“THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF AUTHENTICITY IN MEXICAN RESTAURANTS”

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the social worlds of the Mexican restaurant industry. First, the topic of organizational constructions and presentations of authenticity is investigated. In examining the relation between discourses of business (profit) and aesthetics (authenticity) in Mexican restaurant contexts in which authenticity is a major theme, this study demonstrates the processes of negotiation and policing which form the “authentic” experience for patrons of restaurants.

The second major theme explored in this dissertation is the subjective dimension of authenticity among Mexican immigrant men. Based on data gathered in the field, this project introduces the concept of gender posturing and homosocial behaviors as a means of developing a pragmatic understanding of the many ways male restaurant workers define, perform, negotiate, and police the boundaries of acceptable forms of masculinity while simultaneously performing traditional feminine work in a socially constructed workplace in which masculinity is of premium importance.

The third major theme of this project blends discussions of organizational and subjective dimensions of authenticity as it explores the basis and negative impacts of stereotypes on ethnic restaurant profitability.