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For neither love nor money: Gender, sexuality, and tourism in Costa Rica

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For Neither Love Nor Money: Gender, Sexuality, and Tourism in Costa Rica

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
List of Figures	v
Abstract	vi
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Relevance of Tourism Research	1
Anthropological Approaches to Tourism	1
Tourism and Economic Development	2
Tourism and Culture Change	3
Tourism in the Caribbean and Latin America	4
Why Tourism Research?	5
My Research	5
Statement of the Problem	5
Why Do This Research?	6
What I Thought I'd Find	7
Proposed Applied Dimensions	8
Data are Different than Expected	8
Applied Anthropology and Tourism Research	9
STD Risk as Applied Problem	12
Organization of the Dissertation	15
Chapter Two: Issues of Sex and Tourism	18
Tourism	18
Tourists Defined	18
Types of Tourism in the Caribbean and Latin America	19
Sex and Tourism in the Caribbean and Latin America	27
Female Sex Tourism	30
Female Sex Tourism in Costa Rica	34
Sex Tourism Semantics	35
Impacts of Sex Tourism	37
Gender Roles, Power, and Sexual Risk Factors	37
<i>Machismo</i> in Latin America	37
Impacts of <i>Machismo</i> on Latin American Women	39
Changing Roles of Women and Sexual Life in Latin America	40
Gendered Power and Risk of HIV and other STD's	41
Men Typically Control Condom Use	43
Disinhibited Female Travelers	48
Summary	50

Chapter Three: Methodology	51
Guiding Research Questions	51
Fieldwork and Key Informants	53
Ethnographic Data Collection Strategies	58
The Spanish Language	59
Male Tourism Worker Interviews	60
Demographics of Male Tourism Worker Interviewees	64
Flirtatious Male Interviewees	67
Female Tourist Interviews	68
Observations	69
Participant Observation	70
A Self-Reflective Anthropologist in the Field	72
Validity and Reliability in Ethnographic Research	74
Flaws in the Research	77
Data Analysis	77
Dissemination	78
Ethical Considerations	78
Methods in Sex Tourism Research	80
Chapter Four: Tourism in Costa Rica	83
Costa Rica's Population	83
Tourist Destinations in Costa Rica	85
The Role of Tourism in Costa Rica's Economy	87
The Political and Economic Climate	87
Tourism in the Economic Context	89
Tourist Workers' Perceptions of Costa Rican Tourism	90
Male Interviewees' Work in Tourism	90
Employment and Financial Opportunities	91
Economic Development	92
Impacts of Tourism on Costa Rica	94
Tourists in Costa Rica	96
Recommendations for Change	100
Explaining Tourism in Costa Rica	101
Tourism, Economic Development, and Modernization	101
Economic Impacts of Tourism	102
Social Impacts of Tourism	103
Conclusions about Tourism in Costa Rica	103
Chapter Five: Why <i>These</i> Relationships?	105
Relationships between Female Tourists and Men Working in Tourism	105
Interactions with Tourists	105
Why People Participate in These Relationships	107
Mutual Sexual Attraction	107
Fantasies of the Exotic Other	113

Liberal Foreign Women	114
Mature, Sexually Experienced Women	119
The Latin Lover	122
Sex on Holiday	129
Economic Gain vs. <i>Machismo</i>	137
Unhappiness at Home	141
Conclusions about Female Sex Tourism in Costa Rica	144
Chapter Six: Relationships Begin, End, and Have Consequences	145
Costa Rica's Reliance on Tourism Makes Relationships Possible	145
What Happens in These Relationships	147
Initiation of the Relationships	147
Sex, Romance, Love	158
Ending Relationships	169
Impacts of the Relationships	171
Personal and Professional Lives	171
Sexually Transmitted Diseases	174
Economic Impacts on Costa Rica	178
Summary	179
Chapter Seven: Conclusions and Applied Dimensions of the Research	181
Conclusions	181
Relationships with Female Tourists	182
Policy Views about Tourist Sexual Relationships	182
Recommendation	184
Costa Rica's Tourist Industry	185
The Lived Experience of Men Working in Tourism	185
Recommendations	186
Self-Reflection in Data Analysis	187
Applied Project	188
Risk of Sexually Transmitted Diseases	189
Web site	192
Recommendations for Future Research	197
Sex Tourism and Sexually Transmitted Diseases	197
Sex Tourism, Wives, Girlfriends, and Families	198
Impacts of Tourism on the Local Population	198
References Cited	201
Appendices	216
Appendix A: Interview Instrument: Male Tourist Industry Workers	217
Appendix B: Interview Instrument: Female Tourists	222
About the Author	End Page

List of Tables

Table 3.1	Informants, Interviews Arranged, Place and Date of Interview	62
Table 3.2	Characteristics of Male Interviewees Working in Tourism	66

List of Figures

Figure 2.1	Conceptualizing Sex Tourism Encounters	24
Figure 2.2	Intentionality and Sex Tourism	27
Figure 4.1	Map of Costa Rican Tourist Destinations	87
Figure 7.1	Safe Sex and Travel in Costa Rica, homepage	193
Figure 7.2	Safe Sex and Travel in Costa Rica, Women Travelers	194
Figure 7.3	Safe Sex and Travel in Costa Rica, The Men	195
Figure 7.4	Safe Sex and Travel in Costa Rica, The Issues	196

For Neither Love Nor Money: Gender, Sexuality, and Tourism in Costa Rica

Ellen Puccia

ABSTRACT

Costa Rica has been a popular tourist destination for decades, and is currently the second largest industry in the country. With so many tourists coming into the country, Costa Rica provides a rich environment within which to examine sex tourism. Costa Rica is a known destination for male sex tourists hoping to experience legal prostitution or child prostitution. Although it is lesser known, female sex tourism also occurs in Costa Rica.

Female sex tourism occurs in the form of pseudo-romantic relationships between female tourists and Costa Rican men working in the tourist industry. These people spend a great deal of time together on tour, and relationships occur frequently. Men are seeking interesting sexual exploration, while women tend to be looking for the “Latin Lover.” These relationships are not characteristic of prostitution, as no goods or services are exchanged for sex. These relationships may best be characterized as romantic.

Chapter One: Introduction

The focus of my dissertation is female sex tourism in Costa Rica, that is, an examination of the sexual relationships that develop between female tourists and men working in the tourist industry in Costa Rica. As an introduction to the topic, I begin by examining the situational context of the dissertation: tourism. Tourism, in general, is a rich topic for an applied anthropologist, as will be discussed later in this chapter. After understanding the context of tourism, it is important to explain how I began this research, discuss how the research is applied anthropology, and to examine the specific applied context of the dissertation: demonstrating to women travelers that they face an increased risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) when they have sex while on holiday.

Relevance of Tourism Research

Anthropological Approaches to Tourism

Crick (1989) says that tourism seems to be a fitting topic for anthropologists who are mainly interested in culture contact because international tourism, after all, requires that people from two different cultures come into contact with each other. Crick (1989) is quick to point out, however, that tourists have not been widely studied by anthropologists. Most work on tourism that has been done by anthropologists has focused on how tourism affects host communities, and much early research accentuated

the negative impacts of tourism. More and more, scholars are finding that tourism has some benefits for host communities. In fact, some studies have shown that when members of host communities have been asked about tourism in their countries, they say that it is a positive experience, for reasons such as increased wealth and modernization as a result of tourism (Gamradt 1995, Freitag 1994, Crick 1989).

Tourism and Economic Development

Social scientists have criticized tourism as a development strategy because of adverse economic consequences and because of culture change. “Tourism is not a secure growth industry. Not only are there the obvious seasonal fluctuations in arrivals, but the developed economies themselves also go through economic cycles; and during recessions, demand for overseas travel declines” (Crick 1989:315). Additionally, the people from the host countries generally do not see many of the profits from tourism. If any people from the host countries see any economic benefits from tourism, they are generally the countries’ elite, not the people who work in the tourist industry. While many people in these countries are employed in the tourist industry, they are employed in low-skill and relatively low-paying jobs. This increase in employment makes tourism a positive option for Third World governments and makes tourism look like a positive aspect for the people living in the host country (Crick 1989). O’Connell Davidson (1998) suggests that tourism does not even provide much employment for the local people as many jobs are, in fact, occupied by expatriates. Most of the benefits that come to the local people come from informal jobs in tourist areas. Most profits also leave the host countries as the money travels back to the home country of the foreign investors (O’Connell Davidson 1998).

Many hotels are owned by multinational corporations, and the profits go back to the countries from which the tourists come. In order for developing countries to use tourism as a development strategy, they often have to “borrow overseas capital to build infrastructure, (with) the continuing interest payments promot(ing) dependency rather than the reverse” (Crick 1989:316, see also Dogan 1989). Many researchers see this as “the new colonialism,” since “to opt for tourism as a growth strategy is to ask for continued control by overseas forces” (Crick 1989:321). In order for tourism ventures to continue to grow and compete with other locales, more money must be borrowed (Chambers 2000).

Tourism and Culture Change

Anthropologists tend to focus on a different kind of criticism of tourism: that of culture change in the host communities. Crick (1989) criticizes this attitude for not taking other forces into consideration. “Given that social change in the Third World is highly complex, the attribution of adverse changes to tourism rather than to urbanization, population growth, the mass media, etc., often appears arbitrary,” and “tourists may have been chosen as conspicuous scapegoats” (Crick 1989:335). In some cases the indigenous people in host communities have been known “to imitate tourists who represent for them a respectful and higher civilization” (Dogan 1989:217, see also Crick 1989).

Additionally, traditional festivals and/or ceremonies and dances may “lose their authenticity and a similar culture grows everywhere in order to satisfy the standard desires of the mass tourists” (Dogan 1989:218, see also Crick 1989). Chambers (2000) suggests that methods of hospitality are also becoming increasingly standardized

throughout the world in a desire to placate tourists. Tourism is also criticized as a way of bringing market exchange to people who would traditionally use such forms of exchange as reciprocity. This use of market value and money exchange is far less personal than use of their traditional exchanges would be (Crick 1989, Dogan 1989).

Some benefits of tourism “are increasing modernization and integration with urban civilization, increase in services provided by the government, a more democratic and tolerant political climate, the development of national and ethnic consciousness, . . . and emancipation of women” (Dogan 1989:220). Tourism may also improve communications and transportation in host countries (Stronza 2001). As both Crick (1989) and Dogan (1989) suggest, there may be costs and benefits of international tourism for host communities. In some places tourism has caused environmental preservation while in other places it has caused degradation. Tourism has “weaken(ed) tradition” in some areas while in other areas it has “rais(ed) historical consciousness” (Crick 1989:337).

Tourism in the Caribbean and Latin America

“The Caribbean is said to be the world’s most tourism-dependent region, relying as it does on tourism for approximately 25 percent of its export earnings (compared to a world average of about 7 percent)” according to the WTO (Holder 1996:148). Tourism began in the Caribbean region in a few countries such as Cuba in the 1940’s and 1950’s and spread to other countries in the region after the Cuban revolution in 1959 and the subsequent end of their tourist industry (Holder 1996).

“By the mid-1990’s, regardless of size or level of economic development, there was not a single Caribbean state that had not ranked tourism as *the* priority for economic

development or as being among the priorities” (Holder 1996:149). Growth in international tourism to the Caribbean has grown at higher rates than in any other region, and will likely continue to do so. The region will continue to be dependent on tourism as a result, especially since other economic exports are no longer as profitable as they once were (Holder 1996). Most countries in the Caribbean depended on export or refinement of such products as sugar, coffee, bananas, rum, tobacco, and cotton until the advent of tourism in the region. Now, the people who travel to the Caribbean as tourists are from the same countries that colonized these islands, England, France, the Netherlands, and the United States, hundreds of years ago. While they have gained political independence, they are still dependent on these nations for much of their economic activity (Holder 1996).

Why Tourism Research?

Because tourism is relied on so heavily by developing nations, especially those in the Caribbean and Latin America, as a means of development, tourism research is particularly valuable. Tourism is also one of the primary mechanisms of globalization, which currently is studied a great length. Further, tourism is experienced by nearly all people, either as a traveler or a native in a place where people travel. This makes tourism a particularly wide-reaching phenomenon, and therefore a perfect topic for an applied anthropologist to examine.

My Research

Statement of the Problem

In my research I address the issue of female sex tourism in Costa Rica. In particular, I examine the sexual relationships that develop between men working in the

Costa Rican tourist industry and female tourists who travel there. I wanted to understand why these relationships exist, what happens in the context of these relationships, and what impacts, if any, these relationships might have on the participants. The potential impacts of the relationships lend themselves most to applied interventions, both providing recommendations for future research and illuminating areas most in need of dissemination about the topic of female sex tourism in Costa Rica.

Why Do This Research?

Every time I tell someone about my dissertation research, I am faced with the question “why did you decide to study this?” so I thought that I should include the answer to that question in my dissertation. I have traveled to Costa Rica eight times since 1997 as a student, a tourist, and a researcher, staying there for a week to three months at a time. My range of experiences in the country led me to the idea of writing my dissertation about sex tourism. While a student in the country, my home stay was in a home that housed a tour company. I was able to interact with tour bus drivers, guides, and tourists regularly. I was also given the opportunity to travel with the groups on weekends.

Day after day on my tours I would see at least a few female tourists and men working for the tour companies and hotels showing interest in each other. I learned that sexual relationships between these women and men were not only common but also sometimes expected, and I wanted to know more about them. I was interested in the dynamics of the relationships and whether or not either party was taking advantage of the other. Most literature suggests that men who have sexual relationships with female tourists do so to take advantage of the women and reap economic benefits (Pruitt and

LaFont 1995, Phillips 1999, Karch and Dann 1981). Only O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor (1999) have suggested that female sex tourists exert power over the men with whom they have sex while traveling. The literature about male sex tourism suggests that when men are the sex tourists they are taking advantage of impoverished women who have no choice but to sell sex in order to survive (Antonius-Smits, et al. 1999, Cabezas 1999, Fusco 1999, O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 1999, O'Connell Davidson 1998). While it has been claimed that men or women with economic means might be taking advantage of poor people in the countries visited, only men were suspected of taking advantage of tourists for money, even in cases where women had economic means and men did not. I also viewed this research as particularly valuable because it contributes to a scant body of literature on the subject female sex tourism, which is becoming studied more and more but is still the least explored type of sex tourism.

What I Thought I'd Find

I expected to find that men working in the tourist industry in Costa Rica were accepting money and/or other goods as informal payment for having sexual relationships with female tourists. I thought that I would find this in spite of the fact that these men are employed and are making a good living relative to other people in the country. I expected to find that these men were taking advantage of women tourists who did not realize that they were being used for economic gain. I based my expectations in large part on my literature review in which I found that even in cases where romance was a motivator for having a relationship with a tourist and neither party believed that they

were participating in prostitution, people in the locations visited still expected money and/or other goods from sex tourists (Pruitt and LaFont 1995).

Proposed Applied Dimensions

I proposed to my committee that I would work to empower these female tourists who were being taken advantage of by these men. I planned to get the information gathered in my dissertation out to as many sources as possible including travel literature, newspapers, and a web site devoted to reporting my findings. I wanted women to know that they needed to expect that any of the men with whom they had relationships while in Costa Rica might expect economic gain in return. The idea was that if women knew in advance that this might happen, they would be better prepared to ensure that it did not.

Data are Different than Expected

With my proposal approved by my committee, I went to Costa Rica to collect data. What I found was not what I expected. Men are not accepting payment for sex from female tourists. They are, in fact, telling me that they are refusing money when it is offered. This changed one part of my proposed applied projects. Since women were not being taken advantage of financially, there was really no reason to work to stop it or to work to empower women against it. My intention to work to empower women, however, is still relevant as I have shifted the applied focus of my dissertation to safe sex practices and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STD's). Women may not be duped into supplying men in Costa Rica with money or other goods, but they are allowing these men to, in large part, determine whether or not they are having safe sex. The culmination of my dissertation research endeavors is still to widely disseminate my

findings and still includes a web site. Now, the web site is devoted to empowering women to control their safe sex practices and provides relevant data to demonstrate that women retain the power to insist on safe sex and must be clear about what they want, requiring condom use in their relationships with men in Costa Rica.

Applied Anthropology and Tourism Research

Anthropologists have been studying tourism since colonialism (Enloe 1989). Tourism is “relevant to many theoretical and real-world issues in anthropology” (Stronza 2001:277). “For one, tourism occurs in most, if not all, human societies. It is, at least, safe to say that people in nearly every society have been touched in some way by tourism” (Stronza 2001:264). Tourism is also significant to anthropologists because it is a “catalyst of economic development and sociopolitical change” (Stronza 2001:264). Additionally, anthropologists are particularly interested in the fact that tourism brings together people from different cultures in ways in which it is easy to share cultural ideas (Stronza 2001). Chambers (2000) states that tourism is about more than economics or resulting cultural change. “It is also about the uses of power and about the ways people choose to represent themselves” (Chambers 2000:31).

The practical issues surrounding tourism and development make tourism a particularly relevant topic for applied anthropologists to study since applied anthropology “is concerned with the solution of practical problems” (van Willigen 1993:7). Applied anthropologists may decide to concentrate on a number of “problems” such as policy issues surrounding the use of tourism as a development strategy, economic issues of international commerce, and/or the effects that tourism has on the people who live in the developing countries, just to name a few. My research focuses on

the latter as I study how the tourism industry is being experienced by men who work in the Costa Rican tourist industry, especially as those experiences relate to their interactions with female tourists. Given the nature of these relationships, a focus on STD prevention has also materialized. While I did not start this research intent upon doing an applied project about STD risk, I did include questions about the topic because I was concerned about the consequences of the relationships. That the participants in these relationships leave themselves open to an increased risk of STD transmission, is an important consequence of sex tourism in Costa Rica. Given that the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates of the numbers of adult Costa Ricans living with HIV has nearly doubled between 2001 and 2007 this focus is particularly relevant (WHO 2008). Also, “AIDS is the fourth leading cause of death among women and men between the ages of 25 and 44,” (Wingood and DiClemente 2000) the general age range of the participants in this research.

This aim of increasing condom use in sexual relationships between female tourists and men working in Costa Rican tourism is also very important given that the National AIDS Committee Officer in Costa Rica, working for the national Ministry of Health, suggests in her survey to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) that the national priorities for prevention strategies in the country are men who have sex with men, sex workers, clients of sex workers, and prison inmates, there is not a current focus on other sub-populations (UNAIDS 2008). Since the WHO (2008:13) found that there were only 42% of Costa Ricans aged 15-24 who could “both correctly identify two ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV and who reject two misconceptions about HIV transmission,” many people within the country could use

information about prevention strategies. Absent these efforts, demonstrating to travelers to Costa Rica that they should insist upon safe sex, is a good idea. Without increased education efforts, the current 0.4% rate of HIV in the Costa Rican population (WHO 2008) could increase. Since men working in the tourist industry in Costa Rica are having frequent sexual relationships with women travelers, any attempts at safe sex education or empowerment to increase condom use would be particularly beneficial in keeping the HIV rate low. Additionally, my research project contributes to an emerging body of literature on the topic of sex tourism.

When trying to understand the consequences of modern tourism, Chambers (1997:2) suggests that ethnography presenting the “native’s point of view” is very important and often missing from tourism research. For this reason, anthropologists have “the most to contribute.” Perhaps the most important contribution an anthropologist can make is aiding in understanding the impacts of tourism on the host countries and people who live there. Chambers (1997:8) suggests that the anthropological research that describes “some of the social and cultural consequences of modern tourism development” is an example of applied anthropology. That descriptive ethnographic research leads to a greater understanding of contemporary human issues makes that research applied in nature. The primary role of the applied anthropologist is to transfer “knowledge about one sector of humanity to another” (Chambers 1985:29).

As Chambers (1985:17) suggests, “applied research is subject . . . not only to scientific criteria of validity and reliability, but also to various criteria of utility – such as relevance, significance, and credibility. In like manner, the identification of applied research problems . . . is heavily invested in concerns of value as well as in those of

strictly scientific-empirical knowledge.” My research is relevant, as I provide a greater understanding of how the lives of men working in the Costa Rican tourist industry are impacted by the tourist industry in the country. I provide information about how their interactions with female tourists may affect their lives. I also take this information to provide relevant data to potential female tourists about their risk of STD’s as I disseminate the information gathered through my dissertation research. Research is “useful” when it offers “insight into salient patterns of tourism development” (Chambers 1997). I am disseminating my research findings widely, as I have created a web site as the culmination of my work that is designed to empower women travelers to take control of their safe sexual practices and therefore reduce their STD risk. My findings are eminently usable, and “applied anthropology is anthropology put to use” (van Willigen 1993:7).

STD Risk as Applied Problem

While many issues may be examined pertaining to STD risk and travel, the final product of my dissertation is a web site designed to empower women to negotiate for condom use in their sexual relationships with men in Costa Rica. While the web site is specifically aimed at female travelers and is based on information gathered in Costa Rica, I hope that the web site may also provide guidelines that would be useful in other sexual situations. The information gathered in my dissertation has also led to targeted brochures aimed at women traveling to Costa Rica for field schools, foreign language schools, and study abroad programs, as these women constituted more than half of my female tourist sample.

In 2004, “nearly 50% of infected people worldwide were women, up from 35% in 1985. In nearly every region of the world, the number of women with HIV/AIDS has risen, and, in most regions of the world, women and adolescent girls represent an increasing proportion of people living with HIV/AIDS” (Dworkin and Ehrhardt 2007:13). Half of all women newly infected with HIV are infected by their spouses or primary partners (Dworkin and Ehrhardt 2007), and married women are more likely to have a difficult time negotiating condom use with their husbands than are single women with their partners (Wellings, et al. 2006). Several studies have concluded that women in these cases did not use condoms for a variety of different reasons such as lack of power within their relationships (Orubuloye, Caldwell, and Caldwell 1993, McGrath, et al. 1993, and Feldman, et al. 1997, Wingood and DiClemente 1998), lack of social and economic resources (Dworkin and Ehrhardt 2007, Orubuloye, Caldwell, and Caldwell 1993, McGrath, et al. 1993, and Feldman, et al. 1997, Wingood and DiClemente 1998), a desire to keep their reputations intact (Gomez and Marín 1996, Ford and Norris 1993, Cabada, et al. 2007, Abel and Fitzgerald 2006), limited access to purchasing condoms (Romero-Daza and Freidus 2008), and an inability to successfully negotiate condom use with their partners (Otto-Salaj, et al. 2008, Abel and Fitzgerald 2006). These issues could play a role in women travelers’ inability to use condoms while on holiday as well. Targeting women travelers in an attempt to increase condom use is a strategy designed to protect both women and the men who have sex with them. “Although sexual risk reduction is of equal importance to men and women, available educational programs typically assume that women and not men should be the recipients of negotiation skills training” (Otto-Salaj, et al. 2008:152).

An effective intervention aimed at increasing condom use would not necessarily focus on education about the transmission of HIV and other STD's. Many programs already teach people about STD infections, including symptoms, treatment, and prevention strategies (Abel and Fitzgerald 2006, Ito, et al. 2008). In fact, all of the participants in my research know about STD infections and that the best prevention strategy is consistently using condoms. This type of basic sex education is not enough to effect change in people's risk-taking behaviors. The intention to use condoms does not always translate to practice. Abel and Fitzgerald (2006) have provided four reasons why condoms may not be used: sometimes people believe that it will ruin the spontaneity of the sexual interaction, others are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, some believe that their partners are safe and therefore do not need condoms, and others do not use condoms because their partners do not want to use them. Partners need to be able to negotiate condom use within all of their sexual interactions. "Research has shown that couples who can communicate openly about condom use and safer sex are more likely to reduce HIV behavioral risk through safer sex methods than couples who do not discuss these issues" (Otto-Salaj, et al. 2008:150).

Otto-Salaj, et al. (2008:150) suggest that "effective HIV risk reduction behavior change interventions routinely teach participants sexual assertiveness, communication, and negotiation skills," to "help individuals develop communication skills needed to persuade sexual partners to avoid risky behavior." In any sexual education intervention, specific techniques teaching people how to communicate about sex and negotiate condom use would be useful, including "the practicalities of how to introduce a condom into the sex act" (Abel and Fitzgerald 2006:114). According to Abel and Fitzgerald

(2006), the context of the sexual encounter may determine, in part, whether or not condoms are used. Therefore, my web site and brochure, tailored specifically to women travelers to Costa Rica, using information collected from women who have had sex on tour and the men with whom they have sex, should be able to both inform women that they do have the power to determine if condoms are used as well as suggesting some specific strategies that may be used. I can also provide data aimed at reducing women's fear of being perceived negatively for their sexual experience, which is one of the reasons that condom negotiation is sometimes avoided (Gomez and Marín 1996, Cabada, et al. 2007, Abel and Fitzgerald 2006).

Intervention programs targeted at a specific audience, using data gathered from that group of people, should be most effective in causing changes in risk-taking behaviors by providing that information that the audience will find to be most relevant and by avoiding other unnecessary information (Bellis, Grimley, and Alexander 2002, Ito, et al. 2008). Additionally, focusing on increasing condom use in the context of travel is significant as “tour guides may play a pivotal part in the transmission of” STD's, as they are “having casual sexual relations with sustainable access to at least one additional group of potential partners, that is, travelers, compared to the average person” (Cabada, et al. 2007). Therefore, educating women travelers about condom use negotiation strategies with men working in the tourist industry may lead to a decrease in the transmission of STD's in Costa Rica.

Organization of the Dissertation

In Chapter One: Introduction, I have explained my reasons for writing this dissertation. I began by explaining how tourism research is relevant. I went on to

situate my research in the context of tourism research. I have also explained why this research is applied in nature, including a discussion of the role of applied anthropology in preventing STD's. The following section describes the remainder of my dissertation.

In Chapter Two: Issues of Sex and Tourism, I discuss my theoretical orientation including the ideas about sex and tourism that guided me throughout my research. In my discussion of tourism, I explain definitions of tourism and tourists found in the literature. I specifically look at the sex tourism literature in detail, with particular attention paid to female sex tourism. In the literature about sex and gender, I focus on differences between men and women in Latin America. I end the chapter with an examination of inequality between men and women

In Chapter Three: Methodology, I explain my ethnographic approach to research design, data collection, and data analysis. I also provide details about my key informants and how I went about sampling, interviewing, and observing. I explain my plans for analysis and dissemination as well as my ethical considerations. Finally, I offer a brief review of the methodological approaches used by others who have researched sex tourism.

In Chapter Four: Tourism in Costa Rica, I describe the context of my dissertation, tourism in Costa Rica. I begin by discussing the population, tourist attractions, and tourism and development. I also begin to explore my findings in this chapter by first describing relevant details from my interviews and observations about how men working in tourism perceive the tourist industry and tourists in Costa Rica. I start with my male interviewees' work in tourism, financial opportunities, economic

development, and impacts of tourism on Costa Rica. I also describe their perceptions of tourists and their recommendations for change.

In Chapter Five: *Why These Relationships?*, I begin to describe the relationships that female tourists have with men who work in the tourist industry in Costa Rica. I use my interviews and observations to demonstrate why people participate in the relationships, and I look to some references in popular culture to offer some possible explanations for why the men and women have certain perceptions about each other. I also examine their motivations with current literature about sex and tourism.

In Chapter Six: *Relationships Begin, End, and Have Consequences*, I explore what happens within these relationships. I begin by examining the context within which these relationships flourish. Then I explore who initiates the relationships and how, whether the relationships are based on sex, love, or both, and any impacts of the relationships on the lives of the participants, with an emphasis on STD risk.

Chapter Seven: *Applied Dimensions of the Research*, ties the dissertation together. In this chapter I discuss the findings and implications of the research in an applied context as well as offering recommendations for future research. I also describe in detail my dissemination activities, including the web site that is the final product of my dissertation.

Chapter Two: Issues of Sex and Tourism

In this chapter I discuss the topical area of sex and tourism. This includes the continuum of sex tourism relationships from prostitution to holiday romances. First, I explain tourism and look at tourists, specifically. Next, I turn my attention to sex (and romance) tourism, the specific topic of my dissertation. Then, with particular attention given to *machismo*, I discuss sex differences in general; gender relations in Latin America as well as Costa Rica, specifically; and power inequalities between men and women, especially as related to risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STD's). I conclude by summarizing how these areas of inquiry relate to one another.

Tourism

Tourists Defined

One of the first definitions of “tourist” came from the International Union of Official Travel Organizations (IUOTO) in 1963 (Yiannakis and Gibson 1992). The definition states that tourists are “temporary visitors staying at least twenty four hours in the country visited and the purpose of whose journey can be classified under one of the following headings: (i) Leisure (recreation, holiday, health, study, religion, sport); (ii) Business, family, mission, meeting” (IUOTO 1963). Yiannakis and Gibson (1992) point out that this definition is still useful today in economic terms but that social scientists

have had to make distinctions between those traveling for leisure and those traveling for other purposes.

The definition of tourist most often cited currently in the work of anthropologists and sociologists is that of Valene Smith (1989, see also 1977). “A tourist is a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change” (Smith 1989:1). “The motivations of individuals who travel are many and varied, but the foundation of tourism rests on three key elements (all must be operative) which form an equation $\text{Tourism} = \text{leisure time} + \text{discretionary income} + \text{positive local sanctions}$ ” (Smith 1989:1). She has also identified five types of tourism including ethnic tourism, cultural tourism, historical tourism, environmental tourism, and recreational tourism including sex tourism. These types may also be known by different names such as environmental tourism that is called ecotourism. These different types of tourism have arisen from the different motivations of tourists, what it is that different people wish to experience when they travel.

Types of Tourism in the Caribbean and Latin America

Many types of tourism can be found in the Caribbean and Latin America, specifically. The four most written about and common types of tourism are ecotourism, heritage/cultural tourism, pleasure tourism, and sex tourism. Ecotourism can be found in such countries as Costa Rica where Monteverde is a thriving national park and preserve, (Baez 1996) Mexico, (Long 1992) Barbados (Hutchings 1996 and 1998) and Jamaica (Olsen 1997). Eco-tourists tend to be people who travel to Third World countries to learn about and experience different natural environments. They may go

rock climbing, snorkeling or diving, or take tours of the rainforests all the while gaining an understanding of a particular environmental condition.

Heritage, or cultural, tourism is found in countries such as Mexico (Long 1992, Amador 1997) and Nevis (Slayman 1996). Heritage tourists travel to other countries, generally those in the Third World, to experience a different culture from their own (Amador 1997). Many heritage tourists are experiencing village life in small rural areas such as Punta Laguna in Mexico (Long 1992).

