, and cultural tension or change. It became clear that the worldview of Taquileans, from which the societal structures are derived, before tourism, was characterized by a social interpretation of reciprocity, strong community sense, a strong connection to the earth and the will to control change. These elements have converted into the most important areas of tension during the development of tourism on the Island.

### **Areas of tension**

Before tourism was settled on Taquile reciprocity was a social contract, based on work, tasks. Under tourism it obtained a new, more business oriented dimension in relation with tourists and tourist related actors. Between Taquileans reciprocity still is interpreted as a social contract. In relation with tourists, it is interpreted as a service in exchange for money. Tourists are seen as fortune bringers but are also as a bridge to modernity. For example, almost every Taquilean child has foreign godparents who often pay for necessities, such as school books. Besides, some godparents buy or trade in modern gear, like football shoes or a solar panel.

Taquilean society is built on socialist principles, which are visible in the communal cooperatives, mutual social relations and collective thinking. Until the nineties the benefits of tourism were spread over the community. However, a change in mentality took place when tourism agencies decided to change the offer. The new general tourism route brought tourists to the neighbor Island Amantaní to pass the night and consequently dropped them on Taquile solely for lunch. Besides, guides from Puno executed pressure to make deals with them. These were important

motives for Taquileans to develop a more individual mentality. The strong community sense is still one of the most important features of Taquilean identity, but the will to develop and realize personal interests is present both *in the mind* of Taquileans, as well as in the actual behavior. However, they are not openly choosing for themselves, in order to avoid general disapproval by others. The community based tourism agency *Munay Taquile* is an expression of the strong community sense. On the other hand, we saw that some Taquileans make deals with guides, conscience of the consequences for the social relations within the community.

The general tendency in literature is to emphasize the economical negative effects of tourism such as exploitation or relate tourism to post colonial relations between the West and the local communities. In this thesis it became clear that Taquileans are knowledgeable active participants in tourism and co-decide about the direction of the tourism policy on their island.

Their strong connection to the earth is illustrative for the conservative and cautious attitude the islanders have, they have survived for centuries by living on the rhythm of the earth. Creativity was limited within the laws of nature. Tourism is a modern industry, regulated on the principles of the free market, requires a different kind of creativity. In this industry it is important to capture tourists, to marketing your culture. To manage tourism well and responsible, one needs to develop a new way of thinking. We could say that Taquile finds itself therefore in a reorientation phase. They are in splits: one leg is dug into the traditional present and past, while another is making a slow step to modernization. Taquileans are characterized by their strong will to control change. In order to keep control over the new resource Taquileans combine modernity with natural traditions, they don't ask Pachamama solely for a good harvest, but also for more tourists.

### **Presentation**

Tourism is generating a contradictive process: On the one hand Taquileans consider tourism as a local developing strategy that can bring them a step forward to modernization and a better future. On the other hand, tourism asks them to 'freeze' their culture. Tourism is doing a request on their authenticity, which puts them into a confusing position. The request enforces them to *define* who they are and who they want to be. In doing so, they negotiate with different parties, such as the NGO and

the agencies on the mainland about the presentation of their identity. This negotiation has led to a conceptual division of front stage and backstage (Goffman 1959). By showing the performances and ideas about front stage and the behavior and ideas about daily activities backstage, it became clear that the line between front and backstage is vague. What exactly occurs backstage and front stage can change voluntarily or under pressure of external forces such as NGO's and tourism agencies that have formed new ideas about authenticity or demand different, often more comfortable facilities. An example is that if one wants to be a member of *Munay Taquile*, you have to comply to certain criteria about accommodation facilities and behavior. Because this 'brand' offers participant tourism, tourists expect from Taquileans to be involved in their daily activities.

In this thesis it became clear that, although Taquileans do not use the word authenticity, they do use the meanings of the concept. In line with MacCannell (1999) Taquileans give meaning to certain *objects*. Secondly, they can *experience* authenticity (Wang 1999, 2000). And third, they are aware that authenticity is negotiable (Cohen 1988). It is difficult to determine what can become authentic for Taquileans, and when, because this can change. It is negotiable. Based on the research findings, we could say that something is or can become authentic if it serves them. Even something that does not belong to their culture can become part of their identity and gain the status of authenticity, which also happened with Catholicism, and can happen as we have seen, with *The Virgin of Water*, a statue that Victoria<sup>66</sup> wants to introduce. What can become authentic for tourists, and when, depends on the convincement of performance of the Taquileans. The tourists need to *believe* in the authenticity of the performance. The meaning of authenticity of the performance frontstage is shaped by the interaction between Taquileans and tourism related actors. The interaction is an exchange of preferences and expectations about subjective interpretations of authenticity.