Pleasure tourism is common in Jamaica, (Mullings 1999, Gamradt 1995) Barbados, (1992) the British Virgin Islands, (Lett 1983) the Dominican Republic, (Freitag 1994) and Mexico, (Olsen 1997). Many authors consider pleasure tourists be those people who travel without a particular reason. These tourists may lie on the beach or go to all-inclusive resorts and spas. This is what Crick (1989) would call hedonistic travel. Sex tourism is a type of pleasure tourism that occurs in a variety of countries throughout the Caribbean region that have prosperous tourist industries such as Jamaica, (Mullings 1999), Barbados (Phillips 1999), and the Dominican Republic (Cabezas 1999), as well as in Costa Rica (Ragsdale, et al. 2006, Leal 2002, Romero-Daza and Friedus 2008) and is discussed in great detail in the next section of this chapter.

Tourism has been able to flourish as the amount of leisure time of Westerners, especially those from the United States has increased steadily since World War II (Smith 1989). In their leisure time, people travel for pleasurable experiences. Traveling for pleasure “assumes that there is some experience available ‘out there,’ which cannot be found within the life-space, and which makes travel worthwhile” (Cohen 1979:182). Modern tourism involves an interest in the culture and environment of others (Cohen

1979). Because so many nations have become dependent on revenues earned from tourism, tourists have many choices about where they go. A wide variety of experiences are open to tourists in a wide variety of locations (Chambers 2000).

Cohen (1979) discusses at length the motivations of people who travel for leisure, stating that there are five main “modes of touristic experiences” that he has named: the recreational mode, the diversionary mode, the experiential mode, the experimental mode, and the existential mode (Cohen 1979:183). Recreational tourists are looking for meaningful pleasurable travel. Diversionary tourists are seeking pleasure but do not need meaning. Experiential tourists are searching for meaning in the world, and they do so through tourism, finding “meaning in the life of others” (Cohen 1979:187). “The experimental tourist is in ‘search of himself,’ insofar as in a trial and error process, he seeks to discover that form of life which elicits a resonance in himself; he is often not really aware of what he seeks, of his ‘real’ needs and desires.” Existential tourists are searching for something new and may, for a period of time, “go native” in the new culture being experienced (Cohen 1979).

Not all travel occurs within a person’s leisure time nor can all travel be considered pleasure seeking. There are travelers such as businessmen, missionaries, journalists, and anthropologists who travel for work. However, “it is possible . . . for persons engaging in such roles to take time out from their work and engage in touristic activity, for the pleasure of it, and for the sheer pursuit of goals that have no instrumental payoffs.” It is during these times that even people traveling for work or school are “said to be engaging in leisure behavior. One may conceptualize this form of intrinsically motivated activity as forming the motivational foundation of touristic roles.

Thus, touristic behavior is viewed, unlike other forms of travel (e.g., for business), as a form of leisure that involves travel and takes place away from home” (Yiannakis and Gibson 1992). Therefore, regardless of what motivated a person to travel, those pleasure-seeking or leisure activities are tourist experiences. People are classified as tourists, whether all or part of the time they are traveling, not by what motivates them to travel but by what motivates the different activities they engage in while away from home.

It is with this in mind that I put forth my operational definition of a sex tourist as a person who travels to a place where he/she does not usually reside and who, pleasure seeking, has sex with a native or migrant person during his/her leisure time. It does not matter if people go to the countries with the specific motive of having sex or if they happen upon the possibility after they arrive in the host country. In fact, Frohlick (2007:140) would suggest that people who happen upon the possibility of sexual relationships while traveling “would be involved in ‘situational’ forms of sexual tourism.” Even if people do not explicitly decide before they leave home that they are going to have sex while on holiday, their romanticized and/or sexualized notions about their exotic locations and the people who live there may lead to sexual tourism. People who have sex with native or migrant persons in the places where they travel are participating in sex tourism activities.

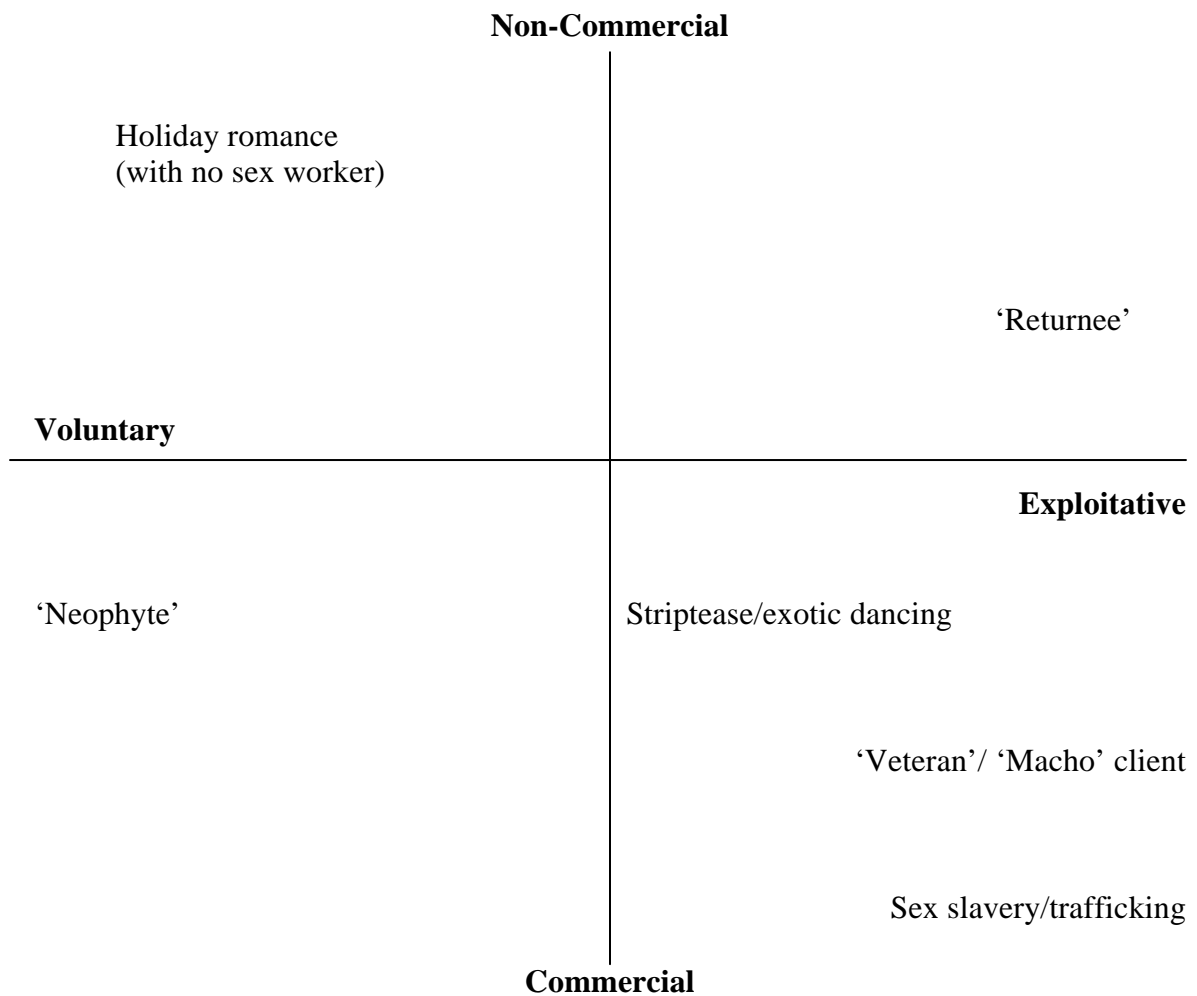
When considering that people are participating in sex tourism activities, it also does not matter if the people pay for sex or not because any pleasure seeking behavior during one’s leisure time is a touristic activity (Yiannakis and Gibson 1992). Ryan (2000) and Günther (1998) write that relationships that occur while people are on tour,

not just those that are commercial in nature, are considered part of sex tourism. In fact, Ryan's (2000:36) definition of sex tourism "may simply be described as sexual intercourse while away from home." While this definition is far too inclusive to make the concept of sex tourism meaningful, Ryan (2000) suggests this definition to demonstrate that it is equally meaningless to focus only on the commercial sex trade, as there are many different types of sex tourism and many different people who participate in sex tourism.

Sex tourism is a particularly important aspect of tourism, in general, since, as Oppermann (1998) suggests, sex and tourist travel around the world are frequently linked. "Tourism, romance, love, and sexual relations have been inextricably linked since the earliest days of travel. For as long as people have been traveling they have been engaging in romantic and sexual encounters of various types" (McKercher and Bauer 2003:3). "Tourism is eroticized to the extent that it embodies sexual imagery and encourages various expressions of sexuality. . . . Sexual activity related to travel and tourism can assume a variety of expressions, including hospitality, companionship, prostitution, and rape" (Chambers 2000:62). Of all types of sexual activity related to tourism, though, prostitution has been studied most (Chambers 2000). McKercher and Bauer (2003) believe that the sex tourism literature has been excessively focused on the exploitative nature of the commercial sex trade, including child prostitution. "So much emphasis has been placed on this area that the term *sex tourism* is used synonymously with the commercial sex tourism industry. Although this emphasis has helped raise awareness of legitimate issues, the commercialization of sex and tourism represents only a small portion of the total spectrum of tourism and human sexual relationships"

(McKercher and Bauer 2003:4). Sex tourism may encompass relationships that range in nature from voluntary (holiday romances) to coercive (child prostitution, sexual slavery). It also includes commercial exchanges (prostitution) as well as non-commercial (holiday romances) (Ryan and Hall 2001, McKercher and Bauer 2003).

Figure 2.1: Conceptualizing Sex Tourism Encounters
(Source: Ryan and Hall 2001:62)



Recently, non-commercial sex tourism has been studied in greater detail (Ryan and Hall 2001, Ragsdale, et al. 2006, Van Broeck 2002). Holiday romances are of particular interest, as they are so different from prostitution. These relationships are

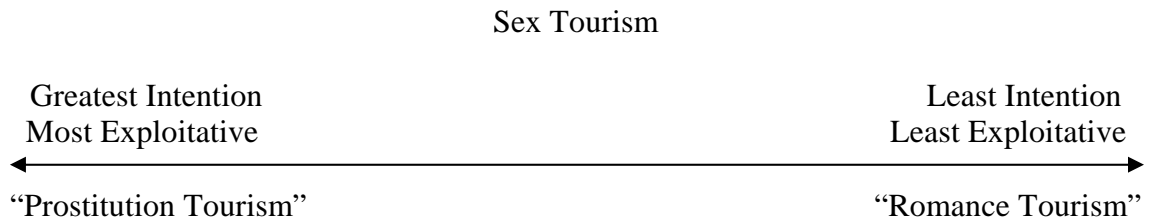
alluring for people as they are temporary in nature, providing the opportunity to experience romance and a sexual relationship without commitment, hiding it from people at home if they wish (McKercher and Bauer 2003, Ryan and Kinder 1996). Tourism provides a context and setting within which sexual relationships may flourish (McKercher and Bauer 2003). Travel also provides people the “possibility of being transported and transformed for a moment into the liminoid where everything is possible” (Selänniemi 2003:24). When people are away from home, breaking their normal routines, they are more open to new experiences, including sexual relations (Selänniemi 2003).

The sex tourism literature includes research about businessmen who see legalized prostitution as a positive aspect of their business travel, (Enloe 1989) men who take vacations to such countries as the Dominican Republic for the purpose of having sex with the women there, (Cabezas 1999) women who travel to Jamaica looking for “romance,” (Pruitt and LaFont 1995) and female students who engage in relationships with men while studying abroad (Meisch 1995). All of these people are considered sex tourists under my operational definition, as they all have sexual relations with natives or migrants of a place they are visiting, while they are temporarily leisured. It is also important to note that so-called “romance tourism” is also included in the sex tourism literature as a type of sex tourism or as one end of the sex/romance tourism continuum (Pruitt and LaFont 1995, Herold, et al. 2001, McKercher and Bauer 2003). Therefore, “romance tourists” are “sex tourists,” a specific type of “sex tourist” who engages in non-commercial and voluntary relationships while away from home. The sex tourism experience is varied, and may be different for different people.

Sex tourism may be conceptualized as the larger concept under which the different types of sexual tourism are subsumed. A continuum of intentionality on the part of the sex tourist goes from the greatest intention (prostitution tourism and child prostitution) to the least intention (unanticipated vacation romance). That is, a continuum exists from “prostitution tourism” to “romance tourism,” but both are types of sex tourism. Those relationships that could be considered romantic, could more accurately be described as “‘situational’ forms of sexual tourism” (Frohlick 2007:140). The participants may or may not have explicitly decided to have sex before they left home, but the opportunity presented itself while they were away from home, and they took the opportunity to engage in sex tourism activities, thus making them “situational” sex tourists (de Albuquerque 1998). Additionally, the relationships with the greatest intention, that is, prostitution, also are the most exploitative, with the traveler able to exert the most control over their sexual partners.

A focus on intentionality, however, poses some conceptual problems. Intentionality is difficult to quantify, and the factors contributing to the choice to participate in a sexual relationship with a stranger while away from home are also different for different people. This is why intentionality is only one piece of the sex tourism puzzle. When does intentionality begin? Does a traveler have to have the idea to have sex with a stranger while on vacation before he/she leaves home? Students who choose their study sites based on the people with whom they might like to have sex as well as businessmen who plan conferences in exotic locations with legal prostitution both have the intentions to have sex, whether or not they actually participate. Participation means more than intention in the context of sexual activity.

Figure 2.2: Intentionality and Sex Tourism



As will be demonstrated in the next section, the reasons why people participate in sexual relationships while traveling are conceptually more significant than the reasons why people travel in the first place.

Sex and Tourism in the Caribbean and Latin America

Many researchers have examined why tourists have sex with people in the countries to which they travel and have posited the notion that white men and women travel to other countries in search of a “racialized other” (Phillips 1999, Mullings 1999, O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 1999, Shrage 1994). Their analyses have shown that many people who purchase sex in the Caribbean believe that there is something more sexual about people from other cultures. White Western women search for black men who they perceive as being more sexual than the white men they find at home and travel to countries such as Barbados and Jamaica for that reason (Phillips 1999, Pruitt and LaFont 1995), and white men want Asian, Caribbean, and Latin American women who they view as less “pure,” and therefore more sexual, than white women (O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 1999, Shrage 1994). The fact that the majority of female prostitutes in the Caribbean and Latin America are black or *mulata* may give credence to this argument. Sex tourism has been criticized as a form of racial

inequality as it is generally white Westerners who buy sex and people of other races and ethnicities that are prostitutes (Crick 1989).

O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor (1999:37) argue "that their sexual taste for 'Others' reflects not so much a wish to engage in any specific sexual practice as a desire for an extraordinarily high degree of control over the management of self and others as sexual, racialized, and gendered beings." The authors go on to explain that "this desire, and the Western sex tourist's power to satiate it, can only be explained through reference to power relations and popular discourses that are simultaneously gendered, racialized, and economic" (O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 1999:37, see also Sanchez Taylor 2000). Therefore, according to these authors, no matter the gender of the tourists who travel for sex, they are all traveling as powerful white Westerners. They then use their power as Westerners to control another person. "Female sex tourists use their economic power to initiate and terminate sexual relations with local men at whim, and within those relationships, they use their economic and racialized power to control these men in ways in which they could never command a Western man" (O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 1999:51, see also Sanchez Taylor 2000).

The argument suggests that because white women are not given power over their relationships with men at home, they travel to places where they will, by virtue of their country of citizenship, relative wealth, and skin color have more power in their personal relationships. Women "for once . . . can experience feeling more powerful than a man" (Sanchez Taylor 2000:48). Therefore, differences in power become the overarching force behind the existence of sex tourism, at least on the part of sex tourists.

Hall (1996:182) had similar findings. He suggests that “most fundamentally, however, the motivations for sex tourism are an outcome of a desire on the part of the tourist for self-gratifying erotic power through the control of another’s body.” However, he also notes that “sex tourism is not simply about sex, but is a response to the complex interaction of gender, class, cultural, sexual, and power relations in both the tourist’s and the sex worker’s society which sanctions the commodification of certain human relationships.” Similar to O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor’s (1999) ideas, therefore, people participate in these relationships to exert their power over another person.

The reasons why prostitutes participate in sex tourism are similarly related to the power structure. In order for sex tourism to flourish, Third World men and women must participate in prostitution. Poverty is the force that makes people desperate enough to sell sex. The women who work as prostitutes in the arena of sex tourism come from poor families in countries where there are not many job opportunities for people in general and/or uneducated or rural women specifically (Enloe 1989, Antonius-Smits, et al. 1999, Mullings 1999, Mayorga and Valasquez 1999, Cabezas 1999, Brennan 2001). Female prostitutes in these countries are often the main sources of income for their families and have many people including children, parents, husbands, and others dependent upon the money they earn (Kempadoo 1998, Brennan 2001). The men who work as hustlers and gigolos face a similar economic situation in countries where there are not enough well-paying jobs. These men, however, tend to be single and are not financially supporting others (Phillips 1999, Pruitt and LaFont 1995). The ability to earn money is seen as a benefit to these people in much the same way that people in

Latin America and the Caribbean who are affected by other forms of tourism believe that tourism is helping their country and the people who live there (Gamradt 1995, Crick 1989, Freitag 1994). The cost of sex tourism is that the demand for prostitution is increased and many people see no other choice but to engage in prostitution.

Female Sex Tourism

Although early studies of sex tourism focused some attention on beach-hustling men in Barbados (Press 1978, Karch and Dann 1981), the services provided by male sex workers for female tourists are the least studied aspect of sex tourism in general. Some researchers suggest that female sex tourism is different from male sex tourism. For example, Phillips (1999) calls the men in her study “beach boys” as they are commonly referred to in Barbados. These men, as other sex workers tend to be, are unemployed or underemployed. They spend most of their time on the beaches looking for female tourists who want relationships. Men who provide sexual services to female tourists are often not considered to be prostitutes. They engage in sexual relationships in an informal manner, not necessarily accepting money for sex but rather accepting gifts and money over an extended period of time as well as becoming traveling companions to female tourists without any cost to themselves (Pruitt and LaFont 1995, Phillips 1999, O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 1999).

Pruitt and LaFont (1995) have even termed the exchange “romance tourism,” although many researchers including Günther (1998:79) would say that “to separate sex tourism and romance tourism as two distinctive forms of tourism is highly questionable” because this leaves people open to self identify as romance tourists just so as not to have any negative social stigma attached to their actions. Sanchez Taylor (2001:751) would

agree, suggesting that there are “conceptual problems” when separating “sex tourism” and “romance tourism.” She would also argue that “a theoretical model of sex tourism which can accommodate . . . the diversity of tourist-related sexual-economic exchanges” needs to be developed (Sanchez Taylor 2001:751). One problem with these distinctions is that most published literature about sex and tourism considers men to be sex tourists and women to be romance tourists. Sanchez Taylor (2001) takes exception to this concept suggesting that not all men who have sex with native women while traveling would consider themselves sex tourists, as they do not have direct money for sex exchanges. Instead, they have “girlfriends” who dance with them, take them around town, and are affectionate, taking “gifts” of cash and meals from their “boyfriends.” Also, “it is important to recognize that women, as well as men, can be sexually hostile and predatory” and sometimes women “will specify their exact requirements as purchasers of sexually objectified bodies” (Sanchez Taylor 2001:759).

Pruitt and LaFont (1995) state, however, that both female tourists and the men whose sexual services they purchase are looking for a romantic encounter, not characteristic of the sex-based prostitution engaged in by male tourists. They claim that the tourist women and men with whom they have sex are primarily interested in an emotional relationship. They also, however, provide excerpts from interviews with Jamaican men in which the men describe their desire to reap economic benefits from a relationship with a white woman. The men have also figured out that the women are looking for a powerful-looking Rasta man with dreadlocks, and even though they do not embrace Rastafarianism they grow dreadlocks in order to appeal to the female tourists. The authors further state that it is easier for the men to engage in relationships with

white female tourists than with Jamaican women because Jamaican women expect the men to support them financially while the white tourists do not (Pruitt and LaFont 1995). The economically disadvantaged men in Caribbean countries who participate in this behavior are using white female tourists for any financial gains possible (Pruitt and LaFont 1995, Phillips 1999). Therefore, men who exchange sex for money from female tourists are not viewed as powerless and controlled by the women, they are seen as the hustlers who either take advantage of the women or give them romance. From this perspective, the men are reaping benefits from the female tourists.

According to de Albuquerque, (1998) who also studied beach boys in Barbados and Jamaica, men who have sexual relationships with female tourists are motivated by economic factors. He says that any “romance” was in the women’s minds since the men are motivated by money. He also states that when men keep in contact with the women, they do so in order to continue to ask for money.

Relationships are usually initiated by men who decide which women they want, where they will go, where and how they will have sex, and when. According to de Albuquerque (1998) West Indian men prefer to maintain control of relationships with women, to keep sex private, and to have what he calls “straight” sex, not deviating much from the “missionary position.”

O’Connell Davidson (1998) agrees with de Albuquerque’s (1998) position in that she states that men are motivated by money. She also believes that men who sell sex to female tourists are in a different situation than women who sell sex to men because the male prostitutes are much less vulnerable than the women. While they are motivated by money, their economic conditions are not nearly as desperate as the conditions of female

prostitutes because women are much more likely to be supporting other people such as women and parents with her money. Men are much more likely to be independent. Also, men are less likely to be controlled by pimps or to be at risk of violence from their clients.

While Meisch (1995) believes that many of the Ecuadorian men in her research might reap economic benefits from the female tourists with whom they have relationships, she does not believe that it is a necessary precondition of involvement. She says that female sex tourism is more prevalent in Otavalo, Ecuador in the 1990's because there is more affluence of indigenous people, some of which is a result of tourism itself. Affluent men often leave the country and encounter more foreign women. Additionally, pale skin and blond hair are exotic features, according to indigenous men in Otavalo, therefore they are interested in relationships with women who have those exotic characteristics.

Beyond an understanding of why the men want the relationships, researchers have turned their attention to why the women want them. O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor (1999) suggest that male and female sex tourists both engage in sex tourism for the same reasons, to exert power over another person. Similarly, de Albuquerque (1998:91) proposes that "female sex tourism is tied to greater female economic power, and concomitant gender emancipation with its new gender and sexual identities" and that "female sex tourism is essentially no different from its male version." He claims that "attempts by feminists (Pruitt and LaFont 1995) to distinguish it by labeling it 'romance tourism' are disingenuous." He believes that women are motivated by racialized sexual fantasies of hypersexual men from other cultures, and

categorizes female sex tourists into four types: “first timers,” “situational sex tourists,” “veterans,” and “returnees” (de Albuquerque 1998:95).

“First timers” are those women who intend to but have not participated in sex tourism before. “Situational sex tourists” do not intend to have sex while on vacation, but they do it when given the chance. “Veterans” have participated in sex tourism before and are traveling again for this purpose. “Returnees” are those women who have met a man on a previous trip and returned to see him again (de Albuquerque 1998). Relationships, then, for the women, are primarily based on sex and their ability to exert some control in their lives.

Female Sex Tourism in Costa Rica

In recent years, female sex tourism has been studied in greater detail in Costa Rica specifically. Otherness is important to the sexual exchanges that occur between women tourists and men local to Costa Rica. Frohlick (2007:140) focuses on the women’s preference for sexualized black Caribbean men who reside in Costa Rica, and the “popular global and local imaginary of Puerto Viejo [Costa Rica] as a ‘female sex tourism’ destination situated complexly within a wider ethnoscape, or mobile landscape, of First World female tourists whose travels to Third World places include participation in heterosexual relationships with local men.” The local men in Puerto Viejo do not consider themselves to be prostitutes, since they are “boyfriends” to these women, even when they receive some money or other goods from the women. These women do not conceive of their relationships as being monetary exchanges, and Frohlick (2007) provides examples of several women who ended their relationships after their boyfriends asked to borrow money. The women also see their relationships as intimate, not

commercial. The women would be able to exert some control over these men, but they do not do so because it would ruin the “intimate” nature of their relationships. They do, however, remain powerful in their mobility, their ability to leave Costa Rica whenever they are ready. Some of these women choose to stay in Costa Rica for extended periods of time, some return to see their “boyfriends,” and some leave and never return. Their power resides in their ability to make that choice.

Exoticism is a key element in choosing a sexual partner while traveling, but a “vacation mentality” is also important to some women travelers in Costa Rica (Romero-Daza and Friedus 2008:175, see also Ragsdale, et al. 2006). In Monteverde, where adventure tourism is popular, Romero-Daza and Friedus (2008) suggest that sexual liaisons are an extension of that adventure. That these women are away from home allows them to act differently than they would at home, and an increase in alcohol consumption is common when women are on holiday, further lowering their sexual inhibitions (Romero-Daza and Friedus 2008, Ragsdale, et al. 2006). All of the recent studies of female sex tourism in Costa Rica support the previous literature about female sex tourism throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, suggesting that sexual otherness and “situational disinhibition” are the primary factors leading to these relationships.

Sex Tourism Semantics

The feminist sociopolitical perspective provides great insights into the sex tourism exchange. Women are defined as less powerful in sexual relationships than men, whether they are selling or buying sex (Shrage 1994, Enloe 1989). Men are able to retain their dominance even when they sell sexual services to women because they are

defined as having more sexual knowledge. This domination by men may suggest a possible reason why women are commonly referred to as prostitutes in the literature whereas men are not. Many researchers (O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 1999, Cabezas 1999, Campbell, Perkins, and Mohammed 1999, Mayorga and Velasquez 1999) use the term prostitute when referring to females who sell sex. Shrage (1994) warns that researchers must be aware of the connotations of the words used for description.

“In the English-speaking world, the term ‘prostitution’ has a kind of double, layered meaning. It designates both sexual activity that is commercially oriented, and the act of debasing oneself for a material reward. The term ‘prostitute’ correspondingly signifies both a commercial sex provider and someone who debases herself for material gain” (Shrage 1994:121). Other researchers use the term sex worker, which also has connotations. “The term ‘sex worker’ captures features more prominent to those who recognize the analogous natures of commercially oriented sex and other commercially oriented activities” (Shrage 1994:122). When ethnographers use these words, they are emphasizing “a particular perspective on prostitution” and “either contribute to the delegitimization of sex commerce or . . . in its legitimization” (Shrage 1994:123). Why then is it uncommon for men to be referred to as prostitutes in the literature? Shrage (1994) suggests that men are culturally defined as more dominant than women. Given this definition of men and her examination of the connotations of the word prostitute as someone who debases him/herself for money, then it makes sense that men are called hustlers and “beach boys” (Pruitt and LaFont 1995, Kempadoo 1999, Phillips 1999). They are seen as members of the gender that controls sexual activity.

Impacts of Sex Tourism

Sex tourism has far-reaching implications for host communities in much the same way as other forms of tourism. Much of the profits from tourism go to people besides those who are selling sex (Oppermann 1998). In order to go to male tourists' hotel rooms, female prostitutes often have to give a share of their profits to the hotel managers. If they pick men up in bars, they have to give the owners of these clubs a share of the profits. The hotel and club managers and owners are the elite. The women who act as prostitutes are not (Fusco 1998, Cabezas 1999).

Also, some tourist destinations become known internationally as places to buy sex. Sex is perceived as available, and exploitation of racialized, sexualized people in the host countries is strengthened (O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 1999). Other risks to international sex workers are health risks such as sexually transmitted diseases (STD's), an increase in violence against women, and an increase in crime (Ragsdale and Tomiko Anders 1999).

Gender Roles, Power, and Sexual Risk Factors

Machismo in Latin America

Machismo is "a stereotype that emphasizes hypermasculinity and (is) associated with the Latin American male" (Hardin 2002:1). "*Machismo* could be described as a cult of the male; a heady mixture of paternalism, aggression, systematic subordination of women, fetishism of women's bodies, and the idolization of their reproductive and nurturing capacities" (Sternberg 2000:91). Hardin (2002:1) attributes the long-standing association of Latin American men with *machismo* to the Conquest of the Americas by the Spanish in the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, suggesting that "Latin American gender

identity and gender relationships, especially for males, were themselves products of the Spanish Conquest and the subsequent colonization.” *Machismo* includes perceptions about male aggression, sexual expertise, and the pursuit of many women.

When the Spanish colonized the Americas, their experience was colored by their association with the Catholic Church, especially in light of the ongoing Inquisition, during which time “sexual crimes” were punished at a high rate (Haliczer 1990:4). This punishment continued in the Americas, with native men being subjected to accusations of sodomy and with castration as punishment for sexual deviance. Hardin (2002) claims that the Spanish colonization of Latin America was particularly sexualized because of the Inquisition and because the conquistadors did not bring women with them to the New World, leaving them desirous of sexual activities with native women.

Just as colonization progressed along different paths in different Latin American countries, “the behaviors and beliefs associated with *machismo* have been shown to vary across Latin American regions, ethnic groups, social classes, age cohorts, and time periods. The components of *machismo* are better treated as products of the relationship between masculinity and power than as a unique Latino cultural attribute” (Asencio 1999:109). While this is true, “our understanding of Latino traditional gender roles . . . is heavily influenced by the concept of *machismo*,” with *machismo* involving “male domination and female subordination” (Asencio 1999:109). Several scholars have described *machismo* in the same way, highlighting the associations to aggressiveness toward other men, virility, and sexual aggressiveness with women (Stevens 1973, Chant 2003, Hardin 2002, Asencio 1999).

In Costa Rica, the concept of *machismo* embodies ideas that men are more powerful and aggressive than women with greater sexual desires and natural sexual needs. Women, on the other hand, are passive and submissive with a diminished sex drive. In Costa Rica this idea is still pervasive; that men have an increased sex drive and somehow cannot help themselves, is a common Costa Rican myth, although Costa Rican women now complain about it (Chant 2003). Chant (2003:142-143) attributes *machismo* with the “‘sexual double standard’ whereby women’s restricted access to sex before and during marriage, is counterposed by the toleration and/or endorsement of men’s engagement in multiple sexual liaisons.” Costa Rican women are still encouraged to wait to have sex until they are married, unlike men who are encouraged to “gain premarital sexual experience in order to ‘instruct their women’” (Chant 2003:145).

Impacts of Machismo on Latin American Women

When describing the history of sexuality in Latin America, Jelin (1997:76) says that “the pleasure is man’s, the woman ‘serves.’ . . . *machismo* in all its forms combines with the cult of the dedicated and suffering mother.” Women were supposed to endure the unhappiness of marriage and men’s behavior (Ehlers 1993). Sexual oppression of women is a common theme throughout Latin America, and it has been sanctioned publicly, politically, and by the Catholic Church. Hardin (2002) suggests that this oppression of women is a remnant of the early conquest of the Americas during which time native women were considered property of their Spanish masters and were subject to being forcibly removed from their homes and raped. Because the Spanish did not bring their wives with them to the Americas as the English had done, their lives in the Americas were much different, and they found themselves desiring sexual pleasures

while away from home. They were not building stable homes in the New World; they were conquering it, and women were one of their winnings (Hardin 2002). This treatment of women as property continued for several centuries.

In the 19th Century, three hundred years after the Conquest, colonial Spanish laws continued to guarantee patriarchal rule (Dore 1997). Spanish laws placed women in a subservient role by limiting their rights (Ehlers 1993). Men did not need to show physical dominance over women because they limited women's participation in political and economic activities. Women were not allowed to have great economic resources. Additionally, women were tied to the home performing domestic chores. This served to keep them out of the public sphere, not earning wages, and reliant on men (Ehlers 1993).

Spanish Catholic values were instilled in the Costa Rican people during the colonization as well. These values included traditional patriarchal gender roles that placed women in a lower standing than men. "Men were seen as superior in anything political, economic, or intellectual; women in morality and spirituality as well as homelife. This contrast justified male power and privilege as well as female weakness and self-sacrifice. A woman was submissive to males, her status linked almost entirely to her relationships with men" (Biesanz, et al. 1999:168).

Changing Roles of Women and Sexual Life in Latin America

Changes in marriage patterns and social structure have been fairly consistent with those in other countries as family size is reduced and there are more single parent female-headed households in Latin America. Women have also gained greater political rights as they have entered the workforce in greater numbers since the 1960's (Cicerchia 1997). While changes have occurred, Spanish mores concerning family life still exist in

Costa Rica today. Gender role socialization of children still follows the traditional pattern of females who do domestic chores around the house including serving their brothers and males who work outside the house either on the farm or at odd jobs around the neighborhood (Biesanz, et al. 1999). Girls' activities are monitored, and boys are given more freedom in their choices and actions (Chant 2003).

Since the 1950's, post-civil war, the role of women has been changing. The nuclear family structure is more common than extended families and the average number of children has reduced from seven to three (Lara 1995). Costa Rican women have entered the workforce in increasingly greater numbers since the 1950's. In 1963, one tenth of the labor force was women, and by 1997 that number increased to one third (Biesanz, et al. 1999). Women generally comprise the service sector, with many working as domestic servants, and they receive lower salaries than men with a higher rate of unemployment, and have little participation in jobs in politics (Lara 1995). The situation of women in Costa Rica has improved in the last century, but Lara (1995:104) suggests that some problems still exist as there is an increase in battering of women, child abuse, and rape, even though "women's rights are becoming part of popular social discourse."

Gendered Power and the Risk of HIV and other STD's

As the above literature about sex tourism suggests, there are power differentials between men and women within the context of sexual relationships between travelers and locals. The most pertinent explanation of these factors of power comes from Wingood and DiClemente (2000:543) as they borrow from Connell's 1987 work in suggesting that power is defined as "having the capacity to influence the action of

others, conceptualizing power in terms of power over others” or “having the ability to act or to change in a desired direction.” This gendered power may best be understood in the context of sex tourism by looking at the difference between research about female sex tourism and male sex tourism. While the literature about male sex tourism suggests that male travelers have more power than female locals with whom they have sex, the female sex tourism literature is more varied, suggesting that while the women have more economic power, they are less powerful because they are women (Pruitt and LaFont 1995, Phillips 1999, Shrage 1994, Enloe 1989).

These disparities in power between men and women are particularly significant, as “according to the sexual division of power, as the power inequality between men and women increases and favors men, women will be more likely to experience adverse health outcomes” (Wingood and DiClemente 2000:543). This gendered inequality may lead to women’s increased risk of contracting HIV or another STD. The sexual oppression of women and pervasiveness of machismo in Latin America may have implications for risk of HIV and other STD’s, as will be explored further (Gomez and Marín 1996, Hoga, et al. 2001, Downe 1997).

Heterosexual women are one of the populations thought to be at greatest risk for infection of HIV and other STD’s. Other high-risk populations include gay and bisexual men, prostitutes, and injection drug users in the United States and other countries. Heterosexual men are not a specific focus of literature about sexual risk except in research about heterosexual women, as they are the likely source of the women’s risk (Orubuloye, et al. 1993, McGrath, et al. 1993, Feldman, et al. 1997, Wingood and DiClemente 1998, Gomez and Marín 1996).

The most discussed risk behavior is participating in sexual activities without the use of condoms (Orubuloye, et al. 1993, McGrath, et al. 1993, Feldman, et al. 1997, Wingood and DiClemente 1998, Gomez and Marín 1996, Singer and Marxuach-Rodriguez 1996, Raffaelli 1993, Ragsdale and Tomiko Anders 1999, Antonius-Smits, et al. 1999). There is also mention of injection drug use and needle-sharing as risks behaviors, but this only applies to a small group of the overall population (Himmelgreen and Singer 1998, Wang, et al. 1998, Wechsberg, et al. 1998, Hoffman, et al. 1998). Because more people are likely to participate in sexual behaviors than drug use, there is a greater emphasis on condom use as a risk-reduction strategy. Condom use helps all of the abovementioned risk groups: heterosexual women, gay and bisexual men, prostitutes, and injection drug users.

There are two main types of reasons why people engage in these two risky behaviors: cultural reasons and reasons related to poverty. Factors related to culture and socioeconomic status work synergistically to promote risk in the identified risk groups. If risk factors are ever going to be understood, then the context within which they exist must also be understood. Context includes many things such as shared perceptions, economics, political systems, environmental conditions, and marriage and kinship systems, just to name a few. The two most important elements of the context of risk behaviors are cultural and economic factors.

Men Typically Control Condom Use

There is a range of reasons why different groups of women might not use condoms. Women in studies completed in West, East, and Southern Africa have named several reasons for not using condoms: some are uneducated about HIV transmission

and do not know that they may be protected by condoms and some want to have children. The most overwhelming reason named by women who do not use condoms, however, is that the men in their lives do not want to use them, with the combination of cultural norms and economic conditions increasing the risk of contracting HIV and/or other STD's for heterosexual females (Orubuloye, et al. 1993, McGrath, et al. 1993, and Feldman, et al. 1997). This reason is more significant for a few particular subgroups including women in Africa where the rate of infection with HIV is highest in the world (McGrath, et al. 1993) and subpopulations of women in the U.S. such as Black and Latina women whose rates of infection with HIV far outnumber those of white women (Lewis and Watters 1989). In fact, while Blacks in the U.S. "are roughly 11.5% of the U.S. population, they are currently 26% of all cases of AIDS" and comprise "two-thirds of all heterosexual AIDS cases" (Lewis and Waters 1989:1071).

Most significant to this dissertation are the issues facing Latina women, as their primary partners are Latino men. Latina women have been studied in the U.S., and researchers have found that the sexual behaviors of these women are largely guided by traditional cultural and gender norms, which may put them at greater risk for STD infection. "In a traditionally *machista* society, women do not talk with men about sex, as this may be viewed as distasteful and/or suggestive of sexual promiscuity" (Gomez and Marín 1996:356). Men have control over sexual activities, and women believe that their role is to "please the man" who has "strong, uncontrollable sexual desires" (Gomez and Marín 1996:356). It is also culturally acceptable for men to know about and participate in a variety of sexual behaviors while the same is not true for women (Ford and Norris 1993). As was found in Africa and with Black women in the U.S., Latina

women are less likely to use condoms when they are in a steady relationship. “Gender, culture, and power each may affect one’s ability to establish and maintain safer sex practices with a primary partner,” and these issues must be considered when strategizing about interventions for prevention (Gomez and Marín 1996:356). According to Bird, et al. (2001:233) “individuals in committed relationships are less likely to use condoms consistently than persons in casual relationships, even if they do not know their partner’s or their own HIV status.” Furthermore, some people’s belief “that trusted partners are safe partners may lead to the perception of decreased risk as trust develops in a relationship over time” (Bird, et al., 2001:233). Additionally, partners who believe that they have less power within their relationships also believe that it is more difficult to introduce condoms to their sexual practices (Woolf and Maisto 2008).

Manji, et al. (2007) discovered in their study in León, Nicaragua that 87% of their adolescent informants said that it is was better not to have sex if a condom was not available, however they also found that only 57% of informants thought that condom use was only necessary with infrequent partners. This is true in a case where more than 90% of the informants knew that HIV could be transmitted through vaginal intercourse (Manji, et al. 2007).

“The man’s role in reproductive health and sexuality are deeply associated with the cultural values on *machismo* and masculinity. The behavioral expression of masculinity is largely acquired through socialization, leading to the internalization of male attitudes and values,” therefore men must “exhibit behavior patterns that are recognized as being masculine or associated with *machismo*” (Hoga, et al. 2001:108). In their study of Brazilian men, Hoga, et al. (2001) found that *machismo* governed the

reproductive lives of these men in that they believed that women were responsible for contraception, even being sterilized to prevent further children because for the men to do it would damage their masculinity. Additionally, “Hispanics (both men and women) report high levels of discomfort with sex, and this discomfort makes it difficult to successfully use condoms” (Marín 2003:188).

According to Downe’s (1997) sample of 247 Costa Rican women, men control condom use and, therefore, also control STD prevention. This problem is compounded by the fact that a national committee established in 1987 to study HIV/AIDS and strategies for prevention stated publicly that HIV is prevalent in homosexual and bisexual men but that “the prevalence of HIV and AIDS will rapidly increase in women who are irresponsibly promiscuous and in men who have sexual contact with these vectors” (Downe 1997:3). This could leave Costa Rican men thinking that they are not at risk if they are having sex with responsible *tica* partners and that they are, therefore, not a risk to other partners such as tourists. This also suggests that men would attempt to control condom use with tourist women, therefore tourist women must try to take the lead in STD prevention strategies such as condom use as much as they possibly can. This is one more way in which tourist women need to be aware of their sexual risk behaviors. They need to understand that these men do not always use condoms and therefore are often putting themselves at risk. In order to minimize their own risk, tourist women need to insist that all men with whom they have sex while on tour always use condoms.

Some of the same issues are at work when condom use is negotiated within the framework of prostitution. Prostitution, or sex work, is an exchange of sex for material

gain. Within the relationship established for the purposes of prostitution, one person, the consumer, when he is a man, will have more control over the transaction than will the person who is selling sex (Shrage 1994). For this reason, “while sex workers desire the use of condoms within the client relationship, they can be at a social and economic disadvantage to insist on compliance with safer sex practices” (Ragsdale and Tomiko Anders 1999). Additionally, “health and personal safety risks are also heightened because sex workers are asked to perform “deviant” sexual acts, i.e., acts that their clients’ wives and girlfriends will not perform, such as oral or anal sex and acts of bondage.” (Ragsdale and Tomiko Anders 1999).

In their study of prostitutes of different types, that is, women from streetwalkers to call girls, Ragsdale and Tomiko Anders (1999) found that their interviewees were not aware of prevention strategies for HIV and other STD’s. When men refused to use condoms, many of the female prostitutes would wash the men’s penises with rubbing alcohol in hopes of preventing STD’s. The women have been reached by local medical outreach programs and are participating in sex education programs, but they say that they cannot make men use condoms. Men do not believe that it is necessary, and the women cannot say no to having sex with them because they need the money or their “children will go hungry” (Ragsdale and Tomiko Anders 1999:230).

Brazilian prostitutes were studied by Antonius-Smits, et al. (1999) in Suriname. They found that the participants in their study would participate in any type of sexual behavior with clients and that they knew little about STD’s. They knew more about HIV/AIDS than other STD’s but did not know safer sex techniques to use for prevention. While most of the participants used condoms with clients sometimes, they

never used condoms with their boyfriends, husbands, or favorite regular clients.

Antonius-Smits, et al. (1999) state that it is common throughout Suriname not to use condoms in steady relationships. While the authors do not analyze this behavior, it is likely similar to Singer and Marxuach-Rodriguez's (1996) analysis of the behavior: in many Latin American cultures condoms are synonymous with infidelity and a lack of trust (Marín and Marín 1992). All of these examples provide evidence that women have less "power over others" (Wingood and DiClemente 2000:543), as they have less control over condom use than do men. This inequality in gendered power has far-reaching implications for the risk of STD's for female sex tourists.

Disinhibited Female Travelers

Tourists are experiencing new places and new cultures while on holiday. In some cases, they are in places completely different from their homes that are governed by different social norms. This sense of freedom from the mundane may, in part, lead tourists to do things while traveling that they would not do at home (Carter and Clift 2000). Having sex with people while on vacation is a common occurrence as a result of this freedom as well as a lowering of inhibitions (Carter and Clift 2000, Eiser and Ford 1995, Ragsdale, et al. 2006, Apostolopoulos, et al. 2002). Half of the participants in Ragsdale, et al.'s (2006) research participated in sexual relationships while traveling, and one-third of all tourists participating in Eiser and Ford's (1995) research had sexual intercourse with someone while on holiday. Eiser and Ford (1995) attributed this behavior to "situational disinhibition," that people feel like they can be someone different while traveling.

Another disinhibiting factor may be anonymity. Meisch (1995:454) suggests that when women are on vacation, they feel as if no one is watching them and therefore their behavior “does not really count . . . because no one at home will ever know about their activities.” Because women may be concerned with their reputations at home, the possibility of short-term sexual encounters on vacation might be particularly appealing (Thomas 2000).

Ragsdale, et al. (2006) specifically examined female tourists’ sexual risk behavior as related to their expectations of and participation in sexual relationships while traveling. Rather than focusing on why women participate in vacation sex, they examined risk behaviors associated with transmission of HIV and other STD’s. “International tourism among young women often is framed as an opportunity for self-discovery through exploration, which may be expressed through engagement in activities outside the tourist’s normal routines and behaviors, ” including binge drinking” and “engaging in vacation relationships” (Ragsdale, et al. 2006:86). They found that women who expected to have sex while on vacation were twice as likely to engage in sexual relations, 12 times more likely to get condoms either before traveling or while on vacation, and five times more likely to use condoms than those women who did not expect to have sex while on vacation. Those women who expected to have sex were also more likely to travel alone or with one friend “in order to facilitate ‘hooking up’ with one or more vacation partners,” as this “provides more independence and greater opportunities for meeting casual sex partners than do the more structured activities . . . with group travel” (Ragsdale, et al. 2006:93-94). The women in the study who did not intend to have sex while on vacation were significantly less likely to use

condoms when they did participate in sexual relationships. Another factor impeding condom use among female tourists is their romanticizing their encounters. They do not perceive their partners as posing a risk therefore they may not use condoms, even if they normally do (Ellen, et al. 1998).

Summary

The situation of sex and tourism in Latin America and the Caribbean, whether commercial sex tourism or sexual holiday romances, has created an environment in which an increase in transmission of HIV and other STD's can be expected. Condom use, while prudent, does not always take place. Not using condoms is the primary risk factor for transmission of HIV and other STD's, and the relative power of men over women may contribute to a decrease in condom use in heterosexual couples, especially in societies where *machismo* is traditional.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this chapter I will explain my methodological approach. First, I will explain my guiding research questions and how I gathered the information to address them. In so doing, I will present my data collection strategies, my methods of analysis, and my dissemination plan. I will also demonstrate how I adhered to anthropological ethical mandates. Finally, I will provide an overview of the methods used in other sex tourism research, showing how my research is similar.

Guiding Research Questions

In my dissertation research I studied heterosexual sex tourism in Costa Rica, specifically men working in the tourist industry who engage in sexual relationships with female tourists. My first research goal was to understand how tourism has affected the lives of the men who work in the tourist industry, hoping to understand if their jobs in tourism have had any impacts on their lives, specifically their economic conditions. I also asked questions about how tourism has impacted the country itself. I asked men employed in the tourist industry questions such as: Has working in the tourist industry changed your life in any way? Are you making more money? Does your current job carry with it any social status? How has tourism affected Costa Rica and its economy? Explain how tourism has led to development in Costa Rica. (see Appendix A: Interview Instrument: Male Tourist Industry Workers) This information provided valuable

background information about the tourist industry in Costa Rica. This information also explained the context within which this particular sex tourism was able to take place.

My second research goal was to understand why men who work in the Costa Rican tourist industry engage in sexual relations with women tourists and to understand what happens within these relationships such as whether one person controls the other. I expected to find that women were paying men for sexual services and that these men were taking advantage of these women for that reason. I specifically asked questions such as: Why are men interested in relationships with female tourists? Are they looking for something specific? Do women travel to Costa Rica for the specific reason of engaging in sexual relationships with Costa Rican men or do they happen upon the possibility of this behavior? In order to characterize these relationships I asked several questions including: Who initiates the relationship? Are these relationships hidden or displayed openly? Are these relationships generally long term or short in duration? Is this relationship characteristic of a “romantic fling?” How do the men and women present these relationships to others? Do these relationships have any effect on the professional or personal lives of participants? In order to understand the dynamics of these relationships I investigated aspects of power and control in these relationships. Do the male tourist workers or the female tourists control the relationships? Is there a reversal of traditional gender roles? By completing this research I interpreted how the specific case of female sex tourists in Costa Rica fits into the overall theoretical understandings of sex tourism in general.

Fieldwork and Key Informants

In order to explain my fieldwork, I will start from the beginning, years before I started collecting data. The first time I traveled to Costa Rica I was a senior in college. I was a substitute teacher at a high school in Dade County in Southern Florida where I spent most of my time in Spanish and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes. I was given the opportunity to travel with some of these students as a chaperone on their high school trip to Costa Rica. The driver of the tour bus was a friend of the American woman teacher who coordinated the trip, and over the course of the trip I became friends with him as well. His name is Pedro, and he became one of my most valuable key informants.

I got sun poisoning on my last day in Costa Rica on this trip, and Pedro took care of me when I got sick. He gave me tart oranges to settle my stomach and washcloths soaked in alcohol to put on my head. He said that the alcohol would draw the fever out of me. I am not much older than his daughters, and he considered himself a parental figure and caretaker. I think that this situation acted to solidify our friendship. I have seen him on every return trip to Costa Rica and traveled with him many times. One time he even invited me to go with him to Bribri, a village where the indigenous Bribri live, with an Anthropology professor and her students from the University of Costa Rica. He thought that I would enjoy meeting them, and it is an area of the country that I had not seen yet. Given our years of friendship, I feel confident that I can trust Pedro. He has been very important in helping me complete my research.

I traveled to Costa Rica several more times after my first trip. I always traveled with the same friend who coordinated that high school trip, and her friends became my

friends. In the summer of 1999 I participated in a graduate level Spanish language summer program at the University of Costa Rica. I was able to coordinate my own home stay with a family I already knew and lived with them for six weeks that summer. This family owns a tour bus company that is located in their home. I spent every day with the men working at this company. I would interview them for my homework when necessary. I talked to them every day. I was also able to travel on tours with various men in the company. While I was living in this house, I acted as a tour guide on weekend tours every weekend that I was there. During this time and in my capacity as a guide, I was able to meet several other men working in tourism. This travel led me to want to do research about men working in the tourist industry who have sex with the tourists. Several of these men I met during this summer became my informants when I started working on my dissertation.

One other benefit of living in a home that housed a tour bus company was that my host father, Arturo, took me places with him. I went out with him to restaurants and bars and was able to meet his friends, some of whom work in tourism. I also went to parties with him where I met the owners of several other tour companies as well as the men who worked for them. The more people I met who worked in the tourist industry, the more I was convinced that there was something worth investigating in the relationships between these men and female tourists.

I never spent much time with the host mother in my house. In fact, I never spent much time with any Costa Rican women when I traveled there. Right before I left Costa Rica that summer I went to the home of a life-long friend of my host family. It was the night of the *Romería*, a nation-wide pilgrimage to make offerings to the Virgin of Los

Angeles in Cartago. The family had a party and a Catholic mass in their house that evening before people started walking to the basilica in Cartago. At this party I noticed something that I had noticed many times before at parties during my trip: the women and men were completely segregated. Throughout the party the women were in one room, and the men were in another. I was in the room with the men. This was not an uncommon occurrence. My American friend and I always seemed to be with the men, not the women. When we went out with the guys working at the tour bus company, we were always the only women with them. The only Costa Rican woman I ever spent any time with was my host father's girlfriend, his mistress. His wife did not go out with us unless we were going on a family outing. This was another factor contributing to my wanting to understand the relationships that develop between female tourists and Costa Rican men working in tourism. I wondered if these men perceived and approached foreign women in a different way than they did Costa Rican women.

When I got home from this summer program, I changed my life. I changed my dissertation topic, formed my committee, and quit my job. On April 28, 2000, I defended my qualifying exams and became a doctoral candidate. Shortly thereafter I left for Costa Rica to start data collection for my dissertation. This first trip to Costa Rica lasted three months, from June through August 2000. Most of that time was spent making contacts with people who could help me find interviewees and observing a variety of locations to decide where I would do further investigations. I also worked for five weeks as a tour guide for my host father Arturo's company.

Upon arriving in Costa Rica in June 2000, I arranged to meet Leo, another tour bus company owner at Arturo's house. I discussed my research with both of them at

length and asked for any suggestions that they might be able to provide. Pedro, my key informant, works for Leo, so I needed to make sure that Leo knew that Pedro had invited me to go with him on some tours. He knew and gave his approval. He also told me that I could come to his home where his company is housed and explain my research to his drivers. He also allowed me to do an interview with one driver in his home office. Leo gave me the phone number of an independent guide who I had traveled with before so that I might contact him for an interview, too. I already knew him, and he had expressed interest in being interviewed if I ever decided to do this research.

During this first summer in Costa Rica, Arturo was a valuable asset. He helped me meet another tour company owner who also allowed me to explain my research to both him and his employees. This owner led me to another independent guide who I also interviewed. I returned to collect more data from June through August 2001, in March 2002, and in July and August 2002. I collected data for a total of seven months in a 26-month period of time.

On all of my return trips to Costa Rica, I continued to travel with Arturo's drivers. I also continued to travel with Pedro. These men introduced me to most of my other male interviewees. Another of my interviewees, Juan, introduced me to more male interviewees. These men introduced me to some of the women tourists I interviewed, too. This is how my snowball sample worked. Because of the sensitive nature of the interviews conducted, and because there is no publicly identifiable population of tourism workers who have sex with tourists, I could not draw a random sample of interviewees. The most compelling reason to use a snowball sample was because I could not identify

the complete population of men working in tourism who have sex with tourists. Without such a population to draw from, I could not obtain a random sample (Bernard 1995).

It could have been possible to spend time in tourist-oriented locations to watch tour guides and tourists interact, thereby identifying possible interviewees myself, but I decided before beginning my research that this would likely not produce great results because of the sensitive nature of the questions I needed to ask. I was concerned that introducing myself to strangers and then wanting to ask them about their sex lives would put me in a position where I would not be sure how the men perceived me. Additionally, my advisor Kevin Yelvington strongly suggested that I not approach men I did not know for interviews in an effort to ensure my own safety, especially considering both the nature of my questions and that I was a woman alone.

I did spend much time in tourist-oriented locations watching men who work in tourism interact with the female tourists, but I never approached any of these men myself. If I saw a man who I thought might be a potential interviewee, I would ask whichever of my key informants was with me if he knew the man and could introduce me to him. Sometimes if my key informants did not know the men, they would approach men, introduce themselves, tell them about my research, and ask if they might want to participate. In these situations, I would interview the man in his work place while the key informant who introduced me to him waited outside or in another area of the restaurant, or on the beach outside the hotel. In this way, it was a snowball sample because all of my interviewees were introduced to me by other informants. I never asked unknown men for interviews. I relied on my informants to introduce me to men appropriate to the study.

Ethnographic Data Collection Strategies

In order to fulfill my research goals, I used the ethnographic methods of observation and interview. Interviews were my primary means of gaining information about this type of sexual relationship. I could not, after all, be the type of participant observer who actually sees people engaging in sexual relations (Herdt 1999, Friedl 1999). It is not typical anthropological practice to watch people having sex in the course of research (Herdt 1999). I was, however, able to complete observations while in the field. Specifically I observed female tourists and male tourist industry workers interact in contexts other than the sexual such as when they meet each other or go out on dates. Additionally, I was a participant observer in that I was both a female tourist and I worked as a guide in the tourist industry. This gave me ample opportunity to observe in the field.

I completed interviews and observations in San José, Poas, Jacó, Tamarindo, Arenal, La Fortuna, Monteverde, Flamingo, parts of Guanacaste, and in areas in between these locations as I was traveling to and from these places. The only region of Costa Rica in which I did not complete interviews or observations was the Caribbean coast. This was a purposeful decision as this region is known to be plagued by “beach boys” and drugs. I had been told by my many informants that sex between female tourists and men in this area was likely sex for payment as “beach boys” are unemployed or underemployed, sometimes live on the beaches, and often expect to be paid for sex. I was also told that women who travel there often do so looking for drugs or sex specifically. These beach boys are different from the men who I targeted in my research since my project is about men who work in the tourist industry and have economic

means of their own. I acquired this information about the Caribbean from Arturo and Pedro, and it was confirmed by other key informants. I also traveled there myself before beginning data collection and was able to witness firsthand the ever-present drug culture and men who lived on the beach.

My use of ethnographic methods is explained in detail in the following sections of this chapter. Also, in order to successfully complete research in Costa Rica, I had to be able to speak and understand Spanish. Most of the men I interviewed spoke only Spanish, and most interactions that I observed also took place in Spanish. My background with the Spanish language is also discussed below.

The Spanish Language

I first learned to speak Spanish in high school where I took three courses including AP Spanish Language as a senior. That same year, I won an award for being the best student in Spanish language classes. I continued to study the language in college taking three semesters of Spanish classes including an intermediate grammar class. I believe that I learned the most, however, when I started traveling to Costa Rica. The philosophy behind language immersion programs is that by hearing the language all the time and having to use it in order to communicate, people will both gain and retain more speaking abilities. I believe that this approach worked for me in Costa Rica. I had no choice but to speak Spanish in most situations. In the summer of 1999 I participated in a graduate level Spanish language program at the University of Costa Rica. This program helped me polish my abilities.

Since I spent a great deal of time at the tour bus company in Arturo's house, I spent much of my time with the men who worked there. Because I believed that it was

important for me to have extensive knowledge of the words that people use for sex, I asked a couple of the men at Arturo's to help me learn those words. I specifically asked that they teach me any slang words for "having sex" as well as what was the most common way that men would say "to have sex." I was also curious about any phrases that a man would use to tell me that sex was "good" or "satisfying" as well as the words for a woman who he perceives as good at sex and for those he perceives as promiscuous. It was also important that I know what words men might use to describe themselves as having great sexual prowess. I also asked that they teach me any words that men might use that were considered vulgar such as words for "penis" and any words for female genitalia and "breasts." Because I already had a pre-existing friendship with these men and because they knew what my research was about, they had no trouble telling me these words. There was no obvious embarrassment.

Whenever a researcher conducts fieldwork using a second language there are possibilities for misunderstandings. This risk was minimized somewhat by my learning the abovementioned slang. Also, if at any time during an interview I was unsure what a man was saying, I asked him to clarify. Because the men I interviewed work in tourism, however, they are used to having to speak Spanish slowly and clearly so that people who do not understand the language very well can understand them. In fact, Arturo frequently reminds the younger men working for him who are new to the industry to always speak slowly for the foreigners. I did not find these interviews to be very difficult to understand for this very reason. In general, the men spoke clearly and slowly so that I would understand what they were saying to me.

Male Tourism Worker Interviews

As I suggested earlier in this chapter, I met all of my interviewees through snowball sampling. My key informants introduced me to other people to interview. These informants arranged meetings with other tour bus drivers, guides who work with them, and men who work in tourist resorts, hotels, and restaurants. Sometimes they also introduced me to female tourists to interview as well, as will be discussed in a later section of this chapter. All interviews were conducted with the consent of the participants.

Table 3.1: Informants, Interviews Arranged, Place and Date of Interview¹

Interviews Arranged By	Interviewees	Interview Place	Interview City/Region	Interview Date
Myself ²	Armando	his house	San José	8/1/01
	Francisco	key informant, no interview		
	Pedro	on tour in a park	San José	6/11/00
Pedro	Carlos	resort bar	Guanacaste	8/16/01
	Eduardo	airport	San José	7/31/01
	Elias	dormitory housing	Jacó	8/2/01
	Federico	dormitory housing	Jacó	8/2/01
	Gustavo	tour bus van	San José	7/31/01
	Jesus	dormitory housing	Jacó	8/2/01
	Orlando	tour bus	Poas	8/17/01
	Pablo	airport	San José	7/31/01
	Raymundo	tour bus van	San José	8/1/01
	Vicente	tour bus van	San José	7/31/01
Juan	Cristian	restaurant	Jacó	8/19/01
	Daniel	street	Jacó	8/19/01
	Lorenzo	hotel	Jacó	8/19/01
	Martin	hotel	Jacó	8/19/01
	Nestor	restaurant	Jacó	8/19/01
	Richard	restaurant	Jacó	8/19/01
	Santiago	hotel	Jacó	8/19/01
	Tomas	gym	San José	8/10/01
Roderigo	Ignacio	tour bus van	Arenal	7/8/01
	Juan	tour bus van	San José	7/9/01
	Julio	tour bus van	Arenal	7/7/01
	Marcos	tour bus van	Arenal	7/7/01
Fidel	Antonio	shopping in his car	San José	7/20/00
	Bernardo	tour company office	San José	7/12/00
Leo	Fernando	tour company office	San José	6/29/00
Arturo	Jorge	key informant, no interview		
	Luis	key informant, no interview		
	Manuel	key informant, no interview		
	Mateo	key informant, no interview		
	Miguel	key informant, no interview		

The interviews were semi-structured in nature and addressed all of my research questions (see Appendix A: Interview Instrument: Male Tourist Industry Workers).

¹ Names have been changed to protect the identities of my informants.

² Not an informant

Using a semi-structured format insured that I was obtaining the same kinds of information from all of the men that I interviewed and that I was able to answer all of my guiding research questions (Bernard 1995, Kirk and Miller 1986).

A good semi-structured interview instrument is phrased for the understanding of the informants. Additionally, questions are worded to be “appropriate to the respondents’ command of language, cultural background, age, gender, level of knowledge, and any other relevant characteristics” (Schensul, et al. 1999:154). I wrote the interview questions myself based upon my research questions. Arturo reviewed the interview instrument for me to make sure that I used appropriate Spanish. I also asked him if he thought that there were any other questions that I should ask. Pedro, after his initial interview, suggested additional questions that I should ask my informants. With the help of these men I improved my final interview instrument.