When objects, events or even people can be evaluated in terms of exchange value, they have become a cultural commodity (Kosters 2009). The performances and the weavings are the most important elements of Taquilean culture that have become commoditized. Taquileans consider commoditization as a strategy to

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<sup>66</sup> Victoria wants to start mystical tourism on Taquile.

develop and to modernize. But this doesn't mean that they are prepared to give up their culture. So far, commoditization is restricted. Not every feature of Taquilean culture has become an article of trade, and the performances are carefully selected. This study has given the locals a voice in the debate about commoditization and the result is that despite the negative sound in literature about commoditization, Taquileans derive satisfaction and a positive self image of this phenomenon. This is on the one hand because their work is a personal way of expression relation to others, as a social being and as Taquilean. On the other hand, thanks to tourism is their work for the first time positively recognized. The sale of textile contributes to the improvement of their economical situation and is therefore considered as a step to a better future. The side effect however, is increasing competition.

As is shown in this study, there are many dimensions of culture and identity, and these are always 'under construction'. Every culture and cultural identity changes through time, but this doesn't mean that they devalue.

### **Globalization**

In April, 34 families installed television with the capacity to receive 40 channels for 41<sup>67</sup> soles a month. In June 2010 they would get public Internet and a regular phone connection. What does this mean for the Taquilean lifestyle, their identity and the way they represent their identity? Would kids and adults prefer television above weaving or playing outside? To what programs would the Taquileans watch, and will this influence their self-image or self esteem? Would they all wear urban clothes within a few years? Or would it not make any difference? What is the role of the isolated location in this sense? The reaction of Taquileans on the coming of Internet was enthusiastic. 'Great, now we can e-mail with family members in Lima or Cuzco!' said Juan<sup>68</sup> while we were walking to the main dock. The reaction of some tourists I spoke to was the opposite: 'A pity, it will ruin this beautiful and tranquil island,

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<sup>67</sup> The currency was 3.7, which makes it 11, 08 euros.

<sup>68</sup> feigned name, 17 April 2010

people will change'. And: 'this quiet place is so unique, people go here for its beauty and tranquility, and can you imagine hearing television?'

According to Ida & Rosaldo (2008) globalization can lead to "deterritorialization", which means that the ties between place and culture become weaker. Consequently a process of "reterritorialization" can take place, which refers to the process of "relocalizing" culture in special environments. In the case of Taquile, the ties between culture and location are very strong. The geographical isolated location is a binding factor for their cultural identity. Besides, the location plays a role in the rapidness of modernization in material sense and *in the mind* of Taquileans. They are not in directly in contact with the mainland and experience therefore less influence of others. The research findings have shown that they are selective in what they add, change, or loose, the tendency is that they stick to their traditions, but are open for new ideas, as long as it serves them. Although people change clothes when they go to the mainland, to prevent discrimination, on the island the majority wears traditional clothing. At the same time, they have introduced a festival that comes originally from Puno. However, it seems that Taquile is only at the beginning of globalization. It would be very interesting for further research to analyze the effects of tourism on identity and presentation after five years.

*Poco a poco cambiamos, pero siempre quedamos Taquileños*: we change bit by bit, but we will always be Taquileans, said Santiago. This quote illustrates the way the changing world outside Taquile affects the islanders, but also that there is an essence in *being* a Taquilean that will never disappear. For the majority of the people, this essence means being born or to live on Taquile. Every other aspect of Taquilean culture might evolve trough time, but this doesn't make the Taquileans less Taquilean.



## A word of Gratitude

As soon as the sun came up, the colors turned extremely bright. A line was drawn over the peaks of the Bolivian mountains and the birds threw out their melody that is carried over the Island by a soft wind. When I was on my way out, I saw a little girl that grabbed a sheep by the horns. She shook the animal's head for a while with power, but with no mean intentions. Her brother was playing with the cat and a blank chopped off chickens paw. Their clothes were dirty and would become dirtier today, but who cares?

Every morning I woke up with a feeling of great satisfaction. Although I was longing for a real shower every week, I felt in complete harmony on the Island. I was only bored at the beginning after diner, because there was absolutely nothing to do. I played patience many times, regretting I didn't bring any movies or funnier games. I wasn't used to eating alone, so I ate just as many magazines as potatoes, until I found out the joy of being with myself and I. However, after a while, when I found my niche, I had a great time with the locals. They are friendly and have a great sense of humor and celebration. I admire them for their tranquil personality and physical energy at the same time. I want to thank all my informants and my guest families who doors were always open, and who cooked delicious!

I wouldn't have enjoyed Taquile as much as I did, if I hadn't had the opportunity to call my boyfriend and family now and then. With as much disbelief as I had sometimes, they listened to all my stories, and I to theirs.

I also need to thank Kristina, Jonas and Jacob; three Danes who worked for the NGO and were great to hang out with. We exchanged ideas and frustrations on the island and on the mainland in our favorite bar.

I want to thank Sonia, the sweetest hostel owner of my place in Puno and Arrufo Alcantara who gave me insight in the social codes of Taquile. Mourik, his wife and his sister in law opened their doors for me. I could make use of their personal library and have a chat. They really made me feel home.

When I left Taquile by boat and looked back to see a last glimpse of the island, I realized how lucky I was. Being happy that research is never done to perfection, I will have to come back someday, with pleasure.

Thank you Marike, and my love Erik, for giving me structure, trust and feedback and being patience until the end. Thank you Vaishaly, Marieke, and classmates for the inspiring breaks in the library!

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