In order to check reliability of my data, a sample of the men in my study were interviewed twice, with a year, or in one case two years, between the interviews, to determine if the men provided the same answers to my questions more than once. If not, I was able to ask them what had changed. Very little had changed for any of the men I spoke to more than once. For example, Juan met a tourist he really loved in the year since I spoke to him the first time. Twenty-seven men were interviewed formally in addition to the information gathered from my key informants. Only one key informant, Pedro, completed a formal interview. Pedro was my first male interviewee in June 2000. I interviewed him my first weekend in Costa Rica that summer. I completed all male interviews by the end of my trip in August 2001.

The interviews completed with male tourist industry workers each took at least 45 minutes to complete. Some of those interviews lasted from one to one and a half hours, though, depending on how much the men had to say about the topic. Each of the men who I interviewed knew the topic of inquiry before meeting me because the key informant who introduced me to him had told him about the subject of my dissertation. After our initial introductions in which I told them my name and that I was an anthropologist from the University of South Florida, I explained my dissertation research in greater detail, explained that their interviews were confidential, and told them that I would be writing up all results in my dissertation and hopefully articles and a book in the future.

While interviewing these men, I tended to follow the order of questions in the interview instrument (see Appendix A: Interview Instrument: Male Tourist Industry Workers). I had written the instrument to flow in what I thought was a logical progression, and I found that this ordering worked nicely in practice as well as theory. Most interviews were conducted immediately upon meeting the potential interviewee. Therefore, most interviews took place where the men worked.

Demographics of Male Tourism Worker Interviewees

Of the 27 men interviewed formally, ten are tour guides, two of whom gave tours from taxis. One man is a river rafting guide. One works at a resort where he is a canopy tour guide but currently works mostly in the bar. Six interviewees are tour bus drivers, three men work in hotels, one works in hotel security, three men work in restaurants, one works at a car rental counter, and one works in a gym. Five key informants who were not interviewed formally are tour bus drivers, and one is a resort manager. Thirty-two of

the 33 men participating in my research work in the tourist industry directly. Only the man who works at the gym has a job that is indirectly touched by tourism. He did have several tourist clients and had a relationship with one of those women. The men range in age from 20 to 47 and have worked in tourism for less than one to over twenty years. Nine are married, six have serious girlfriends, and 18 are single, including those who are divorced. Therefore, I interviewed a wide range of men with different characteristics in the process of completing this research.

Table 3.2: Characteristics of Male Interviewees Working in Tourism

Name	Age	Occupation	Years in Tourism	Marital Status
Antonio	47	Eco-guide	20	Divorced
Armando	32	Tour guide	11	Married
Bernardo	24	Tour bus driver	2	Single
Carlos	23	Canopy guide and bartender	5	Single
Cristian	24	Restaurant	8 mos.	Single
Daniel	30	Guide	5	Single
Eduardo	33	Guide	8	Single
Elias	26	Tour guide	6	Girlfriend
Federico	30	Tour guide	5	Girlfriend
Fernando	40	Tour bus driver	11	Single
Francisco	24	Tour bus driver	5	Single
Gustavo	32	Guide	5	Married
Ignacio	33	Tour bus driver, souvenirs	20	Single
Jesús	20	Nature guide	2	Girlfriend
Jorge	36	Tour bus driver	11	Married
Juan	33	Hotel security	3	Single
Julio	20	River rafting guide	6	Single
Lorenzo	38	Hotel reception	1	Married
Luis	24	Tour bus driver	2	Single
Manuel	36	Tour bus driver	15	Divorced
Marcos	24	Guide	4	Single
Martín	30	Hotel maintenance	6	Married
Mateo	30	Resort manager	7	Single
Miguel	36	Tour bus driver	12	Married
Nestor	30	Restaurant	3	Married
Orlando	29	Tour bus driver	8	Divorced
Pablo	47	Car rental counter	11	Married
Pedro	44	Tour bus driver	18	Married, divorcing
Raymundo	36	Tour bus driver	10	Divorced, girlfriend
Richard	21	Restaurant manager	3	Single
Santiago	22	Hotel reception	3 mos.	Girlfriend
Tomás	27	Gym instructor	2	Single
Vicente	33	Nature guide	11	Divorced, girlfriend

Additionally, these interviews were undertaken in a variety of settings throughout Costa Rica including Arenal, San José, Poas, Jacó, and Guanacaste. Some of

the interviews were conducted during the context of a tour I was taking, but the vast majority of interviews were conducted while I was traveling alone with one of my key informants. During my trip in 2000, I interviewed four men, all in San José. The majority of my time that year was spent traveling and observing. When I returned in 2001, I completed 23 additional male interviews.

Flirtatious Male Interviewees

One issue that I encountered in the field was male interviewees who flirted with me during our interview. This behavior was something that I expected given the nature of my research. Even before I started my research, men working in tourist-oriented jobs were approaching me frequently. That is, in part, why I was so sure that this would be a fruitful research topic. One time at the spa in Arenal a tour bus driver at the bar kept looking at me sitting at a table by the swim up bar. He eventually asked Arturo if he (the driver) knew me. He thought I was beautiful and was sure that he remembered me from somewhere. He had driven on a day tour I took to the coffee factory a year earlier.

Sometimes I felt as if I were being approached everywhere by men who were flirting with me relentlessly. Several times my taxi drivers would start looking at me in their rear view mirrors, tell me that I was beautiful, and ask me questions about what I was doing in Costa Rica and how long I was staying there. One night a taxi driver started asking me if I had a boyfriend, was I interested in having a Costa Rican boyfriend, would I ever marry a *tico*, and how long was I staying in the country. I came to realize that this was something that I probably could not avoid.

I kept the issue of flirtatious men in mind while completing my dissertation research. Within the results and discussion chapters of my dissertation, I include

information about those interviewees who did flirt or ask me out on dates during our interview. Most of my interviewees, however, did not approach me for any type of further contact. Of all 33 men I spoke to, both interviewees and informants, very few approached me beyond the context of the interview. While I am always friendly, I did not lead any of my interviewees to believe that I was interested in them beyond the interview. While I do not believe that the information gathered in my research was compromised by the few men who were interested in me sexually or romantically, it is important that I let the reader know who made advances. Acknowledging any possible biases, not only mine, but those of my informants as well, is important for any researcher who is a participant observer (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002).

Female Tourist Interviews

Both key informants and my own observations while on tour helped me identify possible women to interview (see Appendix B: Interview Instrument: Female Tourists). This was the most challenging aspect of the research. Several women tourists were reluctant to complete formal interviews, but some would come to me with stories about what they did and what they saw other women do while on tours. While I intended to interview ten women, only nine consented to formal interviews. Because I was in the field for up to three months at a time, though, several other women frequently spoke to me about their actions and those of their friends. Eleven other women consented to speak to me about their relationships with men in Costa Rica. While the men are the main focus of the research, the women's perspectives provided a more complete picture of the nature of the relationships in which they engage.

I interviewed six women from the United States, one from Switzerland, one from Germany, and one from Denmark. All of the 11 women who spoke to me without being formally interviewed were from the United States. The women ranged in age from 20 to 50 and were students, teachers, secretaries, and small business owners. I interviewed women in San José, Tamarindo, and Arenal as well as in the United States.

Interviews with women took place in much the same fashion as those with men. I followed the order of questions as written in the interview instrument. I also interviewed about half of the women immediately after meeting them. The rest of my female interviewees were women who I saw more than once or traveled with while in Costa Rica. I made arrangements to interview these women at a later time either before I was to leave the country or, in a few cases, after I returned home.

Observations

Some of the men who were interviewed provided possibilities to observe the interactions of male tourism workers and female tourists. Only with the permission of the bus drivers and tour guides was I afforded the opportunity to travel with tour groups and witness firsthand the ways in which men and women behave while on tour. Observational data is a supplement to interview data, creating a more vivid picture of how these relationships begin and end. Observations were also completed systematically with a guiding framework to help me address my research questions. I kept detailed notes of the interactions I was able to observe, highlighting such issues as: who makes the first move and what these men and women do together on dates. I was able to take notes of conversations between men working in tourism and the women tourists with whom they have sex in addition to the actions that I could observe.

During my first summer of data collection in 2000 I completed observations in several locations throughout the country including Arenal, La Fortuna, Guanacaste, San José, and Jacó. In 2001 I returned to the same places and also went to Monteverde and Flamingo. In 2002 I returned to many of the same places as in the previous two years and went to Tamarindo as well. During all of my observations, I sat in hotel and resort bars listening and watching the men working there interacting with the female tourists. I did the same in discos, restaurants, canopy tours, on the beach, and in tour buses. I was particularly interested in witnessing flirting, and I always made note of any “pick-up lines” that I heard. I wanted to know if there were particular things that a man would say to engage a woman in conversation. I also paid attention to specific activities such as dancing and drinking and made notes about how much time men and women would spend alone together in public places.

Because some of my key informants were also close friends, I sometimes accompanied them on dates. Usually, a group of friends would be going out together, and one of my informants would bring a female tourist with him. I went out with Francisco and Kate, Pedro and Linda, Francisco and Lori, and Oscar and Marlena. Because I was able to see them on their dates, I was also able to talk to them about their dates afterward. These opportunities were among some of the most interesting data-gathering activities. Not only was I able to see the relationships in action, but I was able to ask the actors how they felt about their experiences as well.

Participant Observation

A few people who have heard me talk about my research either at school or at conferences asked me if I was a true participant observer, meaning did I have sex with

my informants. While I did not become sexually involved with my informants in that way, I did have a long-standing personal friendship with many of the men who were my informants and interviewees. This long-term interaction gave me the opportunity to be a participant observer. I participated in the daily lives of the men who worked for Arturo. Almost all of those men became informants for me. They also helped me meet other potential interviewees.

I also worked as a tour guide on trips to different places in the country. This gave me an insider's perspective into the tourist industry in Costa Rica. I became a source of information for tourists about the country, sites, and people. I undertook some of the caretaker functions that a tour guide must in order to keep the tourists happy. I took care of some of the basic needs of the tourists such as making sure that their dietary needs are met in the resorts, translating questions of the tourists for the tour bus drivers and the answers back to the tourists, and trying to make sure that we see as many as possible of the sites that the tourists want to see in a particular city or region. I was also able to hear some of the workers opinions about tourists and their needs and to hear many men working in the industry talk about their experiences with female tourists. As DeWalt and DeWalt (2002:68) suggest, when being a participant observer, "the researcher gradually absorbs the big picture and some of the details that lead to an understanding of people's daily lives, structure of events, social structure, and expectations and values." In order to be a participant observer, the researcher becomes enculturated into group being studied (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002, Schensul, et al. 1999).

Much of the data I gathered from women in the field came from my participant observation. "The type of 'interviewing' that is part of participant observation is usually

informal, and is usually more like a casual conversation among acquaintances” (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002:120). As suggested earlier in this chapter, many of the women I spoke to did not want to be interviewed formally but rather spoke to me informally, telling me stories about what they did or observed while on tour. Because I was a participant observer who was highly visible in the setting and because I let everyone on tours with me know that I was an anthropologist studying sex tourism, it was easy for me to have informal conversations and be an “active listener” with my informants (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002).

A Self-Reflective Anthropologist in the Field

I found that most Costa Ricans I spoke to in the course of completing my dissertation research knew what anthropologists are. In fact, less people there asked me what an anthropologist does than do people in the United States. Several people I talked to told me that studying culture must be interesting. The less I had to focus on why I was studying this topic, the better the interview. It was also helpful that no one ever said they suspected that I was in Costa Rica for a different reason than I said I was, unlike some other anthropologists who have published self-reflexive accounts of their experiences (Tsuda 1998).

It is important to note that “the individual’s identity can also be externally defined by others in accordance with standardized social expectations and cultural norms” (Tsuda 1998:110). Anthropologists such as Kondo (1986) and Tsuda (1998) focused on how they should behave to be accepted into the group they were studying, being especially respectful as they were both working in Japan. They were trying to fit in with families and factory workers in the course of their daily lives. My experience

was different because I was spending all of my time with Costa Rican men working in the tourist industry. I did not have to attempt to “fit in” to their culture, as they are used to being with people from different places and cultures. Of course, they had their own ideas about what American women are like. Their greatest expectation of American women is that we can do as we please. I could be who I am because they expected that I could act as I pleased. The men I worked with spend their time working with tourists, catering to their needs, and watching them interact with each other. They already know what to expect from American women; I did not necessarily show them something that they had never seen. One other expectation of American women is that we are loose about our sexuality, so there was no reason to suspect that any man would not speak to me honestly and tell me about their sexual experiences with tourists because they likely assumed that it was commonplace for me to talk about sexuality.

Given this preconception about American women, it is possible that I reinforced this idea by the very nature of my research. I may have affirmed that American women are sexually liberal by being there to study men working in the tourist industry who have sex with tourist women. That they knew about my research topic may have given them the implicit “permission” that they needed to continue to have their sexual relationships with tourists. In this way, I may have influenced future behavior of the men I came in contact with and the perpetuation of female sex tourist relationships in Costa Rica. While I did not give the men the idea of participating in this behavior, I did, in a way, legitimize the very behavior I was studying.

Validity and Reliability in Ethnographic Research

“Validity refers to the accuracy and trustworthiness of instruments, data, and findings in research” (Bernard 1995:38). According to Bernard (1995:38) “nothing in research is more important than validity.” “To focus on the validity of an observation or an instrument is to care about whether measurements have currency (what do the observations buy?), and about whether phenomena are properly labeled (what are the right names for variables?)” (Kirk and Miller 1986:21). I needed to know that I was asking the right questions to get all of the information required to answer my research questions. I needed to be sure that I understood the context of sex tourism, knew what my variables (issues) were, and was able to talk about the issues in an appropriate manner. In order to do so, I consulted the literature on sex tourism, my informants Pedro and Arturo, and my advisor. I gained some insights about the questions that have been answered in the published research, and Pedro suggested additional questions to ask my interviewees. Upon reading all drafts of my interview instruments, my advisor did not suggest any additional questions.

“We have no other technology for making this kind of validity check than long-run personal interaction. We can never be absolutely sure that we understand all the idiosyncratic cultural implications of anything, but the sensitive, intelligent fieldworker armed with a good theoretical orientation and good rapport over a long period of time is the best check we can make” (Kirk and Miller 1986:32). It was important to spend time with male tourism workers, especially my key informants, to help me be sensitive to the issues at hand. Pedro, my most valuable key informant, critiqued my interview

instruments suggesting more questions to ask to get at the larger issues of what is going on in these relationships.

Pedro specifically suggested that I add questions such as: What kinds of things did you do together? Where did you go? Where did you have sex? When you choose a woman to have sex with, are you looking for a woman who has had many sexual experiences? Are you looking for a virgin? Do you look for anything in particular? Does it not matter? Is there a difference between having sex with a young or pretty woman and an old or ugly woman? These questions provide some insight into the desires of the men who have sex with tourists. These questions also allow me to understand in greater detail what the men are looking for in the tourists with whom they have sex. Pedro helped me to ask the right questions of my informants to answer my research questions.

As Kirk and Miller (1986) suggest, fieldworkers need to spend time in the field in order to be sure that they understand what is going on and are doing valid research. As I explained above, my dissertation research was completed over seven months in the course of two years. Since I have been traveling to San José, Costa Rica for several years now, at least once a year, I know many of the people who work in the tourist industry, and I have been accepted as a friend. This time and expertise allow me to claim that I know what is happening in this situation. Additionally, during my time collecting data in Costa Rica I was a participant observer who became intimately knowledgeable about the daily happenings of my informants as well as what happened within the context of their relationships with female tourists.

I already knew a great deal about the tourist industry before I began data collection for my dissertation. I had even worked there as a tour guide. I also knew many men working in tourism who had relationships with female tourists, and I knew women who participated in these relationships, too. I do consider myself an expert in this area of inquiry, not only because of my anthropological data collection but also because of the other experiences I have had in the country.

“Reliability refers to whether or not you get the same answer by using an instrument to measure something more than once” (Bernard 1995:38). When the fieldwork undertaken by the anthropologist is ethnographic in nature, it is difficult to be sure that the research is reliable in the conventional sense of the word. Ethnography is, after all, a description and analysis of a situation in a particular time and place. An anthropological fieldworker must keep in mind that his/her field site has a history, and as conditions change, so will the description and analysis (Kirk and Miller 1986). “Reliability, (therefore,) depends essentially on explicitly described observational procedures” (Kirk and Miller 1986:41). The fieldworker must be able to demonstrate to others that he/she took great care to collect data systematically. Without compromising his/her ability to absorb the context of the ethnographic site, the anthropologist can standardize the questions asked of the informants. The anthropologist can record questions asked, take good fieldnotes, and explain his/her underlying theory in an effort to demonstrate to other researchers that they would have found the same information had they been the ones in the field.

I kept systematic notes of all that I observed and used a semi-structured interview format for my interviews with both men and women. Additionally, data collection

strategies were explicit in my research proposal, and I did not deviate from the original plan of work. I will also provide accounts of my data collection strategies in any reports, articles, or papers for presentation that I will later complete about this research project.

Flaws in the Research

The one exception to the systematic nature of my dissertation research was my acceptance of stories from the women who did not want to be interviewed formally. My notes from these conversations were not standardized in any way since each woman told a unique story. While being on tour with so many women during my seven months in the field, I came to know several of them very well. I used my personal judgment in whether or not to listen to these women based on the amount of time I had known them and what I had seen them do while we were on tour together. When I had seen women approaching men, I could believe their stories about approaching men. Having seen men approach these women, I could believe the stories they told me about the men who approached them.

Data Analysis

Upon collection of the data, I transcribed and translated into English any interviews that were taped. For interviews that were not tape-recorded, I translated and typed the notes taken. I also kept detailed diary-type fieldnotes of all observations that were typed in report form. I also had the benefit of field reports that were typed and e-mailed to my advisor. These interviews, notes, and reports were coded thematically in order to answer my research questions with a topical narrative analysis.

Dissemination

I have presented papers at the annual meetings of the Society for Applied Anthropology and in the University of South Florida departmental colloquium. Papers will also be submitted for presentation at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association and future meetings of the Society for Applied Anthropology. Papers based on the findings of the my research will be submitted for publication by refereed journals such as *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Human Organization*, and others.

In making sure that my research is situated in an applied context, I also plan to create a web site that I hope will be visited by prospective tourists to Costa Rica. This web site will use knowledge gained through my dissertation research about risk of HIV and other STD's. The goal of the web site is to inform women that they must protect themselves, in most cases providing their own condoms, and insist upon condom use. This web site will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

Ethical Considerations

In order to complete competent research I was guided by the ethical mandates of the discipline of Anthropology. Both the ethics statements from the Society for Applied Anthropology and the American Anthropological Association name the primary responsibility of the researcher to be protecting the rights of those studied. The first rule of ethics for the SfAA is that "to the people we study we owe disclosure of our research goals, methods, and sponsorship" (The Society for Applied Anthropology, 1991:263). Similarly, the AAA mandates that "the aims of all their professional activities should be clearly communicated by anthropologists to those among whom they work" (The

American Anthropological Association 1991:275). The University of South Florida also requires that their students and faculty members go through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to get permission to do any research projects. Part of the requirements for IRB is to use a detailed informed consent form outlining possible risks and benefits of participation in the research. There is such an informed consent form in this research project. I did not nor do I now perceive any risks to the informants since the confidentiality of the participants is maintained. Pseudonyms were used for my informants in all documents including transcripts and fieldnotes as well as all published and presented papers so as to reduce the likelihood of people recognizing them as my research informants. Additionally, I do not give the names of the companies or resorts for which the men work so that their identification will be less likely. In these ways I am able to maintain the promised confidentiality.

I do not believe that there are any foreseeable indirect consequences of my research either. I do not believe that my research will change tourists' minds about whether or not they should travel to Costa Rica. I do not believe that I am revealing anything that will be shocking to the average tourist. If anything, my findings suggest that female tourists are having what appear to be mutually beneficial sexual relationships with men working in tourism. My only goal by creating the web site is to remind women that they need to take control of their sexual safety.

One might wonder about the effects of my research on unfaithful husbands and wives. Since I asked some of the married men if their wives are suspicious of their having affairs and all said yes, I do not foresee any consequences for the men who participated in my research. Their wives likely already suspect that their husbands have

sex with tourists. I do not know if my findings will cause husbands of future female travelers to Costa Rica to be suspicious of whether or not their wives will have sex with tourism workers, but since confidentiality has been maintained, no specific women who participated in my research should be facing any consequences.

Methods in Sex Tourism Research

In order to justify my choice of methods, I examined the literature on sex tourism, making note of the methods used by “the experts.” My approach is similar to theirs. Most sex tourism researchers have used ethnographic methods in their work. Interviews have been the primary means of collecting data for several researchers who have studied sex tourism. They have also relied on observations in their work. Few researchers have used surveys.

Julia O’Connell Davidson is perhaps one of the most well known researchers of sex tourism. She has relied primarily on interviews of sex tourists and/or their clients in Great Britain, Thailand, and Cuba. She was only a participant observer in her first study in Great Britain when she worked as a receptionist for a British prostitute. She, along with Jacqueline Sanchez Taylor, has completed almost 400 interviews in “fifteen weeks of fieldwork” (O’Connell Davidson 1998:6). O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor also observed in several locations where they collected interview data. Surveys were also used “to gather structured data on sex tourists’ background characteristics” (O’Connell Davidson 1998:6). Sanchez Taylor, (2000) in her own research, also interviewed participants as the main source of her information.

In the most comprehensive volume on the subject of Caribbean and Latin American sex tourism, *Sun, Sex, and Gold: Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean*,

interviews were the primary data collection technique in all of the studies. The interviewees were part of purposive, non-probability samples as the researchers targeted specific groups of people and did not obtain random samples. Cabezas's (1999:102) study, for example was "organized around women sex workers." Campbell, et al. (1999) relied on in-depth interviews with female sex workers. Antonius-Smits, et al. (1999) and members of the Red Thread Women's Development Programme (1999) similarly interviewed female sex workers. Phillips (1999) interviewed both female sex tourists and the men with whom they had sex in Barbados. The interview data was the most important source of information for these studies. Researchers in other volumes on sex tourism have also depended upon interview data. Günther, (1998) for example, interviewed male sex tourists in his attempt to define sex tourists. Some researchers such as de Albuquerque (1998) have relied heavily on observations. He watched female tourists interact with the "beach boys" with whom they had sex.

Given the methods used in the published research on sex tourism, I believe that I chose the right course of action in collecting data for my dissertation. Most of the abovementioned authors focused on either the sex tourists or the people with whom they have sex (Cabezas's 1999, Campbell, et al. 1999, Antonius-Smits, et al. 1999, Red Thread Women's Development Programme 1999). Others chose to focus on both the sex tourists and the toured (O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 1999, O'Connell Davidson 1998, Sanchez Taylor 2000, Phillips 1999). While I focused on the men having sex with the women tourists, I also provided the perspective of the women. Additionally, I did not rely completely on interviews as I supplemented my data with observations. I was also a participant observer, a technique that does not seem to be

widely used in sex tourism research. I triangulated my data sources and completed ethical, valid, and reliable research. Of course, there are limitations of all research. Because I used a snowball sample, my findings are not generalizable to all sex tourism arrangements. Because I used ethnographic methods and ethnographies are of a particular time and place, my research is specifically about female sex tourism in Costa Rica from 2000 through 2002.

Chapter Four: Tourism in Costa Rica

In this chapter I discuss the tourist industry in Costa Rica, as it is the context within which my research is situated. Before explaining the specific issues of sex and tourism that concern my dissertation, it is important to understand tourism in Costa Rica in general and how the men feel about their work as well as how they came to work in that field. These topics will help the reader understand how much contact with tourists exists for them.

I begin by describing the population of the country, in general. Then, I describe the tourist industry, including the types of tourism found there and the locations within the country where tourism tends to be concentrated. I also discuss how the men working in the tourist industry perceive the industry and how tourism may affect both them personally and the country as a whole. I begin by describing the workers, their jobs, and the economic advantages of jobs in tourism. Then, I examine their perceptions of tourism and tourists. Finally, I analyze their assessments of the industry in an effort to see how Costa Rican tourism fits into the wider context of tourism in general.

Costa Rica's Population

In order to understand the context of tourism in Costa Rica, it is important to understand the land and the people who reside there. In July 2002, which is the last year I collected data in Costa Rica, the estimated population of Costa Rica was 3,834,934

people with 30.8% of those being 0-14 years old, 63.9% 15-64 years old, and 5.3% 65 or more years old. Costa Rica has a fairly homogenous population with 94% of all people classified as white, including mestizo, 3% black, 1% Amerindian, 1% Chinese, and 1% other. The official religion of Costa Rica is Roman Catholicism, and 76.3% of the population is practicing (Central Intelligence Agency 2002). By 2009, the population increased to 4,253,877, with 26.7% of those being 0-14 years old, 67.1% 15-64 years old, and 6.2% 65 or more years old; the population of Costa Rica is aging, without a corresponding increase in birth rates. The racial composition of the country, however, has remained the same (Central Intelligence Agency 2009).

Costa Rica is located in Central America, north of Panama and south of Nicaragua. The land area is a mere 50,660 sq km, which is smaller than the state of West Virginia (Central Intelligence Agency 2002). Costa Rica accounts for only one tenth of one percent of the land mass of the world, but the country has five percent of the world's biodiversity (Greenspan 1997). It is this biodiversity that may account for Costa Rica's popularity as a tourist destination, in part because the visitor can experience so much in a short time, with minimal travel time between destinations. Costa Rica has a history of environmental conservation since at least the early twentieth century, legally protecting ten percent of their landmass with national parks, bio-reserves, and other protected areas (Lindberg and Aylward 1999). The protected areas increased to 25 percent of the country in the 1990's (Galluzzo 1999).

Additionally, the country consists of seven provinces: Alajuela, Cartago, Guanacaste, Heredia, Limon, Puntarenas, and San José. Currently, more than half of all residents live in the capital city, San José (Central Intelligence Agency 2002). The

provinces of Alajuela, Cartago, and Heredia, also in the central valley of Costa Rica, have grown in size with the capital, and many of the people who live there commute to the capital for work or school (Biesanz, et al. 1999). Tourist destinations and attractions may be found in all of the seven provinces.

Tourist Destinations in Costa Rica

According to Frommer's travel guide to Costa Rica, (Greenspan 1997) some the "best" and most popular places to travel in the country are Rincón de la Vieja National Park, Arenal Volcano and Tabacón Hot Springs, and Manuel Antonio. These three examples include attractions for a variety of travelers' desires. Rincón de la Vieja National Park, located in the Guanacaste province is a popular location for adventure travelers since there is hiking within the park and several canopy tours located in the surrounding areas. While Arenal Volcano might attract those people who want to see the biodiversity of Costa Rica, Tabacón Hot Springs at the foot of the volcano appeals to those who are traveling for pleasure and relaxation. Manuel Antonio is a national park and contains one of the most popular beaches on the Pacific coast of the country, and many people travel there in addition to some of the other beaches on the Pacific such as Jacó, Tamarindo, Conchal, Montezuma, and Flamingo. Most of these beaches are popular with surfers, as they are known for their waves (Greenspan 1997).

In my experience working as a tour guide, there are other popular destinations, especially for young travelers in their twenties. One such popular place is Puerto Viejo on the Caribbean coast of the country. This is where one would find the greatest Jamaican influence in Costa Rica. Another popular area is Monteverde. The cloud

forest is located in Monteverde, and the town in the mountains has very cool weather and many student groups.

Costa Rica has been a popular tourist destination for decades, and Achana (1994:62) studied the “factors that made Costa Rica an attractive vacation destination.” He found that the overwhelmingly most important reason people traveled to Costa Rica was to “escape from daily routine,” with over half of the participants claiming this as their number one reason for travel. Only ten percent of the participants traveled for “nature and outdoor experiences” and “spending free time with desired people.” However, more than half of the participants believed that the most important destinations in Costa Rica were “natural attractions” (52.5 percent) as opposed to “fun and pleasure attractions” (25.1 percent). Both of these explanations make sense in light of the destinations most popular with tourists such as Arenal Volcano and Manuel Antonio, as these and other locations offer both escape and natural wonders.

Ecotourism is popular in Costa Rica, and their environmental protection has only contributed to this facet of the tourism industry. In fact, President Figueres increased support for ecotourism projects in the 1990’s, in part by increasing the amount of protected lands to 25 percent of the landmass in an effort to woo more visitors interested in nature and preservation (Galluzzo 1999). Tourists typically visit at least one national park during their stay in Costa Rica, most popular of which are Manuel Antonio and Poas Volcano, (Lindberg and Aylward 1999, Chase, et al. 1998) and natural attractions have been marketed as tourist destinations (Meadows 1993, Galluzzo 1999). While Achana (1994) did not find that nature was the driving force behind visitors’ motivations

to travel to Costa Rica, Norris (1994:33) claims that “more than two-thirds of the international tourists in Costa Rica say they came to enjoy the country’s national parks.”

Figure 4.1: Map of Costa Rican Tourist Destinations



Source: CentralAmerica.com, <http://centralamerica.com/cr/maps/mapcosta.htm>.

The Role of Tourism in Costa Rica’s Economy

The Political and Economic Climate

Costa Rica was a Spanish colony, but this democratic republic gained independence on September 15, 1821. The constitution was not written, however, until

1949, after the civil war (Central Intelligence Agency 2002). Since then, “Costa Rica consistently lands at the top of lists ranking Latin American democracies. To political scientists, it represents a sort of Third World paradise, a regime that is superlatively democratic, stable, and respectful of human rights” (Clark 2001:1). While politically progressive, the country has made more gradual economic advancements (Clark 2001). The economy in Costa Rica was always stronger than that of the rest of Central America, but after the Civil War in 1948, the country advanced further. In fact, many political and economic changes occurred after the Civil War (Wilson 1998).

Before 1948, agriculture was the main contributor to the economy. Because of this, two-thirds of the population lived in rural areas and most of them worked in the coffee or banana industries (Wilson 1998, Biesanz, et al. 1999). In the prewar period, agricultural exporters controlled many facets of the political structure, but with the “Second Republic” after the war, President José Figueres began the process of changing the economic structure of the country. His plan included diversification of the major industries, which several years later, has been a very important contributor to economic development. In 1959, the first industrialization law was passed under President Echandi (Wilson 1998).

By 1968, the government diversified agricultural exports to nontraditional products, but throughout the 1970’s the increase in nontraditional exports was minimal. From 1983 until 1990, though, nontraditional exports including textiles, ornamental plants, seafood, and pineapple increased from 90 million to 635 million dollars and from 10 to 43 percent of all export earnings. In 1998, these numbers reached 3.8 billion dollars and 68 percent of all exports. That year Intel opened two factories and

microprocessors joined the ranks of nontraditional exports, becoming the most successful export in Costa Rica at 959 million dollars (Clark 2001). “The country's high-tech transition has been nothing short of dramatic. In 1997 Costa Rica exported \$788 million worth of textiles, \$560 million in bananas, \$391 million in coffee--and zero in microchips. By 1999 Inters microchip exports were worth almost twice as much as textiles, bananas, and coffee combined” (Luxner 2000:3). While nontraditional exports were the preferred method of economic diversification and development, in the 1980's and 1990's tourism became a major source of revenue for the country. Tourism was the third largest export for twenty years until becoming first in 1994 (Biesanz, et al. 1999, Molina and Palmer 1997). By 1998, tourism contributed 830 million dollars to the Costa Rican economy, second only to microprocessors (Clark 2001). By 2009, tourism was still only 17% of Costa Rica's GDP, although the industry accounts for an estimated more than 500,000 jobs directly and indirectly related to tourism (Fitzgerald 2009).

Tourism in the Economic Context

Lara (1995) suggests that the growth in tourism throughout the 1980's and 1990's can be attributed to public attention given to Oscar Arias's winning the Nobel Peace Prize and to the national park system. Biesanz, et al. (1999:53) say that “Costa Rica's natural beauty, great biodiversity, and fishing and surfing, as well as its reputation for peace and stability make it a popular vacation spot for North Americans and Europeans.”

Large “tourist complexes” spread throughout the country, in large part due to foreign investment (Lara 1995). “As with the nation's industrial growth, foreigners have made the most investments and hence most profits” (Biesanz, et al. 1999:53). Tourism

always has relied on foreign investment, and because of the political stability and beauty of the country, foreigners continue to invest in tourist industry ventures in Costa Rica (Central Intelligence Agency 2002).

“Costa Rica has played on its comparative advantage in ecotourism” with its “range of microclimates” (Clark 2001:106). National parks and beaches are all very close to San José, the capital city in which the international airport is located and to which foreign tourists arrive in Costa Rica. The tourist industry has a good outlook, but Clark (2001) suggests that there are some potential problems that may face the industry. First, ecotourism has its natural limits, and Costa Rica is already full of visitors, especially during the peak tourist season each year. Environmental degradation is a possibility. Additionally, there are many competitors for tourists in the Caribbean and Latin America. Clark (2001) is particularly concerned that many tourists will choose to travel to Cuba in the coming years as the country is opened up to Americans and should be a less expensive alternative to Costa Rica.

Tourist Workers Perceptions of Costa Rican Tourism

Male Interviewees' Work in Tourism

Depending on their specific job titles, the interviewed men have different job descriptions. The common aspect of all of their jobs is that they are all responsible for taking care of tourists' needs. Some provide information about the country as guides. Others drive and act as guides. Some men serve food and drinks to tourists. Other men direct tourists to their hotel rooms and may even carry bags or clean rooms. All of the men who work in tourism, however, have some degree of contact with tourists. While all of the men said that speaking English was perhaps the most important skill that any

tourism worker could have, only five of my male informants speak fluent English. A few others speak enough English to respond to a few typical tourist questions such as “where is the bathroom?” or “may I have a glass of water?” The majority of my informants, however, do not speak any English. All expressed a desire to learn, though, because it would help with their work.

Employment and Financial Opportunities

All of the men interviewed said that they like their work. When probed further about the benefits of their jobs, all men suggested that they earn more money working in tourism than they would in another job or than they did in their previous job. Nestor said that “his life has changed for the better. He makes more money.” Vicente disclosed that he makes much more money in tourism, “two, three, four times more money.” Antonio suggested that jobs in tourism are highly beneficial for a wide variety of people in Costa Rica. Antonio said that

men with very little education can make a lot of money. . . . A person’s socio-economic status may change with this occupation. It is a respected job. It is the most important industry in Costa Rica.

Tourism has increased employment opportunities for many Costa Ricans, especially men. As Elias said

People change jobs. People who used to work in retail now work in hotels. . . . In a large part, Costa Rica is dependent on tourism. A lot of people would have different jobs. I would have stayed on the farm.

Julio also would have stayed on the farm if not for employment opportunities in tourism.

It is very easy now. Before I worked with my father on the farm, worked really hard, now I just work with the tourists. It is easier.

With tourism, there is both different work and more work for many people. Federico said

There is more work for many families and many tourists per year. The economy has both positives and negatives. When tourism is good, many families benefit. If tourism is bad, then they have to look for something else to do; they don't have money.

It is true that tourism is seasonal in Costa Rica. During peak tourism times, there is more work for people. Although none of my informants told me that he goes through periods of unemployment or that there are times when he does not have enough money, when the tourist season is over, some people may be underemployed. However, not all men who work in the tourist industry believe that this is a negative consequence of working in tourism. Armando, a tour guide, appreciates the time off that his job allows for him. He says that he makes enough money during the tourist season to last all year, and he is happy to get to spend a few months off with his family. He would be able to work during the off times, but he chooses not to do so. He told me that many people who live in his town do not even know what he does for a living because he is gone from home so often. He enjoys getting to stay home and playing a greater role in the community.

Economic Development

Tourism provides benefits not only for the men who work in the industry but also for the country as a whole. The men who work in the tourist industry are quite

knowledgeable about both tourism and economic conditions in Costa Rica. Gustavo correctly told me that “there is economic advancement. Coffee is third, tourism is second, and high tech is first.” He also told me that he believes that Costa Rica is not dependent on tourism because they still export many agricultural products.

While he does not believe that Costa Rica is dependent on tourism, Federico attributes many positive changes to tourism.

Without tourism, the small towns like Jacó and Puntarenas would not have developed. Without tourism there would be no money and no construction. . . . There are better opportunities for work. People can leave San José. The principal highway is better. There are more restaurants because they need them for the people who visit Costa Rica. . . . There is less unemployment and less poverty.

He does not view tourism all positively, however. While he thinks that tourism is one of the best means of development, because of tourism being seasonal, he suggests that Costa Rica rely on other sources of generating funds like “Intel and microchips.” Everyone agreed, however, that tourism provides much for the local people, especially those who work in the industry.

I wanted to know if the men thought that tourism provided more benefits for Costa Ricans or for people from other countries such as the U.S. Most of the men interviewed believe that tourism provides more for Costa Ricans than for foreign people or corporations who invest in Costa Rican tourism. Even those who know that foreigners own many hotels believe that Costa Ricans reap more benefits from money generated by the tourist industry.

Gustavo said about half of all tourist hotels and restaurants are foreign-owned. Jesús, Santiago, Martín, Ignacio, Pablo, and Raymundo believe that there is much more foreign ownership of tourist businesses. The major hotel chains found throughout Costa Rica (Best Western, Barceló, etc.) are, in fact, foreign-owned. Some of the smaller local hotels are owned by Costa Ricans, and expatriates from other countries own other small hotels. Gustavo said

Tourism earns much money for the foreigners, but much more for the people in Costa Rica because they get jobs and tips. More money stays in Costa Rica.

Most of the interviewees suggested that it did not really matter how much money goes to the foreigners who invest in Costa Rica because the money earned by Costa Ricans was much more important. They need the money and jobs more than foreign corporations need the extra earnings. As long as the locals are benefiting, then they see no problem with others gaining something, too.

Impacts of Tourism on Costa Rica

As Gustavo notes, tourism has had many impacts on Costa Rica. Many changes in the country overall can be attributed to the tourist industry.

There are hotels and employment for lots of people. There are more tourism agencies that employ people. They learn English in primary school. The infrastructure has changed, too. Costa Rica wants to look better for tourism.

There are more programs for protecting the forests and beaches. The streets are better.

Many interviewees suggested that the improvements in infrastructure are one of the positive impacts of tourism in Costa Rica. Raymundo and Elias both said that the improvements to the streets were an important result of tourism.

Pablo says that the country is “about 80% dependent on tourism,” and he believes that many improvements would not have been possible if not for the tourist industry.

There are more highways and hotels. There are more schools and universities.

Without tourism it would have been very difficult to get these things.

When asked if Costa Rica is better off for relying so heavily on tourism, Pablo answered, *claro que sí, cien por ciento*, “of course, 100%.” Jesús has similar feelings. He said that “there would be no development without tourism.” He corrected himself, though, and said that “there could be, but it would be much slower.”

Of course, development in the form of construction is not the only impact of tourism. Much ecological preservation in the country can be attributed to tourism. Orlando said that “people take care of the flora and fauna more because of tourism.” Most of the men interviewed believe that people travel to Costa Rica specifically to experience nature therefore it is only wise to protect what the people want to see. Only Antonio, a college-educated biologist and eco-guide, believes that there is not enough environmental protection. He said that there is more deforestation than the government says there is and that they need to worry about environmental degradation.

Tourism also has impacts on the lives of the men who work in tourism. They make more money, but the cost is that they spend less time at home with their families. Pedro seems to have the most problems with this consequence of his job. He said

primero que nada, hay sacrificios en la familia. “First of all, there are sacrifices made with the family.” He does not get to spend as much time with them as he would like. Because he is a popular driver, he often spends weeks at a time away on trips. He continues to work like this even during the off-season because groups that travel to Costa Rica year after year often request him.

Working in tourism, you become a slave to your work. I don't know when I will be free. I have no vacations.

Additionally, Pedro is in the process of a divorce, which he attributes to his work and absence from home.

Federico also believes that tourism could have adverse effects on his family. His common-law wife and child live in another town while he lives in a major tourist city. He lives in a barracks-like dormitory situation with several other young men who work as guides for the same tour company. He is happy that he makes more money to send to his family, but he worries about losing them because he spends so much time away from home. This is another reason why Armando appreciates the off-season so much. He does not want to neglect his family.

Tourists in Costa Rica

I wanted to know why the men working in tourism think that tourists go to Costa Rica, what they think the tourists know about Costa Rica when they travel there, and if they think that the tourists like the country. I just wanted to know their perceptions of tourists, in general.

The men interviewed gave different reasons why they think tourists travel to Costa Rica, but not one of them said that people travel to Costa Rica to learn or improve

their Spanish. About half of the women I spoke to, did, in fact, travel to Costa Rica to learn or improve their Spanish. Most took classes either at a university or language school, but some women such as Sarah were learning Spanish on their own by immersing themselves in the language. Costa Rica is a popular destination for college students, as there are many study abroad programs in the university as well as several Spanish language institutes throughout the country. Most of these programs lead students to tour the country. Some schools, in fact, offer tours for their students. Armando is one of the “official” tour guides for one of the big language schools in San José.

All of the men understand that Costa Rica is known for ecotourism. It is perhaps the most common reason why tourists travel to the country. As Gustavo notes “Costa Rica is famous for forests and rivers, famous for biodiversity.” Nestor believes that people travel to Costa Rica for the national parks. As Carlos said

There are many things to do. Costa Rica has lots of things that other countries don't have. They have vegetation, volcanoes, and nature.

Eduardo said

They come here (to Costa Rica) because they say it is green. They come for the national parks, volcanoes, and beaches. They come for nature.

Federico told me that

There is nature, adventure. People like the canopy tours. They spend a day rafting, a day watching monkeys, a day at the volcanoes.

There are a variety of things for tourists to do while in Costa Rica. What people choose to do will depend upon their specific desires. As Federico said

The typical American is a person who wants to know things. They care about culture and history. They want to have fun but very cautiously. They like nature, animals, birds, jungles, and national parks.

Americans are also known for being adventurous and/or fragile. As Gustavo suggested

The typical American is nice, delicate, is very careful about food and wants places to be just right or they don't want to go there. They want adventures.

They are a little delicate, but they are also adventurous. They are demanding.

Lana was a particularly “delicate” young woman with whom I was on a tour, and she is an excellent example of the fragile yet adventurous traveler. She was a bother to all of the women on the bus since she whined about everything, especially her food, and was afraid that she would get sick or bitten by a bug. She even asked the tour bus driver to take her to a clinic because she mistakenly thought that she had sprained her ankle. At the same time, however, she participated in all activities including the canopy tour in which people swing on zip lines above the forest canopy. She also found time for pleasure, as she and another woman went to the disco in town after everyone else went to bed Saturday night.

Orlando believes that the delicate nature of Americans leads them to choose Costa Rica over other Latin American countries because

it is a safe country with a good culture. There are no problems with the food or drink or water. It is easy to get around. Transportation is easy. . . . People can always help you.

The men working in tourism also believe that people travel to Costa Rica because it is politically stable and democratic. Costa Rica is believed to be different

than the rest of Latin America in this respect. It is a stable, democratic country with very little violent crime or political upheaval. Lorenzo calls Costa Rica “the Switzerland of Latin America.” Carlos attributes the political stability, in part, to tourism itself. The country remains “calm” because the people know that they need the revenues that tourism provides. Jesús said that

there is less corruption in Costa Rica than in other parts of Latin America.

Tourists appreciate this.

Martín believes that

people come to Costa Rica because it is a country without an army. There is not a lot of violence in Costa Rica like in other countries.

Gustavo said

There is no army. It is a democratic country. We don't have war problems.

Arias won the Nobel Peace Prize. He influenced the country a lot.

Vicente agreed that Arias's winning the Nobel Peace Prize influences many tourists to travel to Costa Rica.

In the last few years, Costa Rica is becoming popular. The Discovery Channel has rainforest programs. Oscar Arias, the 1987 president, won the Nobel Prize. In 2001 people know more than they did ten years ago. They have no idea about the Costa Rican people, but when they go home, they are impressed and say that Costa Rican people are polite, helpful.

Antonio believes that the good relationship between the U.S. and Costa Rica leads many people to travel there.

Costa Rica is protected by the U.S. Millions are subsidized every year. Costa Rica is a model for democracy for the world. It is democratic like the U.S., which is good for us (Costa Ricans). There is no army. The U.S. tries to, wants to keep Costa Rica neutral and safe. The lifestyle is safe. Also, the U.S. has political interests here (in Costa Rica). Costa Rica is like a U.S. base for policies in Latin America. It is like the headquarters of the U.S. in Latin America in many ways.

Most of the men interviewed said that people travel to Costa Rica because they have heard about it from other people. As Orlando said “there is much publicity. People give their recommendations to other people about the beach, ecotourism, adventures, and nature.” In addition to word of mouth from other tourists, Elias attributes some of Costa Rica’s popularity with the Internet where many of the tourists learn about the country before they travel.

Recommendations for Change

When asked what they would change about how tourism is implemented in Costa Rica, very few of the men said that the tourist industry needed changes. Armando, however, had strong suggestions. He is a certified guide who has been through all of the necessary training and who is registered with the Ministry of Tourism in Costa Rica. He is one of two guides who are registered and certified. Armando believes that the tourist industry needs to change its standards of hiring. He does not think that just anybody should be able to act as a guide. Federico agrees.

Right now, anyone can be a guide. It is not regulated. It would be good if they needed a license for tourism because there are many guides.

Armando told me that men think that just because they learn some English they are qualified to become guides. This takes jobs away from certified guides since untrained men will work for a lower wage. Armando believes that it also affects the tourists' experiences in the country since unqualified guides know less about the sites, the ecology, and the history of Costa Rica. He is currently working with the Ministry of Tourism, the governmental body that oversees the tourist industry, to implement rules for guides and a means of certifying more people. He is, in fact, the only informant who has had any contact with the Ministry of Tourism.

Explaining Tourism in Costa Rica

Tourism, Economic Development, and Modernization

The men I interviewed who work in the tourist industry in Costa Rica are quite knowledgeable about the industry. They believe that tourism has resulted in economic development in the country, especially in the form of employment opportunities and improvements to infrastructure. This is a common pattern of tourism development in developing countries as modernization results in order to keep the tourists happy (Crick 1989). While the men I interviewed are satisfied with the changes made in Costa Rica such as the improvements to the roads and the modernization of the highway, they also understand that these changes were not made for them but to make the tourists' experiences better.

Crick (1989) and O'Connell Davidson (1998) state that more profits from tourism ventures return to the countries investing in the industry than those that remain in the native countries. Most of the men interviewed believe that there are more benefits for the Costa Rican people than for foreign investors. Even those who understand how

much is gained by foreigners do not seem to care, as they are more concerned that the industry continue to provide income and jobs for the Costa Rican people. The outlook for tourism continues to be good, so it is likely that the people will continue to see benefits (Clark 2001).

Economic Impacts of Tourism

One common consequence of tourism in Latin America, according to O'Connell Davidson, (1998) is that men are more likely to benefit from tourism because they are more likely to be employed in the industry. Men in Costa Rica are much more likely to get jobs in the tourist industry than are women. Much like O'Connell Davidson (1998) describes, men receive jobs that are traditionally held by men such as being taxi drivers and bus drivers. Of all people working in the tourist industry, tour bus drivers and tour guides are the best paid, and women are generally not part of those industries.

It was relatively easy to find men working in the industry to interview. I began by looking for men who worked as tour guides and tour bus drivers. I have only met one woman who drives a tour bus. She drives a van, and therefore has much less contact with tourists and makes less money than men who drive the bigger buses. As far as I know, not one woman drives a medium or large tour bus in Costa Rica. Additionally, there are no women working as tour guides for the nation-wide companies. There are a few women working as guides in specific tourist towns, but they generally work at the reception counters where people purchase small excursions. My key informants also told me that women do not guide tourists in dangerous places such as trails on the Arenal volcano or white water rafting.

Social Impacts of Tourism

The men interviewed do not seem aware of much if any culture change as a result of tourism or culture contact with people from other countries. The few older men, those aged over 40, who I spoke to have suggested that one result of tourism is that the work ethic of Costa Rican youth has changed. The older men maintain that they work much harder than the younger men getting jobs in the industry. They believe that for the young men, life has always been easier. Some of the young men I interviewed did suggest that this might be true. Juan told me that his work in tourism is much easier than his previous job in the hospital and that he makes more money doing it. Both Elias and Julio are happy to have found service-oriented occupations in tourism because then they do not have to work on the farms with their fathers.

While it does not yet seem to be much of an issue, there is a possibility that men who have continual contact with tourists may prefer foreign women and therefore not marry or even have relationships with *ticas*. Julio is my youngest informant, and he is also the only informant who has never had a Costa Rican girlfriend. He is 20 years old and has worked as a river rafting guide since he was 14. His contact with tourist women has been so extensive that he has decided to only have relationships with foreigners. Right now, he is an extreme case, but this might become more common as the tourist industry in Costa Rica expands. Some Costa Rican women I know are concerned about this very possibility and view relationships with female tourists with disdain.

Conclusions about Tourism in Costa Rica

Tourist destinations may be found throughout the country of Costa Rica, and they include beaches, volcanoes, national parks, and cities. Regardless of where tourists

go or what activities they engage in, they will come into contact with several people working in the tourist industry. The opportunity for culture contact occurs frequently, as most of the people working in the tourist industry are Costa Rican locals. The men interviewed, all working in the tourist industry, were a valuable source of information about tourism in general and their specific jobs in particular. Tour guides and bus drivers have the most one-on-one contact with tourists, as they may take overnight trips with travelers. This intensive firsthand contact allows for exchanges of ideas between tourists and locals, and is likely where locals get most of their information about foreigners and foreign countries.

I believe that the tourist industry in Costa Rica will continue to thrive in future generations, evolving to meet the needs of ever-increasing numbers and varieties of tourists. Locals will likely continue to be the main source of workers in the industry, and the interviewees are likely correct in assuming that the local people will continue to reap many benefits from tourism, including, and probably most importantly, greater access to increased amounts of money.

Chapter Five: Why *These* Relationships?

Tourism in Costa Rica provides many relatively well-paying jobs for many men in the country. Their affluence and freedom to travel around the country has facilitated a situation in which some men working in the tourist industry are frequently engaging in sexual relationships with female tourists when the opportunity presents itself. In this chapter I examine those relationships from the perspective of the men working in the tourist industry who participate in such relationships. Additionally, the women tourists' attitudes provide a complement to the men's perspective. I look at what motivates people to participate in these relationships by examining what I was told, what I observed, and images in popular culture. I also examine these relationships in the context of the tourism and sex tourism literature, providing an analysis of these motivations.

Relationships between Female Tourists and Men Working in Tourism

Interactions with Tourists

The male interviewees all viewed their interactions with tourists positively. All of the men, especially those who work as tour guides and tour bus drivers, said that one of the positive aspects of their jobs is that they get to spend time with the tourists. Pedro said that he likes his work and being able to help people. He said it's like having people "in your own house." Juan said that he enjoys his job and finds it interesting to meet so

many people from different countries. He has developed friendships with people, not just women, from other countries. In fact, when I spoke to him he had just received a letter from a couple in Canada, and he asked me to read it. They thanked him for being so kind to them when they were in Costa Rica. Ignacio, Nestor, and Carlos specifically like that they can “exchange culture” with the tourists. In general, the men who work in tourism believe that they are learning more about Costa Rica by traveling throughout the country and about the rest of the world by interacting with the tourists.

In general the tourists view the tour guides and tour bus drivers as being very knowledgeable. Their primary duty is to teach the tourists about Costa Rica, its culture and history, and the surrounding nature. The men who work in tourism spend the bulk of their days with tourists, talking and teaching. Their main responsibility is to take care of the tourists. They must make sure that no one gets hurt while on tour. They also have to make the tourists happy and make sure that they are all satisfied with their vacations. Given the nature of their jobs, it is easy to understand how they cultivate relationships with the tourists.

Vicente suggested that the mere fact that he is a tour guide makes him attractive to the female tourists.

They come to you. It's hard to believe, but it's true. They see you like you're the guide and you know many things about many subjects.

The drivers and guides sometimes continue their care-taking function for the tourist women with whom they have relationships. Pedro said that when he is traveling with a tourist woman he takes care of her and makes sure that she gets to do and see what she wants while she is on tour with him. Bernardo, a tour bus driver, said that having sexual

and romantic relationships with the female tourists is part of the job. “Guides like groups with lots of women, women of all types.” Armando also believes that having relationships with the women tourists is a natural outgrowth of the job. He thinks that it is expected, not only by the women but by the men working in the industry as well.

Why People Participate in These Relationships

In exploring the relationships between female tourists and male tourist industry workers, based on my review of the literature and my previous informal investigations in Costa Rica, I went into the field expecting to find that the Costa Rican men working in the tourist industry who have sex with the female tourists do so for economic gain. I hypothesized that even though these men had well-paying jobs relative to others in the country, they were still looking for any possible financial gains from the North American and European women who travel there. I have not found any evidence, however, that this is happening. None of the 33 men who participated in my research reported that money or other goods were a motivating factor in their pursuing relationships with female tourists. I really wanted to understand why they were interested in these relationships. The same answer was given to me over and over again. The men were clear about the fact that they wanted to have sex with these women who they found to be attractive. For them, the relationships are more about sex than anything else.

Mutual Sexual Attraction

For both male and female tourists, many relationships between them and people living in the countries visited are based on physical attraction and a want for sexual gratification (Thomas 2000). In this context, people have sex for pleasure, because they

want to do it. They do not need any other motivators, as sexual attraction is their primary motivation in most cases. Sexual attraction is the basis for many of these relationships, and the construction of sexual attraction in this context will be explored in this chapter. Francisco and Karla provide a perfect example of a relationship growing from sexual attraction. I know more about this couple than most others because I was privy to their entire relationship. Because Francisco is a close friend of mine and I therefore, spent time with Karla, I was able to speak to each of them about their relationship. I even accompanied them on some of their dates, in a group setting. For this reason, their story is the best and most detailed story I can tell in my dissertation.

I went on a weekend trip to a ranch in which I acted as a tour guide. This trip started as the most sexually charged tour I have ever worked. I acted as the second tour guide, taking care of the women in the small bus, a van really, that seats no more than eight people, including the driver. Francisco, a 24-year-old man, was our driver. I had known him at the time for four years, as he has been working for the same tour company for five years now. He is perhaps one of the most attractive men I know, and while he did not always know it, he certainly knows it now. That he is attractive is not just my opinion. Women on every tour I have been on with him have said so. Women who have just seen him out with me around San José have said so. I have traveled with him before, but it has never been like this. The six American women in my group ranging in age from 22 to 36 were perhaps the most brazen group of women with whom I have ever traveled. They began talking about Francisco before we even left the university (where we picked them up) on Friday. They kept saying that he has a “nice ass,” and they were “arguing” over who would get to “have” him. Karla, a 22-year-old, called “dibs” on him

because she said that she was the only one in the van without a boyfriend. While this is not true, she believed that she was the most age-appropriate woman without a boyfriend.

She talked about or to him for the entire five-hour drive to the ranch. Her best friend from home was with her, and they talked a lot about Francisco. One woman even commented that after seeing Francisco she can see why I have something to study for my dissertation. The women in the van also knew about my research and told me what they thought of Francisco. They also tried to get information from me, as they knew that he and I are friends. They wanted to know if he had a girlfriend, if he “sleeps around” (has sex with many women), how old he is, and any other information that I might think is important.

These women competed for Francisco’s attention. They all wanted him. They all thought that they were equally deserving of the man’s attention regardless of age or looks and flirted with him relentlessly. There was a recurring lengthy conversation about how great the man’s ass was, and they all referred to him as *guapo* (the Spanish word for handsome or attractive, as a name, not an adjective). They were actually asking questions by saying “*Guapo*, can you tell me . . .” I think this was the most blatant display of the sexual objectification of a man that I had seen on tour, and as will be demonstrated in later sections, I have seen objectification before in my research.

By the time we reached the ranch, Karla was “smitten” with Francisco. He has not had much experience with the tourist women because he does not travel out of the city very often. He does know a bit about American women, however, because he knows my friend and me. He believes that American women are different from Costa Rican women in that they have sexual freedom, and during this trip he decided to put

that theory to the test. Friday night, our first night there, the guide for the tour, an American woman, threw a *guaro* (the national alcohol of Costa Rica) party at her cabin because the ranch is isolated, and there is little to do there at night. These parties do not usually get out of control, but they are really just an excuse for young people to drink lots of alcohol. I have been to several of these parties, and they are usually non-eventful. This party was different, however, because Francisco and the girls from my van were there. Karla continued to talk about Francisco. She pursued him by attempting to speak Spanish to him and asking him to correct her speech. She focused quite a bit on his “nice ass” and made it a topic of conversation with all of the women at the party.

The party ended, and we all went to bed, except for Francisco and Karla. Since I was sharing a cabin with Francisco, I can say with certainty that he did not go to bed until about 3am, about two hours after the party ended. He and Karla stayed out together and kissed for the first time that night. Karla pursued him, and Francisco had decided to pursue her by the end of the first night, and they continued to spend time together throughout the weekend trip to the ranch.

On our drive back to San José on Sunday, a couple of the women jokingly asked Francisco to take us to a motel and “give each of us a turn with him.” They specifically reiterated that they meant “motel” not “hotel.” Since all of these women had relentlessly flirted with him all weekend and had sexually objectified him without apology, Francisco was, at first, unsure if it was really a joke. He asked me if he understood their bad Spanish correctly, and I told him that he did. It is important to note that we passed a motel on the way to the ranch on Friday. A couple of the young women on the bus,

including Karla, did not know that there is a difference in Costa Rica between a motel and a hotel. Francisco explained in Spanish that a motel was a place designed for sexual encounters. I followed up with a more detailed explanation telling them that motels rent rooms in 12-hour periods of time, although it is not necessary that people stay that long. Motels are surrounded by privacy fences and large gates. The people who go to motels maintain their privacy since they park their cars in individual garages that lead to rooms with a drawer in which to put the money so that the people who work there do not see them. There are also typically menus found in these rooms, and people can order things such as porn movies, condoms, and drinks. The notion of Francisco taking us to a motel was a joke, an inside joke that arose from our time together that weekend. However, Karla made sure to tell the women on the bus that she should get to go first so that she was guaranteed an experience with Francisco. He might get too tired to have sex with everyone. Even within the joke, Karla made sure to assert her right to Francisco above all the other women.

Francisco and Karla continued to see each other for the remaining two weeks of her stay in Costa Rica. They went on some group dates with the women from the van and me. They also went out alone. Over the course of their two weeks together, they had a sexual relationship. Francisco also developed real feelings for Karla. He told me that he never knew that a relationship with a woman could be so nice. He told me that he had found something that he had been missing in his life. They e-mailed each other for the rest of the summer until they finally lost contact with each other, by her choice. At first, he did not understand why she was not responding to his e-mails, although he knew from the beginning that their relationship was only going to last for the short time

that she was there. He really liked her, but he knew that she would not be coming back to Costa Rica and that he would not be leaving. He understood the limitations of a relationship with a tourist as a holiday romance.

If not for sexual attraction, the events described here would never have occurred. Karla and the rest of the women in the van were attracted to Francisco. This fact gave him many options, but in the end, he chose to pursue the woman for whom he felt an attraction. It is this mutual attraction that led to this relationship. Neither party ever thought about money or power. Neither of them was interested in anything different than a romance and sexual relationship.

Karla did tell me, however, that she wanted to have the fond memories of her “*novio*,” her Costa Rican boyfriend. She told me that the fact that he is Costa Rican and different from her was part of what was attractive to her. Sexual attraction is the key element in these relationships, and in many cases, this sexual attraction comes from notions of the other person as being exotic. Sexual relationships between tourists and the people they meet in their host countries are often a manifestation of a desire for a racialized, sexualized “other,” someone that the tourist would perceive as being more “sexual” because of his/her race or ethnicity (Phillips 1999, Mullings 1999, O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 1999, Pruitt and LaFont 1995). Karla provides a great example of this phenomenon, as she was most interested in how much Francisco was different from her. The fact that he was Costa Rican and spoke only Spanish made him more exotic and therefore more attractive.

Fantasies of the Exotic Other

Both the female tourists and the male tourist industry workers who I interviewed told me that they had sexual fantasies about each other. The Costa Rican men believe that there is something more sexual about white women from North America and Europe. They commonly told me that North American and European women will participate in more and different sexual activities than *ticas* such as oral sex, masturbation, and sexual positions other than the “missionary position.” Some have said that a variety of sex acts is normal for women from other countries, but it is not for *ticas*. The men in my research are similar to the men Meisch (1995) describes who found blond hair and pale skin to be exotic and therefore attractive. Julio, in fact, told me that it is the light skin and “yellow” hair that he likes so much about tourist women. He is twenty years old and has been working as a river rafting guide for six years. He has spent a considerable amount of time with tourists because of this fact. He has such a preference for white foreign women that he has only had sexual relationships with tourists, never with a Costa Rican woman. He told me that he does not want Costa Rican women. He has no interest in them.

Similarly, all of the women I talked to believe that there is something more “sexual” about Latin men than white American men. They all believed in the Latin Lover concept and all replied that Latin men are better in bed than men are at home. This construction of the Latin Lover concept will be explored further in other sections of this chapter. That people have fantasies of racialized, sexualized “others” is a common theme throughout the sex tourism literature (O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 1999, Sanchez Taylor 2000, Hall 1996).

The female tourists in my research are characteristic of tourists in general. “Tourism is a socially sanctioned escape route for adults into play, fantasy, and sexual adventure. . . . It is not surprising that sex and tourism have been closely associated” (Ryan 2000:27). Sex and tourism have been linked since at least the 19th Century, when Western Europeans, especially the British, would take holidays to “exotic” locations in the Mediterranean where many would have sex with natives, according to Littlewood (2001). Sanchez Taylor (2000:41) suggests that tourist destinations “are marketed as culturally *different* (emphasis hers) places, and all tourists are encouraged to view this ‘difference’ as a part of what they have a right to consume on their holiday.” The female tourists in my research were “consuming” this “difference.” Having sex with an “other” is one way in which tourists experience cultural differences in other countries. As will be demonstrated in the following sections, both the men and women who participated in my research wanted to sexually experience “the other.”

Liberal Foreign Women

These men working in the Costa Rican tourist industry tend to believe that women from the United States and Europe are more “sexual” than women from Costa Rica. This belief takes many forms. More than three-quarters of the men interviewed told me that North American and European women are more liberal than Costa Rican women. When asked to explain in what sense this is true, many men expressed a belief that women from other countries are more open to new ideas, both sexually and in general.

Ignacio suggested that Costa Rican women are very timid about sex but that American women *tienen facilidades para el sexo*, “have a gift or aptitude for sex.” They

are more affectionate and will tell you when they like it. As Pedro said, “*gringas* are not reserved. They explode. They scream.” Some might wonder if the word *gringa* is used with negative connotations, but I found that in Costa Rica, it is not. It is just another word for Americans. Additionally, American women are more forward about sexual matters. They will come right out and ask these men to have sex with them. This is an experience that most men are not used to with Costa Rican women. Vicente told me that for men working in tourism,

sex is very easy. There are beautiful ladies you never think would look at you, but they do. They come to you. It's hard to believe, but it's true . . . American women dream to have sex with a Latin guy because they are hot, passionate, and wild.

Juan and Eduardo suggested that American women are more willing to experiment sexually. In fact, this was a common response. They believe that North American and European women are willing to participate in a wider variety of sexual acts than are Costa Rican women. Carlos said that “Americans and Italians will do everything in bed.” As Vicente suggested,

American women are more open. For an American woman a blowjob is normal. Costa Rican women are conservative. They teach you through religion to be conservative and not to do things like that.

Costa Rican women are not just conservative about giving oral sex to men. Francisco told me that many *ticas* will not allow men to perform oral sex on them nor will they allow men to masturbate them. Francisco also said that the foreign women with whom he has had experiences let him do these things to them.

Vicente gives a concrete example of how American women are more sexually liberal than Costa Rican women. He said

It is the American man's fantasy to have sex with two women, and if they ask, the American women will do it. If you asked a Costa Rican woman that, she would slap you. A porn movie for an American woman is normal. A Costa Rican woman will yell at you; maybe she'll do it (watch it), but.

While this statement may not be an entirely accurate picture of what happens between American men and women, it does give insight into how some Costa Rican men perceive American women. It is important to note that Vicente lived in the United States for several years during which time he met and married an American woman who he described as "beautiful." According to him, they divorced, largely because of the independent spirit of this woman that he fell in love with in the first place. His attitude about American women in general may be colored by his obvious (to me) bitterness toward this woman. He, of course, was not the only man I spoke to who believes that American women have more permissive and liberal attitudes about sex than do women in Costa Rica.

While Pedro does not agree with Vicente that American women are more willing to experiment, he said that their liberal attitudes about sex are different from those of women in Costa Rica.

American women are totally different from Latin American women. They enjoy things more. They enjoy 200% of what they want. They are more liberal. They do not feel ashamed by anything that they want to do or that they actually do. This is something that is attractive to Latin men. American women are not more

willing to experiment sexually, but in moments when they are making love, they enjoy every part of it. They give themselves totally to the man.

Federico gives evidence of the American women's liberal attitude by telling me that they will have sex very early in a relationship. They do not make the man wait like Costa Rican women do.

Tourist women are different. They don't feel guilty about anything they do. They are not ashamed. They are more liberal. They have sex with a man very quickly, and they like to have sex with Latin men.

This, too, is a common response by these men. As Elias suggested

A relationship with a tourist happens fast. We meet and like each other, and she has to leave soon.

That female tourists have sex early in a relationship on holiday is a common perception of men in the tourist industry. Because the women are only in the country for a short time, having sex within days or even hours of meeting someone is not uncommon. It makes sense that those relationships while traveling could not progress at the same rate that a relationship might progress with someone at home. The woman is not going to be there long enough to wait.

One morning at breakfast in a tourist town we saw three American women, each in her twenties eating with a *tico*, also in his twenties. This man had spent the night with one of these women. They came to breakfast together and met her two friends there. They barely knew each other, as when the woman attempted to introduce him to her friends she seemed not to remember his name so he introduced himself. He spoke English, so they seemed to be communicating fine, but she did what I have seen many

other women do; she talked about him to her friends as if he were not there. Usually, I see women talking about how attractive a man is, right in front of him because he does not speak English. The women were leaving him out of the conversation, and the man looked bored. Several times, he was just staring into space. The whole conversation, in fact, appeared quite awkward since the other two women barely spoke to him. I heard the couple discuss that they had plans to go out on jet skis later that day. When they all finished eating, he paid for his and his companion's breakfast, and the two friends paid for their own breakfast. The man went one way and the three women went another way. Scenes like this can be witnessed in many tourist locations. A woman will bring the man she had sex with the previous evening with her the next day to meet her friends, and they will likely spend some awkward time together. I have seen other such awkward meetings.

These relationships may begin quickly, but they often end quickly as well. This can also be attributed to the fact that the women are only in Costa Rica for a short time. Jesús said that

It is very romantic with the tourists. Everything is in the moment. It is very short and both want sex.

Women who frequently travel to Costa Rica understand that men perceive them as moving fast or as being sexually liberal. Many men who have had contact with tourists in the past believe that tourist women are “easy,” sometimes referring to them as *mujeres fáciles*, a literal translation of “easy women” that is used by some Costa Rican men to mean that they are not only good in bed but will do many things in bed, and that they are willing to have sex with a man soon after first meeting him. In fact, the women

working at a Spanish language program for college students and teacher certification explained to all of the women at orientation that they have to keep in mind how they may be perceived by the men in Costa Rica, especially those who have continual contact with tourists such as their host brothers and the bartenders in the tourist bars. They told the women to think about how all of the other female students in these kinds of programs have acted before. Many of those girls had sex with men in Costa Rica, even their host brothers, and each of the women needs to think about how that makes her look.

This particular program has seen problems in the past with female students having sex in their host families' houses, sometimes with their host brothers, sometimes with other students from the program. The people in charge of this program like to tell the story of the young woman found by her host parents naked in her closet with a man. She had heard them coming in the room and decided to hide. This story is meant to be a warning, but having talked to some of the students who heard the story, I know that they saw it as a joke.

Mature, Sexually Experienced Women

More than a woman with a liberal attitude, the men I spoke to specifically want experienced and mature women. Mature women generally occupy an age range from about 25 to 45, depending upon the age of the man talking about them. For a young man of about 20, 30 seems pretty mature. Eduardo said: *Me gusta la mujer madura con mucha experiencia*. "I like the mature woman with lots of experience." When I asked why, he told me that he wants to learn more about sex, not teach it. A mature woman has things to teach a man. Pedro also believes that it is better to have sex with

experienced women. He prefers women with more experience because they know what to do, what he wants to do, and how to do it. He thinks that experience is important so that they can both enjoy themselves 100%.

Santiago also believes that “older women are better in bed, *mejores en la cama*, because they have more experience.” Raymundo said that “women are better when they have some experience.” When asked if there is a difference between having sex with a young woman and an old woman, he stated that “young women are more timid and are ashamed of their behavior.” Similarly, Jesús wants a woman with lots of experience.

Most of the women are 25-40. Older women are better because they have more experience and are more sexually exciting.

When I asked him to explain the difference between having sex with older women and having sex with younger women, he told me that an experience with a young woman is different. He said that you have to be careful because they are younger. He also said that you might have problems with their parents and that it is dangerous to be with young girls. In this context, he is talking about high school and college girls who may be traveling with their families, not talking about children. Federico shared this belief that older women are less ashamed about their behavior than younger women. While he said that he “likes all women as long as they’re clean,” he also said that

Older women are more caring and are not ashamed. Young girls feel guilty and often change their minds.

Carlos also likes all women, but he believes that women with lots of experience are better. When I asked him how he knows if a woman has lots of experience, he told me that he knows by the way she kisses. When I asked, “you don’t know before that?” he

said no. This is further evidence that the men are seeking sexual experiences when they have relationships with female tourists.

In part, that men believe that foreign women are more sexually experienced may be explained by the Madonna Whore dichotomy. All of my male interviewees expressed that they participate in relationships with female tourists because women from other countries know more about sex, are more experienced sexually, and are willing to engage in a wider variety of sexual activities than are women from Costa Rica. These same men commonly told me that there are two different types of women, those for marriage and those for sex. These ideas are consistent with the Madonna-whore dichotomy. Both men and women in Latin America divide women into two categories, that is, some are “good” and others are “bad.” Good women are mothers and wives. They resist the sexual urges of men. Bad women are eroticized “whores” who give in to male sexuality or even initiate sexual contact. As Chant (2003:135) suggests, this idea of the Madonna-whore dichotomy in Latin America “is associated with considerable ambivalence towards women on the part of men. . . . In turn, men have been observed to divide their sexual relationships into two main types: those with wives, which tend to be emotional but sexually conservative, and those with casual partners or prostitutes, which are sexually carnal but lacking in sentiment.” The Madonna-whore dichotomy has long been associated with Catholicism and the differences between the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus and Mary Magdelene, the prostitute that Jesus befriended and “saved.” The Virgin Mary is worshipped with much fervor, especially throughout Latin America, where she has been “sighted” several times in different places and in different forms.

Costa Rica has the Virgin of Los Angeles. Such worship of the Virgin Mary further emphasizes the difference between chaste and sexual women.

While most of the male interviewees suggested that they did have feelings toward the tourists with whom they had sex, these women can still be considered “casual partners” in that the relationships were more about the sexual gratification than any emotional connection. Additionally, these relationships were short-term interactions. The men’s behavior remains consistent with their traditionally held beliefs about the sexuality of women. The female tourists are the whores in their cultural construction. Their Costa Rican wives or girlfriends are the Madonnas.

The Latin Lover

The men are seeking certain characteristics in women, but they also believe that the tourist women seek them for particular reasons such as because they are more passionate and romantic and because they are better in bed than other men. As will be explained in this section, for the women in my research, the Latin Lover concept seems to be at the heart of the sexual exchange between female tourists and male tourist industry workers in Costa Rica. Most of the men I spoke to believe that the women want to experience the Latin Lover, specifically, not just someone different than the men they are used to at home. They believe that Latin men are “hot,” meaning passionate, and more romantic than other men. Eduardo explained,

The Latin Lover concept is true. There is a sexual atmosphere. The women try more in this atmosphere. Latin Lovers are more romantic, intellectual, and like surprises. Latin Lovers give women flowers, kisses, poems.

Antonio said he thinks that

Women come here with the idea of the Latin Lover, such a reputation. Women are aggressive and think that they are definitely going to get laid.

He believes that there is a difference between the Latin Lover and men from the United States. He has heard that American men are cold. He believes that the reason for this is that life is more stressful in the United States. It is different.

They could be good lovers, but they are just trying to get ahead. American men don't have time to think about sex. They are thinking too much about survival. It is a 'dog eat dog' hectic life in the U.S., especially in the big cities.

Ignacio agreed that free time is one of the things that give Costa Rican men the opportunity to be good lovers. “*Ticos* are hotter. It may be the tropical climate. They have more time to spend on romance.”

The Latin Lover concept is not just about time, though. These men truly believe that they are different from other men. Orlando said that

In Costa Rica, men are more affectionate. They take care of women. They are concerned with women.

Tomás suggested that *hombres latinoamericanos tienen sangre caliente*. “Latin American men have hot blood.” As Gustavo said

Creo que son más calientes, mejor en la cama, depende en el hombre. I think that they are hotter and better in bed, but it depends on the man.

Juan said that

Latin men are calientes, sabrosos. They are hot and good at sex. They feel love more deeply than gringos. They are hotter than gringos who are known to be cold. Ticos are about the details.

Sabroso and *rico* are the two words I have found to be the most commonly used to refer to someone who is a good lover. The words are also used to describe “good sex.” *Sabroso* means flavorful or tasty. *Rico* also refers to food and means rich in the sense of tasty. I asked Arturo, Pedro, and Francisco if they knew why the words for good sex were also the words for good food, but none could tell me the origins of the association. Arturo suggested that the words were the same because eating and having sex both fulfilled sensory pleasures.

Juan believes that Latin men are more willing to experiment sexually because they like the heat. He thinks that *gringas* are “hot” like Latin men, and that is why they have these relationships. Ignacio agreed that American women are “hotter,” more passionate, than Costa Rican women and that this is what leads them to seek out the “hot” Latin men.

Buying into the Latin Lover concept is another example of women travelers seeking a racialized, sexualized “other” for their holiday romances and sexual adventures. This stereotype brings up ideas of a man who is totally different from the white men these women usually encounter at home. It is their difference that makes them more attractive for sexual relationships (Phillips 1999, Mullings 1999, O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 1999, Shrage 1994).

The female participants in these relationships share sentiments about the Latin Lover concept and suggest that it is an important motivating factor. Rene started a relationship with a waiter on her first night in Costa Rica when she went to dinner with the friends who accompanied her to the country. She said that he was flirting with her and that she knew that he wanted to ask her out on a date. By the end of their meal, he

had asked her if he could see her again. She agreed, and they started seeing a lot of each other. She saw him most days of her trip and had a romantic sexual relationship with him. She even went to his house for dinner and met his mother.

This was not Rene's first relationship with a Latin man. She prefers Latinos. She dates Latinos at home in the United States. She had been to Spain where she also had relationships with Latin men. She believes in the Latin Lover stereotype. She says that it is just different to be with them because they care more about pleasing women and possess a tenderness that white American men do not.

Susie is a college student. She also believes in the Latin Lover stereotype. She told me that she has had relationships in many Latin countries including Mexico, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, and Spain. She has a clear preference for Latin men, and dates them at home in the United States as well. She had not had a relationship with a *tico* when I spoke to her, but she said that she was not leaving the country until she had at least kissed a Costa Rican man. She said sex would be better, but a kiss would do.

Other interviewees also expressed a preference for Latin men, even at home. Annie suggested that *cariño*, a word that is difficult to translate into English, is what makes Latin men sexier than men at home. *Cariño* is a concept that means caring, but it is more than that. It implies an overwhelming affection and tenderness, in this case, for the women by the men. Annie told me that women who have never experienced a Latin man do not understand the appeal because they do not understand *cariño*. Marlena, Linda, and Sarah had similar sentiments and all said that they prefer to date Latin men at home. Sarah, in fact, only dates Latin men both at home and on holiday. She said that

men treat women differently in Costa Rica. They treat women better. He [her boyfriend] treats me like a queen. He tries to take care of me. Yes, women are independent, but sometimes it is nice to have someone taking care of you.

According to Marlana

It feels right to have a fling with a Costa Rican man. It feels like every moment is sexualized. I guess it does have something to do with the Latin Lover fantasy.

Hillary has similar feelings about Costa Rican men.

First of all because it's like he's different, culturally, he's not an American guy, I mean, he does have that machismo thing, and there are things that are attractive about it, although it's like very sexist.

When asked to explain further what is attractive about it, Hillary said

Okay, I mean, just like simple things, . . . it's just like respectful, like opening the door for you.

Marlana, summed it up nicely:

They (Costa Rican men) make women feel like the goddesses that we are. These men love women. They are nice to us. They tell us how beautiful we are. They open doors for us. They watch out for us. They try to make us feel good in any way that they can.

Even though these women seem to feel that there are advantages to relationships with these Latin Lovers, on an intellectual level they may see a sexist downside as Hillary explained.

Yeah, I mean it's part of like not seeing (women) as equal, so they treat them like they're above [men], but then, actually, they don't. . . . I mean, personally, I

don't like the way American women are treated [in Costa Rica]. . . . In general, like, it happens [in the United States], just like being treated as pieces of meat, like hubba hubba. . . . I mean, like, I think like with all the American movies and TV we're perceived like we're easy, we're sluts, you know, and it's like bimbo, and then, I was talking to [the director of my school] about that and he's like, then don't you think you're playing into that then.

It seems that American women I spoke to are totally buying into this Latin Lover fantasy. They are also having sexual relationships in Costa Rica in an attempt at some sort of escape from their normal everyday lives. As Marlina explained

The first time I just happened upon the possibility [of sex with a tourism worker]. I mean, men hit on you everywhere. It just seems much more sexually charged than any place I have ever been to in the U.S. Men are more aggressive about hitting on women. Well, not aggressive. They are more forward, but in a nice way.

Debra agreed that men in Costa Rica are forward about “hitting on” women as she is approached all the time. To be “hit on” is to be approached by someone whose purpose is furthering contact with you. This person “hits on” you with the idea in mind that more contact with you might lead to sex. There is not a word found in the scholarly literature that exactly means “hitting on” someone. Since it is a commonly used and widely understood phrase in the American vernacular, and because it was used by several of my informants, I will continue to use the phrase in my dissertation.

Marlena further explained that from her perspective the Latin Lover stereotype “is completely accurate.” They are “better and more romantic lovers. . . . They certainly do know how to make us feel good.” Sarah said

yes, the stereotype is true. It is better because of the way they treat a woman.

They make you feel like you are in heaven.

In addition to sexualizing the Latin Lover, some American women have sexualized the place of Costa Rica, as Hillary explained.

Well, part of it was just being caught up in the culture and how different things were, and like, the trees and, but I mean, how it's different. One thing about him [her Costa Rican boyfriend] was that he was, like, incredible in bed. . . . I don't know. There was just, like, a sexual energy. I remember just, like, laying on the hammock with him, just, like, he wouldn't say anything for a long time, and he would just, like, pet my head, and I was just, like, oh my god, I could stay here forever. I guess that's just part of the lifestyle, too. It's a lot more relaxed.

She went on to explain.

You know what's one other thing, that, you know, I think is appealing about this, it's the environment that you're in, it's like this lush beautiful area that's just, like, it's like a sexual area. It's just, like, the jungle, I mean it's, like, I don't know. It's like Eden or something.

For Hillary, there was something primitive about Costa Rica. She equated having a sexual relationship with a Costa Rican man with getting back to nature. Frohlick (2007:152) suggests that “erotic intimacy within a touristic setting can involve

proximate relationships to people whose corporeality is fused with the landscape.” Hillary’s sexualization of place provides a great example of this.

Sex on Holiday

The men have ideas about how women will act on tour, but they also have reasons for why they believe this. Beyond desiring a sexual “other,” one common response of the men about why they think the women participate in relationships with the men working in the tourist industry is that they feel “free” because they are on vacation. This especially makes sense in Costa Rica in light of Hillary’s explanation of the country as a “sexual area . . . like Eden.” Women on holiday may seek out more experiences than women do at home, in large part because there is no one there to judge their behavior. A certain sense of freedom is experienced by some women who travel alone. This theme found throughout my male interviews has constantly brought to mind the latest 2003 Las Vegas tourism board campaign which is centered on the idea that women who travel experience “secret lives” while away from home. Part of this experience is sex and/or romance that no one else needs to know about unless she chooses to tell them.

In one television commercial being shown on American cable television, a woman in her forties is standing outside a wedding chapel holding a bridal bouquet asking herself what she has just done. Then, we see her kiss a young Hispanic man and say “I can’t believe I just got married,” because she has a conference to which she needs to return. She starts to walk away but comes back for one last kiss before leaving her new “husband.” In another commercial, a sultry woman in a sexy outfit gets in the back of a limo that is taking her to the airport. She tells the driver that she loves the smell of

leather, sniffs the seats and the driver, and even starts to rub his head. Then, she closes the glass between them. When she gets out of the limo, she has transformed her appearance by putting her hair up in a bun, wiping off her make-up, and putting on a blazer and a blouse buttoned all the way up the neck. She takes one last sniff of the driver and walks into the airport, talking on the phone with a yet unheard British accent. At the end of both of these commercials the screen reads: “Vegas, what happens here, stays here.” The idea is that women can come to Vegas and do anything they want to do. They can “let their hair down” and try new things that they might not do in their everyday lives, but no one at home ever needs to know. This is also possible in Costa Rica, where many women travel in small groups of two or three if they are not alone.

Juan believes that when women travel on holiday they are out to have a party. Elias agreed.

Sometimes tourists are more liberal. They are on vacation and like to dance and drink. It is a party for them. Tourist women are more passionate than ticas. It is a different culture.

Pedro suggested that the tourist women are more liberal. “They come and go, so they are more free for sex.”

Vicente said

It does not happen the same in the U.S. because they come here and feel free in all ways and want to have experiences. Lots have boyfriends or husbands. They feel free on vacation. You see in America, on spring break vacation, they go out and feel free.

Antonio agreed. He said that

The women from the U.S. are not necessarily more adventurous than other women, but tourists, in general, are on holiday and are going to have fun. When women come from a far distance, far from their country, they figure, who cares? They want to be free.

Antonio was so sure of his belief that American women are liberal and want the freedom to have fun, that after the interview was over, he told me that it was his turn to learn some things about me. He asked me if I was liberal like the tourist women we were talking about in the interview. I tried to answer honestly telling him that I was not as liberal as some but was more liberal than others. I also told him that I do not become intimately involved with my interviewees. He was nice and told me that if I ever needed anything else that he would be happy to help. Even though he was clearly attempting to express sexual interest in me, I think he was very honest in his interview, and I do not doubt anything that he told me. I also think, though, that if I had given him the chance to start a brief relationship, he would have done so.

Linda agreed with the sentiments expressed by these men. Some women do feel free to have sexual experiences because they are out of the country.

Out of sight, out of mind, you're on vacation, nobody's there to spy on you, nobody's gonna know what you do, therefore you do things that you normally wouldn't do, especially after a couple of drinks or I've heard some people blame it on the altitude also.

Linda's response demonstrates that some women might feel the need to have an excuse, an explanation of why they would act "out of the ordinary" and be so liberal. They may

not be so free all of the time and need an excuse in case anyone at home finds out about or seems to judge them for their holiday adventures.

That women on holiday are looking for a good time is a popular conception shared by men working in the tourist industry, and as suggested earlier it is based upon their previous experiences with female tourists. In fact, two bartenders working together at a very popular resort told a group of twenty-something bikini clad women sitting at a swim-up bar that if they would get up and dance on the bar they would give them free drinks. This particular group of women chose not to do so, but when they told another young woman on the tour with them about the offer, she said she was sorry she was not there because she would have done it. Certainly the attitudes of these men have been colored by some of the female tourists that they have previously encountered. Linda suggested that they are correct in their assumptions about tourists.

I think it might be a self-perpetuating prophesy here, in other words, we go down there knowing [about the Latin Lover stereotype], therefore we're easier, therefore it happens, and then you come back (home) and talk about it, and they [Costa Rican men] feel that we're free and easy.

So, I asked “Okay, so you’re suggesting it’s that we’re easy?” Her response: “We are easy. There’s no doubt about it.” Many male informants have suggested that, regardless of the reason, foreign women are “easier” than Costa Rican women. Pedro, Francisco, and Luis have all referred to foreign women as “*mujeres fáciles*,” “easy women.” I was not left with the impression that it mattered why women were available for sex. Carlos said that he just feels “lucky” to have found them.

Images in popular culture reinforce the idea that romance and/or sex while traveling are not only acceptable but, in many cases, expected, and women such as those I spoke to in conducting my research have been influenced by this idea. For example, many romance novels rely on relationships that grow from travel. Even in those books in which the heroine is not traveling, she meets a handsome stranger who is very different from her. In many cases he is of a different ethnic group. The romance novel genre has created a fantasy of “the other” for women. Reading romance novels is one of the ways that Linda keeps her fantasy of “the other” alive when she is at home in the United States. The *Love Stories: Year Abroad Trilogy* is specifically designed for young women and each of the three stories, set in Rome, Paris, and London, depict a young woman in a study abroad program who enters into a romantic relationship with a native man.

Beyond popular fiction, travel literature also explores the connection between sex and/or romance and traveling. Salon.com, the Travelers’ Tales company, and Lonely Planet all have published books with “stories of love, sex, and travel” (de Kretser 1998). While Salon.com and Lonely Planet relied primarily on reality-based fiction written by popular fiction authors such as Pico Iyer, the Travelers’ Tales Guide includes “true stories of passion on the road” (Babcock Wylie 1998), anecdotes written by everyday travelers. The “Wild Writing Women” group (2002) has also published a collection of their factual tales of travel and adventure. While this collection is not limited to stories of romance and sex as are the abovementioned books, stories about the topic are included. Not only do such stories further the widely accepted idea that

romance and/or sex are part of the travel experience, they also, in some cases, give people an outlet to share their personal experiences with others.

Tourists may approach people in a different manner when they are away from home. “Media such as guidebooks [and] travel literature . . . portray tourist settings as both romantic and as a different cultural environment in which different social norms apply. This can facilitate a sense of freedom from constraints for the traveler that are reinforced by a reduction of normal inhibitions as a result of factors such as loneliness or boredom” (Carter and Clift 2000:10). These tourists would then do things while on holiday that they would not do at home. One such thing that tourists are inclined to do while on vacation is have sex with new people.

In their study about sex on holiday, Eiser and Ford (1995) found that one-third of all travelers that they spoke to had sexual intercourse with someone while on holiday. They attributed this behavior to “situational disinhibition,” that people feel like a “different person” while traveling. One possible disinhibiting factor for tourists may be the consumption of alcohol. Several of my interviewees told me that they had sex with people after they had been out drinking together. Thomas (2000) similarly found that many of her informants had been drinking before the first time they had sex with men on tour with them. Neither Thomas (2000) nor her informants blamed alcohol for their experiences but suggested that it lowered their inhibitions and allowed them to do what they really wanted to do.

Another disinhibiting factor may be anonymity. Meisch (1995:454) suggests that when women are on vacation, they feel as if no one is watching them and therefore their behavior “does not really count . . . because no one at home will ever know about their

activities.” “The importance of women’s sexual reputations has long been recognized. The anonymity of a holiday abroad may offer an opportunity for women to have a short-term sexual relationship which does not threaten their reputation” (Thomas 2000:215). Thomas’s (2000) findings were similar to mine in that the women appreciated both the short-term and anonymous nature of these relationships. Linda specifically mentioned that she did not have to worry about her behavior when she was on vacation because no one in Costa Rica knew her at home. Hillary and Marlena appreciated that relationships with *ticos* are short-term. This gave them the freedom to be with different men than they would choose at home. Even the male interviewees understood that when women are on holiday they are more apt to do things that they might not do otherwise.

Several of my female interviewees are forthright about their looking for a fantasy relationship that only exists in the short term. Linda, a self-proclaimed “control freak,” who commands her husband at home, determining nearly every facet of their relationship has had affairs at home that were much the same. She was in control. She said

when I lived in [another state] it was different from the get go. I knew exactly when I’d see them [my lovers], under what circumstances, etc. In Costa Rica, because the schedules are really, really strange, there’s more of a “will I see him tonight, what if I see him tonight, maybe it’s going to be a week before I see him,” etc.

Even though this woman is used to having everything her own way, she allows herself to be controlled when she is in Costa Rica, even to the point of waiting at home on any given evening just hoping to get a phone call from one of her Costa Rican boyfriends,

even if she was supposed to have a date with him and he just does not show up and does not call. As she said,

They decide when they can see me, and if it's not an appropriate time for me, then I get the feeling that I better make the time or I'll lose the chance of seeing them.

She lets them dictate her schedule just so she can spend time with them.

Marlena's opinion is slightly different.

I don't think that power ever entered into the equation, at least not in the way I think you mean. I allowed myself to lose control in Costa Rica. That is something that I never do. I am what we call a "control freak." I have to know what is going to happen and when. I tend to be a leader. I never give up any control at home or work. I think that's what's so appealing about having a relationship with a Costa Rican man. He takes charge. Because it will be short term, though, it doesn't matter. I can afford to give up control for a short fling, but I would never be able to do so with a relationship in the U.S. I am a completely different person.

Hillary agreed that part of what was appealing about the relationship was that it was a "short-term fling." As heartbreaking as it was to go home and leave her Costa Rican boyfriend, she said

you know they say that men fear commitment, but I do, too, but that's probably part of what's appealing about [the relationship].

Vicente, who, as mentioned above, was married to a woman from the United States and lived there for a few years, has strong opinions about the relationships that Costa Rican men have with female foreigners.

American women want a fantasy man who will be nice to them and protect them, but they don't want it for long. They want to keep their independence. American women care about work and making money. And when a Costa Rican man starts to feel like he's not appreciated by her, he will go find someone else who will appreciate him. 99% of the men I know who married someone from the [United States] or England, or another place, got divorced, even though divorce is not common here [in Costa Rica].

Economic Gain vs. Machismo

The female tourists are motivated by fantasies of “the other” and the anonymous and short-term nature of these relationships. The men also have fantasies of “the other” and are looking for sexual gratification above all else. Therefore, contrary to the literature, men working in the tourist industry in Costa Rica do not have sex with female tourists for economic gain; they do so for the sexual experience itself. Furthermore, when asked if women ever offer money for sex, every man who claimed to have been given this offer also claimed to have rejected it. Vicente said that these women offer tips just as other tourists do but he never accepts any money in the context of a relationship with a woman.

I don't like women to pay for anything, but it's common for women to offer.

Many women who travel here have money.

Jesús agreed that there are women who offer money for sex, but he said that

If you take money for sex, then you are not a man. Some women offer money indirectly. Sometimes the tip is bigger. They pay for stuff when you go out.

Carlos said that women do not try to pay him for sex. They take him out to dinner or for drinks. He does not think that it is common for women to want to pay. Most men said that women do not offer them money in exchange for having sexual relationships with them.

There is a distinction between accepting money for sex and accepting tips from tourists. Tips are a normal part of their jobs. Tour bus drivers and guides typically receive tips from most, if not all, of the people on a tour with them. They receive tips from both women and men. Sometimes they receive big tips from women they had sex with, but sometimes they do not receive a tip from those women at all. Sometimes, according to Marcos, they even receive tips from the husbands of women with whom they have had sex, even though the husbands do not know that the guides have had sex with their wives. Marcos told me about a woman with whom he had sex after initiating it in the mud room and sauna area of a resort. Her husband was in the next room while they were intimate, and according to Marcos, the man likely never knew. He did, however, give Marcos a large tip upon their leaving the resort.

In Miguel's case, a woman with whom he had a relationship offered him more than money or gifts, she offered him the independence of working for himself. Miguel is a married 36-year-old tour bus driver. He met a woman in her late 40's to early 50's named Debbie. He told me that they started dating and having a sexual relationship. He did not provide too many details about that. She began to be more serious about the relationship than he was, talking about returning to Costa Rica to see him again. She

began to talk about a future with him. He was not going to leave his wife for her and said that he considered her to be nothing more than a friend. The complicated situation that arose from this relationship was that Debbie offered to purchase for Miguel his own tour bus. Since he was unhappy at his current job, he was thinking about how great that would be. However, he was afraid that it would make Debbie think that they had a more serious relationship than he wanted. He tried to find a way to start this business with her and maintain nothing more than a friendship with her. Eventually, he decided not to go into business with her, because he could not handle the possible consequences to his personal life. While he did not consider the possibility of Debbie's buying him a tour bus to drive and going into business with him to be payment for his having had a sexual relationship with her, he still could not take the offer because he feared becoming indebted to this woman with whom he shared a casual but intimate relationship.

Considering that the women who travel to Costa Rica tend to have access to money and that the men who work in the tourist industry tend to make very little money according to U.S. standards, in many cases between \$50 and \$100 per week, one might wonder why these men do not take money from the women with whom they have sex. As stated in Chapter Four, all of the men interviewed suggested that they make a good living by Costa Rican standards. They make more money working in tourism than they could if they had other jobs. Additionally, the majority of the men interviewed said that in Costa Rica, men control the money. This notion is not uncommon, and considering the Theory of Gender and Power, as explained by Wingood and DiClemente (2000), power within relationships is measured by an individual's ability to exert control over another person. Relationships between men and women in Costa Rica tend to favor

male power. One might wonder if these men were being truthful with me about the power they are able to exert over the women in their lives. Having witnessed interactions between married couples in Costa Rica through my homestay and time living there, I do believe the men since I rarely saw women asserting themselves within their relationships.

Within relationships in Costa Rica, whether between spouses or what they call *juntados*, people who are serious couples who likely live together and may be “common law” married, men control the money. Orlando said “the man dominates . . . Men have the money for the house.” Jesús said that the man usually controls the relationship and that the majority are *machistas*, which is a commonly held belief by the men interviewed. Several men, without any mention of the word or concept by me, told me that *machismo* is why men control relationships and why they need to have more than one woman.

This *machismo*, an ever-present part of these men’s life experience, leads them to have relationships with more than one woman at time. It is common for a man in Costa Rica to have many women. Some have Costa Rican girlfriends or mistresses in addition to their wives. Others only have these short-term relationships with the tourists. When I asked them why Costa Rican men need more than one woman, the response was unbelievably uniform. They said that men in Costa Rica are *machista*, and, therefore, they can have more than one woman at a time. Martín summed up the situation with one sentence. “There is lots of *machismo* in Costa Rica.”

Sometimes having more than one woman is merely about having more sexual experiences. Juan said that

with more women, men gain more sexual experience and more confidence. They are more satisfied. It is all about introspection and satisfaction of the moment.

Antonio said that

Most men don't need, they just want more than one woman. It's almost tradition, a cultural thing. Why? In the past it was like that, like that in their heritage from the ancient.

Ignacio told me that *ticos* are hot but *ticas* are not, so the men want to have a lot more sex than their wives or girlfriends. Carlos said that

Costa Rican men need more than one woman because all women are different. You want to try as many as you can. Maybe one is cold, and you can find another who is hot.

Unhappiness at Home

Some men suggested that their wives or girlfriends led them to have relationships with other women. Raymundo said that jealous women drive men to have other girlfriends by constantly asking the men where they are. Federico said that sometimes men have relationships with other women because they are angry with their wife or girlfriend. He said that sometimes it is bad at home. Pablo told me that

Sometimes the relationship is routine. Sometimes the woman is bitter, muy amargada, and he looks for a fling, aventura afuera.

An unhappy home life may lead some of these men to seek relationships with tourists, and tourists may also seek these relationships with Costa Rican men because they are not satisfied with their lives at home. They are looking for even a momentary escape from their unhappy marriages. Margie is a perfect example of an unhappily

married woman who was open to something that could make her feel better in Costa Rica. Margie is a teacher, married with a teen-aged son, and about 40 years old. She is a friend of a friend of mine who was in San José with me. I spoke to her on several occasions. She was not happy in her marriage and was happy to be in Costa Rica away from her husband.

I went to a tourist-oriented disco in San José with some other American women. Margie was there with us. We were all dancing and drinking together. We were lucky enough to arrive early, so we managed to get two tables next to each other and stay together. We were only there for about an hour before a man in the disco approached Margie. He asked her to dance, and she did. She came back to the table alone. He came to her again. She danced with him again, and came back to the table alone. Then she danced with him again and invited him to come back to the table with her. She introduced him to the rest of the women who were sitting there. His name is Javier. We stayed at this disco until about 2am. Margie and Javier spent the evening together, and he asked her if he could see her again. She gave him her phone number.

Margie explained that on that first night they met, Javier was very nice to her, told her that she was beautiful and that he had not met such an interesting woman in a long time. It did not take him long to approach her romantically that night. While they sat at the table with us he put his arm around her. I also saw him kiss her.

I saw Margie several more times before she left Costa Rica. Javier did call her. They went out on several dates. He took her on a weekend trip with him out of the city, and they had sex. She continued to have a romantic sexual relationship with him for the

three weeks that she was there. In fact, she increased her stay in the country for an extra week. During that time she stayed with Javier in his house.

They wrote letters to each other for a year after she left the country. The next summer when school was out again, she returned to Costa Rica to see Javier. He had been writing romantic letters to her. He even visited her in the United States, which was not easy considering that she is married. He traveled there on a business trip, and she managed to meet him for dinner one night. She even introduced him to her husband as a friend that she met in Costa Rica.

When she returned to Costa Rica, she planned to stay with Javier again. He was picking her up at the airport. When he arrived, his new fiancé was with him. Margie did not know about this woman before her trip. She was surprised that he would bring a woman to the airport with him to pick her up. She did stay with Javier on her first night in San Jose. He approached her to have sex with him that night, but she did not. She talked to him a few times while she was in Costa Rica that summer, but she did not continue to see him.

While Margie's romantic adventure with Javier did not work out, she remained open to the possibility of sex and romance in Costa Rica. While she was traveling around the country that summer she met another man. He worked at a hotel on the beach. She told me that this man approached her almost as soon as she arrived at the hotel. He wanted to talk. She saw him later that night in the hotel bar. She spent the evening with him and had sex with him that night. She spent the weekend with him while she was at the beach. She returned to see him again a few weeks later. He also visited her in San José before she returned home.

Margie eventually decided to do something about her unhappiness and filed for divorce from her husband. Her experiences in Costa Rica were the first step in the process of her leaving her marriage.

Margie's story provides a preview of what is to come in Chapter Six: Relationships Begin, End, and Have Consequences. In the next chapter I will provide more examples and explain in greater detail what happens during the course of these relationships and what impacts that they might have on the lives of the participants.

Conclusions about Female Sex Tourism in Costa Rica

Whether having sex with mature women or college girls, the men working in the Costa Rican tourist industry who are having sexual relationships with female tourists are doing so because they are attracted to the women and want to experience sex with them. They do not have sex with these women for any material gain, and for the most part, they understand that these relationships are by necessity short-term.

They are attracted to these women for a variety of reasons, but the foundation of most of those reasons is that the women are different from the women at home. In much the same way, women who travel to Costa Rica are attracted to the men there because of their belief that the Latin Lover will be an expert sexual partner.

With a greater understanding of why the relationships occur, in the next chapter, I will explore what happens during these relationships as well as how they end and what impacts they might have on the lives of the participants.

Chapter Six: Relationships Begin, End, and Have Consequences

In Chapter Five, I discussed what motivates female tourists and Costa Rican men working in the tourist industry there to have relationships with each other. Each brings with him/her to the relationship preconceived ideas about the other, and those might be based on images in popular culture, fantasies of the exotic, and/or the desire for a “secret” vacation “romance.” In this chapter, I explore what happens in the course of these relationships, beginning with who initiates contact and how. I also examine some of the possible consequences of these relationships including impacts on the lives of the participants as well as on Costa Rica.

Costa Rica’s Reliance on Tourism Makes Relationships Possible

As explained in Chapter Four, the tourist industry in Costa Rica has created economic advancements for many people living in the country. There are more jobs with better pay. There are opportunities for a wide variety of people, especially men, with a variety of educational attainment levels. Much improvement to the infrastructure can be attributed to tourism, as there are more and better roads and electricity reaches to more regions of the country. That tourism is a leading strategy for economic development in Costa Rica has profound implications for my research.

Costa Rican tourism has, in part, created a climate in which men who work in the tourist industry are able to cultivate relationships with female tourists. As a result of

contact with tourists and their relative position of authority on matters related to Costa Rica, no matter their actual job titles, each of the men interviewed acts in some way as a guide for tourists. Tourists come to them with their questions and problems. Many tourists speak only English, and they rely on their tour guides and bus drivers to explain things to them in ways that are understandable. Even though few of the men interviewed speak English well, most know just enough and are able to make themselves understood to tourists. They provide a care-taking function in many cases.

Relationships with female tourists are just one more way that men take care of women while they are guests in the country. While there many factors contributing to the existence of these relationships, as is discussed in Chapter Five, tourism itself is the tangible act without which there would be no relationships between tourists and tourism workers.

Men who work in tourism spend a significant amount of time away from home traveling around the country with tourists. Some men drive around the country for sometimes weeks at a time. Others live away from their families in order to be closer to popular tourist destinations. This time away from wives and girlfriends gives men easy access to affairs, both with tourists and with other Costa Ricans. People are less likely to find out about infidelity therefore it is easier for the men to participate. With an understanding of why participation is both desired and possible, as is demonstrated in Chapter Five, I now consider how these relationships progress.

What Happens During These Relationships

Initiation of the Relationships

I wanted to know who initiates the relationships and how they go about doing so, so I specifically asked the men about it. They suggested that both men and women might initiate contact. Most men told me that they had initiated at least some of the relationships in which they participated. Some men suggested that they always initiated, but other men suggested that women initiated more often. I also asked the women who also told me that both parties might initiate contact. It became clear to me that regardless of who initiated contact, both people needed to be open to the possibility of having a relationship. Sometimes, even if the man initiated the relationship, it was because a woman was flirting with him.

While relationships between male tourist industry workers and female tourists may develop at any time, Antonio said that it is easier to cultivate relationships over a longer period of time.

They get to develop relationships when on a week-long tour. They have time to talk a lot and get to know each other. A one-day trip is different. They don't get together on a day tour unless violent chemical attraction brings them together.

. . . Basically, the women flirt. The women give a clue that they are interested.

The men told me how they came to have these relationships with the female tourists. Pedro explained how he charms the women on his tours.

Whenever there is a group of American women and some of them want to have sex with me, I teach them to dance and drink with them. I caress a woman when I am interested in her.

When he initiates a relationship with a tourist, he might give her flowers. He said that if there is one particular woman who likes him, he treats her differently. He has more contact with her and dances with her. He may also invite her to sit in the seat behind or next to his driver's seat. He said that he is able to touch her when she is there and often will caress the women while he is driving. Fernando takes the same approach as Pedro. He said that when he had a relationship with a woman on tour he gave her chocolates or a flower whenever he saw her. He said he did what he was accustomed to doing with women and that men in Costa Rica ask women questions and always want to know how the woman is doing. He also said that for Costa Rican men, it is all about the details and taking care of the women. He believes that this attention to detail is one of the reasons why Costa Rican men are so attractive to foreign women.

That men concern themselves with the details when they are approaching women became evident to a group of women who, on a weekend tour, spent one night in the local disco where we saw a fabulous display from the volcano. I had been there five times before at different times of the year, but I had never seen the volcano spew ash at night. This disco is at one of the closest points to the volcano, and is a popular tourist attraction.

As usual, there were many men in the disco who appeared to be waiting for the arrival of tourist women. These men may or may not have been tourism workers, but they provide examples of how relationships may begin in tourist-oriented locations. The ratio of Costa Rican men to Costa Rican women appeared to be about four to one. There were eight women in the group of female tourists ranging in age from 21 to about 35, and we were all asked to dance within minutes of entering the disco. All of the women

knew about my research and promised to tell me all of the stories of the men “hitting on” them. All of the women reported that the men made advances by telling the women that they could teach them to dance *salsa* or *merengue*. All women similarly reported that the men touched them much more than necessary to teach them to dance.

Sandra met a man who she said approached her by asking her if she had seen the volcano yet. Three other women reported that men used showing them the volcano as a way to make advances. These men, even though I do not know if they worked in tourism (although I suspect that most do not), were assuming the role of the caretaker and guide for these tourist women as a way to get to spend time with them, perhaps impress them, and possibly see them again.

Jenny and Gabby were given flowers for their hair, and the man who gave them to them said “a beautiful flower for a beautiful lady.” This is more evidence of the *tico* man’s attention to the romantic details. Abby and Brittany continued to dance and talk with the same two men all night and let the men buy them drinks and teach them to dance. Another man told Sandra “I’ll wait for you,” suggesting that he would be at the bar if she decided to come back and look at the volcano with him later. When we got in the van to leave, the entire group of men who had been asking us to dance all night came outside to watch us leave and wave good-bye. While none of the women in this group had sex with the men they met at the disco, the exchanges at the disco are evidence of the men here aggressively approaching the tourist women.

When we got back to the hotel, the women, who had been in Costa Rica for a month and were leaving in two days, admitted that they were all “horny” and ready to go home. Some of them wished they had had sex with some of the men they had met. Half

of the women decided to go skinny-dipping in the hotel pool. This, of course, only reinforced for the hotel's night manager that American women are different from the women in Costa Rica and are more sexually liberated. He said that the women were a disturbance, and we had to make them get out of the pool. The manager and our driver both tried to catch a glimpse of the naked women, even though it was my job to get them out of the pool. As explained in Chapter Three, I worked as a tour guide for groups of students during much of the time I spent in Costa Rica. This was one of the weekend tours that I worked, and I was the only woman working. This is why the responsibility to get the women out of the pool fell to me. Additionally, I knew most of the young women, as I had traveled with them on other weekend tours, had become friendly with most of them, and had talked to some of them to get information for my dissertation. They all knew what I was studying, and several of them helped me by telling me stories about Costa Rican men propositioning them for dates, kisses, sex.

According to my female interviewees, contact is most often initiated by men, but according to the male interviewees, men and women may both initiate relationships. According to Carlos, he has had many, many sexual adventures at the resort where he works. His interview was one of the most interesting that I conducted. He flirted with me the entire time I was interviewing him. He did not like the usual interview format because he wanted to have more of a conversation than an interview. He wanted to be able to ask me questions, too. I let him do so. He asked me if I had a boyfriend. When I said no, he told me that such a beautiful and intelligent woman should be able to have any man she wants. I thanked him for the compliment and continued asking my questions. At first, he began his interview with lies. He told me that he had never had

sex with tourists. I knew that this was not true. I just kept talking to him, and he started to trust me. He told me about the many women he had had sex with while working at the resort. He had one long-term relationship with a woman from Switzerland who ended up staying in Costa Rica to be with him for a couple of months. My allowing him to ask me questions if he wanted to gave him a sense of ease with me. I think that is why he retracted the lies and told me about the women. I do not think that he would have told me stories about so many women in an attempt to make me interested in him. In my experience, these men underreport the number of sexual partners they have had when they are trying to make a woman interested in them. He was interested in me, though. He asked me if I wanted to stay at the resort that night. My driver and I left to return to San José shortly after this interview. I was able to experience firsthand, though, how he attempts to initiate a relationship with a female tourist.

Carlos explained that both men and women might initiate contact but that the man always initiates sex. They start by drinking and dancing at the bar and talking to each other. He said he is attracted to how a woman acts and how she moves and dances. He goes to her room if they can or they go to any place on the resort property after 10:00pm when everyone is sleeping. Vicente agreed that many relationships progress after the other people on the tour are sleeping.

Usually most people go to bed at night at 10. You go dancing later, go for a walk, or stay late in the hotel.

Sometimes a mutual attraction brings people together. Eduardo said that usually the women are grateful for his service. He said that both people usually initiate. They go to the disco, dance, and have fun. It is romantic. They kiss. Part of the job is that

people trust the driver to take them places. They have conversations and become familiar with each other. Over two to four days, they tour and go to the beach. If he likes her, then they might get together. They go to dinner. They get romantic. Normally he initiates the sex.

Tomás also explained how his relationship began. He said that they both initiated. They went dancing and to dinner together alone. He said that it moved very fast. They had conversations and joked. He explained that she initiated the sex. When I asked him how, he told me that she did a strip tease for him when they were alone in her apartment one night after dinner.

Jesús suggested that women initiate relationships by inviting him to dance or to go to the beach. Pedro agreed and said that when women initiate the relationships, they might invite him for a drink or to dance. He also said that she might ask him to come to her room to fix something. Other women have used this technique, as I know a woman who asked the driver to come to her room to fix her air conditioner and answered the door wearing a short nightgown and no underwear. He did not give in to her advances, likely because he was already having a relationship with a different woman on the tour. He left the room of the woman with whom he was already having a relationship to fix the air conditioner and was expected to return. He did return.

Women ask questions of the men working in tourism as a way of initiating further contact with them. Orlando explained that a woman once asked him to see his nature book as a way of initiating contact. The nature book was just a book of trees and animals that showed pictures and gave little explanations of them. Lorenzo told me that

one woman initiated their relationship by asking for information and waiting for him after work.

By my observations, women seem to easily approach men for further contact. For example, on the last day of a three-day trip to a ranch in Guanacaste, we went on the canopy tour, traveling by zip lines above the rainforest canopy. We wear a harness and are suspended above the canopy by our waist, using our hands as the brake by pushing down on the line. Well, this was a particularly dangerous day to be participating in this activity as it was raining and the wet zip lines make us travel across so much faster. Some of us needed some help getting across. The guides who are up there to help us will act as a “taxi” by wrapping their bodies around ours and taking us across. The men who act as guides on the canopy tours are known for flirting with the women, and our trip was no exception. The women were interested in these men, and were constantly commenting about needing a “taxi” and hoping to get the cute guy to take them across. The women made a game out of “competing” for the cute “taxi.” Usually the tourists using the zip lines would go across in the same order every time, but some young women would try to get ahead in the line just to get a cuter young man to help them across the lines.

The women had no problem sexually objectifying the men. I think that it makes it more exciting for the women to speak in English about the man’s “nice ass” thinking that he may not know what they are saying because he only speaks Spanish or speaks very little English. In my experience, the men usually know, however, that the women are talking about them. I have learned in Costa Rica that even if the men know very little English they tend to know words like “cute,” “ass,” and “hot.” They usually know

these words because they hear them often. Besides, the women are generally pretty clear when they think that the men are attractive. They look at the men constantly while they are talking about how cute they are, and the younger women tend to giggle quite a bit while talking about how “hot” a young man is.

At this same resort, two years later, Deidre, a free-spirited 37-year-old American woman initiated a relationship with a 21-year-old canopy tour guide. Deidre considers herself to be unconventional and unconcerned with what other people think about her. The other Americans on our tour considered Deidre to be a “hippy.” She was often wearing a long flowing skirt. She does not shave her legs or underarms. She does not wear make-up or worry about how her hair looks. She is not at all like the women that men working in tourism in Costa Rica are used to seeing, neither foreign women on tour nor women in their own country. Deidre arranged to take a long horse riding tour through the resort grounds after the canopy tour. The other people on the tour chose the short horse ride. Because she was alone, only one guide went with her. The long ride explores parts of the ranch that the rest of us had not seen, and takes her to see many waterfalls. At one of these waterfalls, Deidre decided to go skinny-dipping. Although they were shocked to see it in person, most people on the tour were not surprised that Deidre would do this. She thinks that it is natural. She had already done this while with her group. What is surprising to me is that she also did this while she was alone with the guide. She told me that he was shocked to see her swimming naked. She did not think that he had ever seen a woman do this before. Deidre told me that she started talking to him while she was swimming and invited him to come in the water with her.

The guide did end up swimming with her, although he did not take off his clothes. Deidre believed that she had opened this young man up to new experiences by showing him that not all women act the same way. She told me that she thought he was interested in her just because she had let him see her naked and because she was different. He did not approach her, though. After having dinner with the group, Deidre went back to her cabin to read. About an hour later, she came back to the bar where many of the people on her tour were drinking and dancing, and she looked for the guide. He was not there, so she asked a couple of the other guides there if they knew where she could find him. They told her which cabin was his, and she went there. She explained to me that at first they just talked, but then she asked him if she could stay there with him. She said that at first she just wanted to sleep with him, but that eventually they did have sex. She told me that it just “seemed right.” Their relationship continued throughout her stay in Costa Rica, and more details of their story will be found in later sections of this chapter.

Flirting can be seen in many forms, whether it is women asking for help, men giving women flowers, or women swimming naked in the waterfalls. This flirting seems to be a standard part of the exchange between female tourists and the men who work in the tourist industry in Costa Rica. This flirting may not always lead to sex, but it tends to be the first step. Several men in the industry have suggested that they know that flirting makes the women happy and that it may even produce higher tips for them. Arturo likes to send young drivers on tours with the Americans because he knows that they will flirt with the women and therefore lead the women to have a good time. When people are happy on tour, they might end up being repeat business.

Raymundo said that he was driving on a 13-day trip. Since he does not speak any English, the guide helped to arrange this relationship. The guide also acted as a translator. They initiated sexual relationships with two women who were roommates on the tour, and the guide went to stay with one woman while the other woman came to stay with him. They stayed with the women all night when they were able to switch rooms, that is, rather than the two men staying together and the two women staying together as they were supposed to, they were able to stay as couples, each in a room of their own.

Gustavo told me about an experience he had with an American woman. He drove her, her brother, and his wife to Arenal Volcano. He said that they talked and when they arrived the woman invited him to go to the pool with her. Later, they had dinner with her brother and his wife. They danced, drank, and went back to the hotel where they had sex. As Gustavo explains, in many ways this woman treated him as her date, and they were not hindered by the fact that her family members were traveling with them.

Most of the men interviewed told me that the relationships were friendly. Like Martín explained, the relationships begin with *amistad*, “friendship.” They liked each other. As can be seen in the above accounts, that the couples went dancing and drank was a common thread throughout my interviews. As Daniel said, the relationships usually begin by dancing together and the way of dancing together is a clue to the future of the relationship.

Sometimes, having a friendly relationship with a man makes him think that the woman wants more, as one woman learned. On our first night at the lodge, we had a

guaro party in the driver's cabin. Guaro is the national sugar cane alcohol of Costa Rica, so really this was just a party where the tourists could drink a lot. A couple of men who work at the lodge came to the party. Mateo is an old friend of mine and of the bus driver who I was working with, and the other was a friend of his. After the party ended, which was very early, by the way, at about 9pm, we went to the bar. Mateo spent the entire time at the bar talking to one woman, Patty. He was very forward about wanting to have sex with her that night and kept asking her if it would happen. He also asked her if they could go take a walk together just to talk. She declined the offer but said that they could continue to talk there. A bit later, she left the bar to use the bathroom. There were no open bathrooms in public areas, so she went back to her cabin. Mateo followed her and tried to enter her room with her. She pushed him out. When she came out of her cabin, he came right up to her door and tried to enter again. She had to keep talking to him to keep him from entering her cabin. He wanted to have sex with this woman, and he did not easily accept her rejection. Patty explained that she was not afraid that he would force his way into her cabin, but she still felt "more comfortable with him outside."

The next night, about 15 women in our tour group stayed in the bar until it closed. They were the only people there. Mateo, specifically, did not come to the bar because he did not want to see the woman who rejected him. At first there were only a few of the young men who worked there sitting and relaxing in the bar. As time passed, more and more of them arrived. One of the men had gone to their rooms and told them that there were a lot of women in the bar and that they should all come over. This behavior was not uncommon for me to see as I have been on so many trips with different men who usually will try to help each other find women tourists.

There is not a dance floor in this bar. It is just not that kind of place. It is meant to be a tranquil atmosphere in the middle of the very laid back resort area. A couple of the women in the group started to move tables so they could dance. Some of the men who worked at the resort helped them. Then they asked the bartender to change the music to *salsa* or *merengue*. He did, and the bar quickly livened. Each of the men there asked a woman from our group to dance with him. Not all of the women accommodated, so they started taking turns dancing with the one woman who was a really good dancer.

One of the men kept asking me to dance with him. He would not take no for an answer. Every two minutes or so, he would come back to tell me that he could show me a good time. This man had been flirting with me on the previous night in the bar. I am not really sure why he seemed to prefer me to some of the other women. I never did dance with him, but he found many other women who did. I got to hear some of the “lines” that the men give when they are interested in a woman at the bar. He told me that I should try to “have more fun.” He told me that he really knew “how to move.” He told me that such a “pretty woman should not be sitting at the bar alone” (I was not even alone at the time). These were all things that I had heard before in other places at other times in Costa Rica, and they provide further evidence of how relationships might begin. I suppose that women who have not heard these “lines” again and again might be more susceptible to the “charms” of the men who use them.

Sex, Romance, Love

I wanted to know if these relationships were characteristic of “flings,” brief sexual relationships, or romances which may be long or short term and include more

sentimental feelings, and I wanted to know if these men loved the women or if they only had sex with them. It is important that I begin by explaining that the men's responses to these questions suggested that they have a different conception of "flings" and romance than I do. "Flings" and romance are almost inextricable in the minds of the men I interviewed. Romance is such a large part of how they approach women in general, that they did not make a distinction between a "fling" and romance. Most men called their relationships *aventuras*, "adventures," which can be understood in English to mean a "fling," however, almost all men suggested that these were *aventuras romanticas*, "romantic adventures." These men also seem to have a different definition of love than I do. About half of the men claimed to have loved the women; in fact, some men claimed to have loved all of the women with whom they had sex while on tour. For some of these men, that number is very high. For example, Jesús told me that he has had sex with many female tourists, and he also claimed to have loved almost all of them. I, on the other hand, do not believe that it is possible to love that many people. I think that when most people think about love, they assume a deep emotional affection that usually develops with time; at least that is what I think about love.

Love and romance are reported to be a significant part of these relationships. Sarah said that she was not looking for a relationship or anything when she came to Costa Rica, but that she "fell in love" with a man that she had been friends with for two months of her trip. She said that she "fell in love with his personality," but that "of course he is a good-looking man." For me, it makes some sense that she could fall in love over the course of two months, but some of these relationships that men called love only lasted for one night. I am not sure that I would say that a "one-night stand"

involved “love.” The participants’ depictions of their own relationships do not necessarily mesh with my own perspectives, but because this chapter is about how the participants in these relationships feel and act, it is important to describe their interactions in their own terms. Pedro’s approach to love is similar to how I perceive it, and he says that he has only loved one of the many tourist women with whom he has had sexual relationships. She is the woman he has known the longest and seen year after year as she returns to Costa Rica.

When [this woman] appeared in my life I was going through the first years of problems with my marriage and thought that there would never be another woman for me. [She] appeared and me enamore. I fell in love. She has una forma muy especial para mi, a way of being that is very special for me. I have begun relationships with many women, but none were as special to me as [she is]. She knows my life. She knows everything that I like: clothes, shoes, music, food, and cologne. And sexually, she is excellent. I would have liked to meet someone like this before I got married.

Romantic love is important to both the women and men who have these relationships. While I was on a tour with Lana, a 20-year-old young American woman, she went to the disco one night with one other woman from the tour and a Costa Rican guide to help them get there. A young man from the hotel decided to go with them. Lana danced with him all night and kissed him for a while when they got back to the hotel. The next morning, before we left the hotel, he spent a lot of time with her. He wrote her a love letter telling her that he would never forget her and asking her to write to him and call him again before leaving Costa Rica. He also picked her a flower and

gave it to her along with a kiss while the rest of us waited on the bus so we could leave. He is the perfect example of the romantic nature of the men working in tourism who have relationships with the tourists. He was concerned with little details that would make Lana feel special.

Bernardo is the only man I interviewed who did not have sex with a woman while on tour. He did, however, have a relationship with one tourist. He told me that they never had sex, but they spent a lot of time together during her five-day trip. He said that they kissed. He said that he loved her. He also told me that they kept in contact for a long time after she went home. He said that the relationship was just impossible, though, because she was not there with him. This is certainly not the typical relationship between a man working in tourism and the female tourists he meets. All of the other men interviewed had had sex with at least one woman while on tour, and some of them claimed to have had a lot of sex with many women.

Juan had relationships with two American tourists. When I asked him if he loved the women, he responded *claro que sí*, “of course.” He called his relationships *aventuras románticas*, “romantic flings.” He said that it was not just about sex as the romance was important to him. Eduardo concurred. He said that he and the American woman with whom he had a relationship were intimate friends. He said that the relationships were about “things of love.” He had sex with them and had feelings for them, too.

Gustavo has had what he called “friendships” with several women, but he has only had sex with one. He said that he did not love her and called it an adventure, but he called it a “romantic adventure with sex.” He also told me that “a long romance has

love, but the other is only pleasure,” *hay amor en romancia larga y otro es solamente placer*. Further, a short “adventure” is easier because the women do not expect much from the men in a short-term relationship. Orlando’s situation is different. He explained that his relationship is a romance.

It started as an adventure, but it changed after a while. It didn’t end. She went home. She comes back every six to eight months, and I see her.

These relationships may take a variety of forms. Martín explained that he felt a special attraction for the women he had sex with while on tour. He said that he was attracted to how they acted and cared that they had “good feelings.” By “good feelings” he was describing a woman who seemed to be nice and who would not treat him badly.

At first, the relationships are not love. Some were no más que aventuras, nothing more than adventures. Other relationships were very romantic. . . . First it is about friendship. Then it becomes more intimate when we both want it.

Antonio said that he had many relationships with female tourists. He said that “they are lots of fun.” When I asked him if he loved any of the women he replied that it is hard to keep up a relationship from a distance.

Long distance is hard. Instead, they are sexual relationships. There was mainly sexual chemistry between us. Sometimes we keep up with each other for a few months or even years and eventually become friends.

He said that he did love a couple of the women, though. Love does not need to be a part of these relationships, though, and Lori provides a good example of a relationship without love.

Lori is 24 years old. She traveled to Costa Rica after graduating from college and was going home to start a job teaching Spanish. She had a boyfriend at home who she was going to be moving in with when she got home, and she was sure that he was going to propose soon.

She was determined to have a good time while in Costa Rica. She went river rafting with some friends of hers. I saw them after they had been rafting, and they told me that they had lots of fun with the river guides. She explained that the men kept telling the women how beautiful they were. According to Lori, they asked the women about what they did back in the United States. She told me that the men seemed very interested in them and asked them for dates later. Both Lori and her friend Iris went out to dinner with these men. Lori told me that besides kissing, nothing else happened on the double date. Lori did not see her river guide again. I am not sure about Iris, because I never spoke to her.

Lori did, however, go out with Francisco, a tour bus driver she met on a trip to Arenal. I was the guide on this trip, and that is where I met Lori. She flirted with Francisco both in the van on the way to and from the destination and at the spa. She told him that he was attractive. She asked him if he had a girlfriend. She asked him if he liked his job. According to both Lori and Francisco, nothing really came of this flirting on that day. This changed later.

I became friends with Lori and went out dancing in a disco in San José with her and some of her friends. Francisco and a couple of other *ticos* went with us. Lori danced with Francisco all night. They drank a lot of beer. Everyone drank a lot that night. Most people went home by midnight, but a few of us stayed later. Lori told me

that she was thinking about leaving the disco with Francisco. I think she was looking for approval from someone. I told her that she should do whatever she wanted to do, so she asked me if I had any condoms in my purse that she could have. I gave them to her. Francisco was also thinking about taking Lori with him. He and I are very good friends, so we talk about a lot of things. We are very comfortable with each other. He told me that he had not brought enough money with him to pay for the motel room and asked if he could borrow the 5000 colones (\$17) that he would need to pay for it until I saw him the next day. I gave him the money. (He did give it back to me the next day.) He and Lori decided to go to a motel. As explained in Chapter Five, motels are specifically used for sexual encounters and are not the same as hotels.

Before leaving the disco, Francisco helped me get a taxi. I went home. They both told me that they went to the motel. I heard about the experience from each of them the next day. Francisco and Lori started the evening by dancing and drinking. As the hours went by, they danced more and more closely and provocatively. They even kissed at the disco before even discussing leaving together or going to the motel. Lori told me that she wanted to experience something different. She told me that she knew before she came to Costa Rica that she was going home to move in with the man she would marry, and she just needed to try something different before she did. She also told me that Francisco was one final “fling.” She was happy to be in Costa Rica and to have the freedom to do anything she wanted to do.

This freedom to experience new things was at the heart of the relationship that Deidre (whose story is explained above) had with a guide from a resort. I got to know Deidre fairly well and saw her on several occasions in Costa Rica after the tour on which

I met her. Whenever she spoke to me about her relationship I could not help thinking that she was taking the opportunity to act like a teenager again. She seemed so angst-filled and took everything so seriously. She became depressed when she thought that he did not want to see her again and completely elated when she found out that he really did want to see her again. She even wrote poetry about the experience. One poem was very sad and about rejection and the other was very happy and about the satisfaction of love. She gave me her poems to read, and, in my opinion, they were very serious. Her relationship was the cause of emotional ups and downs throughout the several weeks that she was in Costa Rica. Her reaction to her relationship was something that I did not expect. She really seemed like a level-headed 37-year-old woman. She appeared to be a hippy and told me that she does not care what people think about her, and I believed that she was just a free-spirit who would have the sexual relationship while “in the moment” at the resort and then just put it behind her. I was surprised that she kept seeing the tour guide after she returned to San José. She even traveled back to the resort area to see him again.

Flirting and starting relationships may cause some problems on tour or afterward as is evidenced in Luis’s story. Luis is a 24-year-old tour bus driver. Currently, he is only able to drive the van. Arturo, the owner of the company where he works told me that he is sending Luis out to do many tours with American tourists because he is so charismatic and because the women like him.

Luis met Carly, a 32-year-old teacher, on a weekend tour. There were about 20 women and three men on the tour with him. While I was not there, I heard many stories about this weekend upon their return. In fact, the organizer of the tour called the

company to complain about Luis to Arturo. Arturo says that a good driver or guide knows that he has to spend time with all of the women on his tour. He cannot let anyone know that he favors one woman over another. Because Luis is inexperienced with foreign tourists, he did not realize this. There were several young women on the tour competing for his attention, but he spent all of his time with Carly. The biggest complaint from the other young women was that Luis danced only with Carly when he took the group to the disco. They all wanted a chance to dance with him, too. Luis was not allowed to drive on any more of this group's tours so that Arturo would not have to deal with any problems.

Luis did develop a relationship with Carly, though, as a result of this one short tour. A few days after this weekend trip, Luis and Carly went on their first date to the movies. I heard about the date from both Luis and Carly, as I met her on another tour a week later. Carly was enrolled in a Spanish Language program, so she was doing a home stay with a Costa Rican family. They insisted on chaperoning her on her date with Luis. He was not happy about this and told me that he did not want to see her again if the family intended to accompany them on their dates. Carly thought it was nice that the family was worried about her but also did not want the family to continue to go with them on their dates.

Carly invited Luis to go on a trip to the beach with her and a few of her friends. He stayed with her in her hotel room for free but got his own transportation to and from the beach. Luis told me that he was looking forward to the trip because he could be alone with her and because he knew that they would be able to have sex.

Luis was also pursuing another American woman during this time. He had sex with her as well, within days of going on this trip with Carly. I am confident that this happened, since I was able to speak to all three of these people. The other woman was not interested in having any sort of relationship with Luis, so she did not mind that he was seeing another woman. Carly did not know about the other woman, though. Luis did not want for her to be jealous or to lose future opportunities to have sex with her, so he kept the other American woman a secret.

Of course, Luis's life was much more complicated than this since he had a steady Costa Rican girlfriend as well. He was keeping the American women a secret from her. He was able to do so easily because he was able to tell his girlfriend that he was working whenever he wanted to see another woman. I have learned from several informants that this is common among men working in tourism. It is easier for them to have affairs than it is for other men because they can always say that they have to leave town for work. It is not only easier to have affairs with tourists, but it makes it possible for them to have Costa Rican girlfriends, too. Arturo has done this, and so have all of the men I have spoken to who work for his company, except for one. They make up trips and tell their wives and girlfriends that they will be gone overnight. Then, they meet their other girlfriends instead.

Not one of the stories told in this chapter is characteristic of "sex for money." I, in fact, found no evidence of this happening at all. These relationships are not business-like arrangements in which the men are using the women for money or other goods. Whether they loved all of the women they had sex with or not, they told me that they did have some feelings for the women and treated their relationships as romances.

None of the men interviewed said that they accept money or gifts in exchange for sex. In fact, most men told me that if men are paid for sex, then they are not really men. Some men told me about the “beach boys” on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica who are unemployed and “live off of women.” This is a stereotype of the men living on the Caribbean coast, many of whom are of Jamaican descent. Antonio told me that this behavior is “disgusting” and that he does not understand why any women would want to be with those men. Pedro said that the “beach boys” are not at all like other men in the country. The men I interviewed who mentioned the “beach boys” attempted to make a distinction between their behavior and that of the Caribbean “beach boys.” I think Pedro’s issue with the “beach boys” has more to do with their level of poverty and lack of employment than it does with their accepting money and other goods from women in exchange for sex.

The greatest difference between the men in my research and the men in the other published research on female sex tourism (Phillips 1999, Pruitt and LaFont 1995) is that all of the men I interviewed are employed. All of the men told me that they make more money working in tourism than they would in other jobs. Some have even left other jobs just to work in this well-paying industry. That they make a decent living relative to the rest of Costa Ricans is another contributing factor to why the men do not accept and will not take payments for sex. The men in my research are not at all similar to the people in desperate economic situations described in other sex tourism research (Phillips 1999, Pruitt and LaFont 1995, Cabezas 1999, Antonius-Smits, et al. 1999) who sell sex to tourists. Even though the women are, in most cases, much more affluent than the

men, the men do not desperately need the money therefore they do not need or want to receive any.

Ending Relationships

Most of the relationships discussed by my informants did have an end. In fact, the majority of all relationships I heard about only lasted for a few days. For most people, the relationships are short term by their very nature, as the women often go home and do not return to Costa Rica. Federico, for example, has only had relationships that lasted “one or two days.” Eduardo’s experiences similarly lasted only a few days. Cristian, on the other hand, had a relationship that lasted “months” until the woman went home.

Some couples try to keep the relationships going after the women return home. Bernardo and his “girlfriend” kept in contact for a long time.

The relationship was just impossible, though. She is not here with me. We sent letters to keep in touch.

Raymundo also kept in contact with one woman for a brief time through letters. As cyber cafes can be found all over San José and in some other more remote areas of the country, e-mail has made it easier for tourism workers and the women they have relationships with to stay in contact with each other. Karla and Francisco sent e-mails to each other for some time. Juan also communicated with a woman via e-mail for a few months. This woman had traveled to the country and resumed her relationship with him a year after she had last seen him, and he told me that they kept in contact by e-mail for about six months after the last time he saw her.

For some couples, like Juan and his tourist “girlfriend,” contact continues beyond writing letters. Orlando’s tourist “girlfriend” visits him in Costa Rica often and has done so for several years. The same is true for Pedro. These two men’s relationships, however, are not typical of those I examined in my research. As is more common, Margie returned to Costa Rica to see a man with whom she had a relationship. Marlana, Debra, and Hillary all did the same. None of these relationships ever amounted to much, though, and after one or two return trips to the country, the women never returned to see the same men.

It is in this way that the women tourists are wielding power. “Within the global economy, women from First World countries can and do exert their relative economic power over local lovers and others in the communities to which they travel in Third World countries, but power associated with masculinity complicates this schema” (Frohlick 2007:141). As suggested earlier in this chapter, men routinely initiate relationships with tourist women, and these men said that the man always initiates sexual contact. By virtue of their masculinity, they are able to exert some control over the women with whom they have relationships. Within the confines of the relationship, the Costa Rican man exerts power, he is dominant and decides how the relationship progresses. Based on the examples above, the man often approaches the woman and asks her to go out with him; determines where they go, what they do, and when; and takes the relationship to the sexual level. Men are powerful because they are men and because they can be. Costa Rican men in this context abide by their culturally conditioned ideas about how relationships between men and women should be, attributing their behavior to *machismo* in Costa Rica.

It is the economic power of the women, however, that allows them to participate in international tourism in the first place. Their relative position of economic power also allows them to leave the country to return home. The women have the power to “act or change in a desired direction” (Wingood and DiClemente 2000:543), as they are empowered by their wealth to make their own decisions. Their wealth also provides a context within which they can choose to return to Costa Rica at whim, leaving the women tourists to make decisions about the duration of their relationships with men in Costa Rica. Tourist women are “mobile subjects engendered by a privilege that enables them to come and go” (Frohlick 2007:143), and it is in this respect that tourist women retain their power.

With this in mind, it is important to note that no one that I interviewed told me of a bad end to a relationship. None of my informants told me about teary good-byes or any false promises of a return to Costa Rica. I only heard of one repeat visit not working out as the woman intended. Margie returned to Costa Rica to see a man with whom she had had a sexual relationship the previous year, only to find that the man was engaged and not interested in seeing her sexually any more. They had kept in contact over that year, and he had not mentioned that he was getting married or that he would not be interested in seeing her if she returned. Margie handled the news very well, though, and started a friendship with the man, never having sex with him again.

Impacts of the Relationships

Personal and Professional Lives

Interestingly, none of the men I interviewed believe that the relationships that they have with tourists have any negative effects on their personal or professional lives.

If anything, the relationships made them happy and, therefore, they were in a better mood. Raymundo said, "I suppose I feel better after." Antonio said that he is not really affected, but that "a good relationship can make you happy for a while." When asked about effects of the relationships on their lives, some men focused on how much they cared about the women. Richard sometimes wants to get to know the woman better but does not have the chance to do so. Orlando said that the woman who comes to Costa Rica to see him every few months "is always in his heart and his mind." Pablo's relationship only affects his life in that he plans to move to Canada to be with his girlfriend.

Almost all of the men believe that there would be no negative impacts on their professional lives. Only two men fear otherwise. Jesús is worried that he could get a bad reputation, as a man who is looking for sex with tourists, in a particular hotel or tour company, but does not know what, if anything would happen to him. When probed further about effects of his relationships, Pedro suggested that there could be professional problems if he were to get a bad reputation, as a man who has had sex with many tourist women. However, Pedro already has a bad reputation. Several of my informants told me that Pedro has had a bad reputation for years, as six different people told me that if I wanted to talk to someone who had sex with many tourists that I should talk to Pedro first. Even Pedro has admitted on other occasions that some people perceive of him as a man who has sex with many women. There have not been any negative consequences because of his bad reputation, though. He is still one of the most steadily employed tour bus drivers because he is very good at his job. He is also very well-liked by both women and men tourists, and as he and his employer have explained,

groups that return year after year often request that he be their driver if they have had previous experience with him.

Most men do not think that they have to worry about any negative consequences in their personal lives either. When I asked married men if their wives suspect that they might have sex with tourists, all married men said that they think their wives have suspicions about their behavior. None of the men told me that they have fear of repercussions. Only Pedro has told me that he has developed a bad relationship with his wife. He does not blame this on his sexual relationships with tourists, however; he blames this on his job and the fact that he must spend so much time away from home. Pedro has suggested that “wives can only get upset about what they know.”

Relationships are easy to have because wives do not know about them. According to Pedro, even what wives suspect, they “cannot prove.” Similarly, the women tourists I spoke to do not fear negative consequences. Even those who are married do not worry that their husbands will find out. They believe that their lives on holiday are separate from their lives at home. They believe that their husbands will never find out therefore, there are no consequences. Their husbands will only know what they tell them.

Some women, just as in the case of the men, have been affected by their relationships in that they care for the men. Linda has returned to Costa Rica several times to see her Costa Rican “boyfriends.” Her relationship with one man has lasted twelve years. Marlina has returned and seen the same men that she had relationships with during previous trips. Sarah intends to return to Costa Rica to see her boyfriend again. Dana even moved to Costa Rica twenty years ago to marry a man who she had met while on an earlier trip. She has since divorced him and stayed in the country.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

While few people wanted to talk about it, one possible impact of these relationships is the potential for contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STD's). Safe sex, in some cases, is not a priority for some of my informants. Three of the nine women I interviewed formally admitted to having sex without condoms. When asked about whether or not she used condoms, Linda said

No, not in the beginning because the attitude was that there was such a low level of HIV in Costa Rica that it wasn't a necessity. Stupid but . . . For the last four years I have because I realized that I needed to get my head out of the clouds and realize that they were lying to me about being faithful.

That Linda ever thought that the men she had sexual relationships with in Costa Rica were faithful to her is evidence of her romanticizing her encounters. She has always known that her "boyfriends" have wives. She has admitted to knowing that these men have had relationships with other tourists. She wanted to believe that she was not at risk, so she acted as if there were no risk. Romanticism of this nature is particularly dangerous because if people do not perceive their sex partners' risk, they may change their own sexual behaviors, specifically condom use (Ellen, et al. 1998).

This romanticism has left some of my informants vulnerable to disease. Greta has been in Costa Rica for two years now, and says that the longer she is dating a man the less likely she is to use condoms with him. After they build a relationship, she says that it is unnecessary. Orlando also said that he always uses condoms at first. He uses them with women in the beginning of a relationship but as time goes on he does not use them. He also told me that he and his tourist girlfriend who returns year after year to see

him do not use condoms with each other but that they do use them when they have sex with other people. Similarly, Elias said that he always uses condoms with the tourist women and with the *ticas* with whom he has affairs but that he does not use them with his Costa Rican girlfriend because he has had a relationship with her for a long time. He believes that there is less risk with a woman he has known for a long time. Risk for these informants is associated with having sex with strangers, not just with having sex. This is not an uncommon idea. According to Bird, et al. (2001:233) “individuals in committed relationships are less likely to use condoms consistently than persons in casual relationships, even if they do not know their partner’s or their own HIV status.” Furthermore, some people’s belief “that trusted partners are safe partners may lead to the perception of decreased risk as trust develops in a relationship over time” (Bird, et al., 2001:233).

In some cases, risk of exposure to STD’s is a matter of carelessness. For example, Nestor said that he uses condoms almost always but that “it depends on how many drinks we both might have had.” Several studies have tried to quantify the causal relationship between alcohol consumption and STD risk, and although a relationship between alcohol and sexual risk does exist, many researchers are loath to quantify because they do not trust self-report data (LaBrie and Earleywine 2000). I concentrate on the informants who told me about their unsafe sex in this section, for that reason. I feel confident that these informants are truthful about unsafe sex, because they were not trying to impress me with their stories of how safe they are.

Daniel said that he prefers sex “natural” and that when he does use condoms it is because the women have them and want to use them. Jesús said that he uses condoms

sometimes. When he does not use them it is because he does not think about it. He also said that sex is more enjoyable without condoms but that if a tourist woman asks, then he will use them and that she would have to have her own condoms because he does not carry them. When asked, however, he suggested that he is afraid of getting an STD even though he does not protect against them. Similarly, Pedro never likes to use condoms and claims to only have sex with women he “trusts.” I asked him if he was afraid of STD’s and HIV, and he said yes. “*Claro que si, tengo miedo.* Of course I am afraid [of HIV and STD’s.] Usually, I prefer to have relationships with married women who only have sex with their husbands. It is less dangerous.” Because I know Pedro well and because we tried to treat this interview as much like a conversation as possible, I reminded him that married American women probably had a lot of sex with other men before they were married. He said that he had never thought about that before. Pedro did, at least when probed, admit to being afraid of sexually transmitted diseases, even though he does not always practice safe sex.

In fact, all of the men I specifically asked said that they are afraid of diseases, but not all of them think about it very much. For some reason, men such as Pedro, Jesús, and Reymundo, believe that American women are safer than Costa Rican women. I asked them how they could believe that when they all said that American women are more adventurous and experienced sexually, but the two concepts seem to be unrelated for these men. They believe that tourists are healthy.

Pedro does not use condoms when he does not have to, but if a woman makes him, then he will use them without argument. While most of the men claim to use condoms, some of those said that they only do so when the woman wants it. Only about

half of the men carry their own condoms. They rely on the women to think about it. Nestor said that “tourists are prepared.” Raymundo said that the tourist women with whom he had sex carried their own condoms, which he used with them. He also told me that “*gringas* are more free; they have more freedom.” If a woman in Costa Rica, his girlfriend or another woman, had her own condoms, he would fight with her. Women who carry their own condoms are viewed as less “pure” than women who do not. It seems that he believes that carrying your own condoms means that you have already decided to have sex. While *gringas* with freedom can do this, chaste *ticas* cannot. Patty told me that in her experience Costa Rican men have thought that she was “easy” because she carried too many condoms; “maybe carrying one or two is fine, but five or six is not.”

According to Downe’s (1997) sample of 247 Costa Rican women, men control condom use and, therefore, also control STD prevention. This problem is compounded by the fact that a national committee established in 1987 to study HIV/AIDS and strategies for prevention stated publicly that HIV is prevalent in homosexual and bisexual men but that “the prevalence of HIV and AIDS will rapidly increase in women who are irresponsibly promiscuous and in men who have sexual contact with these vectors” (Downe 1997:3). This could leave Costa Rican men thinking that they are not at risk if they are having sex with responsible *tica* partners and that they are, therefore, not a risk to other partners such as tourists. This study suggests that Costa Rican men control condom use within relationships with Costa Rican women, as these Costa Rican women are the study population. Whether or not Costa Rican men would attempt to control condom use with women tourists, however, is debatable. Pedro, Jesús, and

Daniel all prefer to have sex without condoms, but would agree to use them if a tourist woman asked them to do so. Therefore, tourist women must try to take the lead in STD prevention strategies such as condom use as much as they possibly can.

Sarah said that while her boyfriend does not try to convince her not to use condoms, he has tried to have sex with her without them and she told him that she would not do it. Marlena and Patty reported similar experiences with men with whom they had sex. Patty told me that a man took off a condom during sex thinking that she would not notice. She immediately told him that she would leave if he did not put on another condom.

While Richard uses condoms with tourists, he said that he never uses them with *ticas*. This is one more way in which tourist women need to be aware of their sexual risk behaviors. They need to understand that these men do not always use condoms, as they tend to control condom use within their relationships with Costa Rican women, and therefore are often putting themselves at risk. In order to minimize their own risk, tourist women need to insist that all men with whom they have sex while on tour always use condoms.

Economic Impacts on Costa Rica

I specifically asked the male interviewees if they believed that the relationships that tourist women have while in the country have any effects on Costa Rica. Most of the men did not make a connection between the relationships and the country as a whole, but those who did, believe that these relationships have only positive impacts on the Costa Rican people and the country's economy. Martín said that the relationships'

positive effect on the country is that the women bring new ideas with them and share those ideas with the men.

Lorenzo believes that there is a minimal positive economic impact. Santiago said that “the women come (to Costa Rica) looking for sex, so the relationships do have some economic effects on Costa Rica.” Orlando believes that many women extend their stay in Costa Rica, and, therefore, they spend more money in the country. This is a common occurrence, especially in regards to female students. Lana decided to stay in Costa Rica longer after she met a boyfriend. She even called her parents to ask for more money. She will spend more money in Costa Rica as a result of her relationship. Marlana and Debra returned to Costa Rica specifically to see men they had met there before. Linda even invested in a business in Costa Rica so she could travel there more often and spend more time with her boyfriends. As discussed in Chapter Four, tourism has had many impacts on Costa Rica. These relationships only contribute to those impacts as they contribute to increased tourism in the country.

Summary

Both men and women are known to initiate relationships with each other in the context of female sex tourism in Costa Rica. Whether the female tourist or the tourist industry worker initiates the relationship, most are known to end since the women often return home and, in most cases, never visit Costa Rica again. While most of these relationships are short-lived, they may have far-reaching consequences. While none of the men I interviewed said that they had experienced negative consequences in their personal or professional lives because of their relationships with tourists, some have left themselves vulnerable to such consequences. Pedro does not attribute his impending

divorce on his long-term romance with a tourist but rather on his job in general as it keeps him away from home too much.

Additionally, while no one has admitted to contracting an STD, many of my informants are vulnerable to disease. More than half of my informants had had unprotected sex. Most of those did not perceive a risk even though they were, in fact, educated about HIV transmission. This will be explored further in Chapter Seven as I examine the applied dimensions of my research, especially vulnerability to contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions and Applied Dimensions of the Research

In Chapters Five and Six, the collected data were explained in detail. With a firm understanding of why women tourists and men working in the Costa Rican tourist industry enter into sexual and romantic relationships as well as what happens during the relationships, how the relationships end, and what impacts the relationships may have on the lives of the participants, Chapter Seven is primarily concerned with the applied project that is the culmination of the data collection. In this chapter, after discussing my primary conclusions and recommendations, I describe the web site developed to promote safe sex to women tourists. Additionally, I provide my recommendations for future research.

Conclusions

In order to draw conclusions about the tourist industry and make recommendations for changes in the tourism industry in Costa Rica, I rely on the opinions, and more specifically, the complaints, of my male tourist industry worker interviewees. Overall, the men interviewed believe that tourism is a good idea in Costa Rica. All men who specifically mentioned their economic situation told me that tourism provides excellent economic opportunities for themselves and many other people in the country. They appreciate that they make more money by working in the tourist industry. They even enjoy the benefits of getting to have relationships with female tourists.

Overall, the changes that they would make to the lived experience of working in tourism are minor. The specific areas that we discussed at length during the interview process were: sexual relationships with female tourists and tourism and development in Costa Rica, specifically their experiences working in the tourist industry.

Relationships with Female Tourists

The relationships that occur between female tourists and men working in the Costa Rican tourism industry were discussed at great length in Chapters Five and Six. For the most part, sexual attraction to an exotic other is the motivation to enter into one of these relationships. The relationships are usually short-term, although they may last for short periods of time over several years. The primary reason for the demise of these relationships is that the woman returns to her country of origin and either does not return to Costa Rica or returns but does not look for the man or men she had relationships with previously. In most cases, there are few if any impacts on the lives of the participants, except that they had some fun and made some memories. In a few instances, these relationships have led to love, marriage, and women who have moved to Costa Rica to be with the men they met while traveling.

Policy Views about Tourist Sexual Relationships

As discussed throughout this dissertation, sexual relationships between female tourists and men working in the tourist industry occur often. Several of the men I interviewed, however, told me that there are rules against their engaging in sexual relationships with female tourists. The men at one particular resort were afraid to speak to me at first. Until they trusted that I would not tell anyone about their actions, I learned very little. While the management at this resort prohibits these relationships, at

least half of the ten men I met working there had participated in at least one such relationship in the recent past, since he started working at this resort. Of course, that number could be higher, but I only talked to five of the ten men.

Another interviewee works as a tour bus driver for one of the largest tour companies in Costa Rica, a company that uses very large buses for their tours, quite uncommon in Costa Rica, where most buses used in the tourist industry would transport less than 50 people. The bulk of the transportation they offer is for highly organized and expensive tours. He told me that if his bosses ever found out about his relationships with tourists that he could lose his job. He could lose his very well-paying and prestigious tourism job because he has sex with tourists, but he continues to do so. While rules such as these are not uncommon, they are often disregarded. Some resorts do not want to gain reputations as sex tourism locations; that is why these rules are in place.

Not all people in management positions, however, have a problem with sexual relationships between men working for them and female tourists. In addition to my interviews of men working in the industry, I spoke to some small tour company owners and small hotel managers. They all told me that everyone knows what is going on, but that no one really minds. They, as managers, do not participate in this behavior because as one of them said “it is not good business to fool around with the customers,” but they do not have specific rules against this behavior for their employees. I talked to 33 men, and none of them reported that they had been fired for having sex with tourist women. Also, none of the men in management positions told me that they had ever fired a man for having these relationships.

Recommendations

Currently there is no standard rule that men working in tourism should not have sexual relationships with women tourists. I am not sure that such a rule could really be enforced, as many men working in tourism are able to do so independently, not under the watchful eye of a manager. At the resort mentioned above where there are strict prohibitions, these relationships are able to occur for a couple of reasons: at night, especially, the young men who are having the relationships are the same men who are in charge, taking care of the resort and the tourists' needs, and, also, the young men who work there live in dormitory-style living quarters away from their families and, in some cases, their wives.

I believe that if men spent less time away from their wives, there would be less sexual relationships occurring between men working in tourism and female tourists. A remedy for some of these men would be for tour companies and hotels to allow for family housing on their property rather than the current dormitory-style housing where men who move away from home currently live. In addition to the tour guide companies located in popular tourist destinations, several resorts provide this type of housing for men who live on the resort property. All of these men live away from their wives or girlfriends and instead share rooms with other men in similar situations. More than sexual relationships with female tourists, this time away from home, in some cases, is leading to problems within families, and as was discussed in Chapter Six, about a quarter of the men I talked to were divorced or were in the process of divorcing.

Costa Rica's Tourist Industry

Costa Rica's tourist industry is the second largest contributor to their economy, after high tech, especially microprocessors. This makes the industry very important to the country as a whole, and it has impacts upon the lives of the people who work in the industry. Ecotourism is popular in Costa Rica, as they have a number of microclimates (Clark 2001) and the biodiversity in Costa Rica is amazing given the small overall area of the country. In one day, a tourist could see a cloud forest, rainforest, and beach.

The number of large tourism complexes has increased over the past 20 years, allowing greater numbers of tourists to travel to the country at once. These large complexes are also a center of foreign investment in Costa Rica (Lara 1995). Therefore, while tourism provides many economic benefits for the people who live there, it is also profitable for foreign investors.

The Lived Experience of Men Working in Tourism

In Chapter Four, I discussed Costa Rica's tourism industry, citing the men's experiences working in the industry. Most of the men interviewed work as tour guides and bus drivers, although there are a few interviewees who work in service industries such as restaurants and bars. Work as tour guides and bus drivers usually means a great deal of travel away from home, interacting with tourists most days of the week. Sometimes, travel away from home can last for weeks at a time. This is sometimes stressful for the men and their families, but according to the interviews, the high salaries make the time away from home worth it.

Men working in tourism can make a great deal more money as bus drivers and tour guides than they can in other industries, especially since the job does not require

any formal education and because the large numbers of jobs in tourism do not appear to be waning any time soon. There is a sense of job security. Experience working with tourists is valuable, even if a tourist industry worker finds himself in need of a new tourist industry job.

Recommendations

In order for tourists to maximize their experiences in Costa Rica, knowledgeable tour guides are necessary. Some certified guides have suggested that all guides be held responsible for obtaining the necessary training to become certified guides. Even some of the guides who are not certified suggested that they would like to be. Certification training should be more easily accessible to the men working in the industry. Currently, this training is only available in San José and in Liberia. If training were more widely available, then perhaps more men would participate. Training would insure that all guides earned comparable wages and would benefit the guides by making their jobs easier. Additionally, they would learn about Costa Rica's biodiversity, which would allow them to pass on more information to the tourists.

Also, all of the men interviewed suggested that they would like to learn more English because it would make their jobs easier and allow them to interact more freely with the tourists. If they received the training for certification, then they would have access to this language training as well. However, even if certification training does not become more widely available, the men could still use access to English language training. Travel agencies, tour companies, even hotels, would benefit from providing their employees with instruction in speaking English, and I believe that a good portion of the men interviewed would take advantage of such training.

Self-Reflection in Data Analysis

In concluding my dissertation, I was able to examine my own impact on the study. As suggested in Chapter Three, I believe it may be possible that I legitimized these sexual relationships between female tourists and Costa Rican men working in tourism through my studying the topic. I may have had a particularly strong impact on Francisco, as I spent more time with him than with any of my other informants. I played a greater role in his romantic life with tourists as well, since I often went out with him and his tourist dates. In one instance, I loaned him money for a motel and gave his date the condoms she asked for before accompanying him there. I also acted as a “sounding board” when he was trying to understand his relationship with Karla. He was trying to gain greater insight into American women, so he asked me many questions about what American women want and expect from relationships.

My work as a tour guide with groups composed primarily of women tourists may also have had an influence on sexual relationships between them and men working in tourism. Perhaps I also legitimized these relationships for the women, giving them license to act in ways that they do not normally. Once they knew that I was studying these sexual relationships, many women would come to me to tell me about their adventures. In Chapter Six, when I explain my experiences with a group of women in Arenal at a disco, I clearly describe how the women would come to me every time a man would “hit on” them. They thought that it was funny that they were being approached for the types of sexual relationships that I was studying. This was their last weekend in Costa Rica, and they had all been on tours with me before, so they had spent several weeks talking to me about my research.

For some women, I think I may have given the impression that these relationships are commonplace, since I was studying them. Lori, one of Francisco's romantic partners, likely would not have had a sexual relationship in Costa Rica if she and I had not become friends. She and I went out together quite a bit over the summer we were there, so I gave her increased access to men working in tourism. She would not have seen Francisco again if she had not gone out to a bar with me, and she may never have thought about having a sexual relationship in Costa Rica if she had never known about my research. I cannot measure the extent to which I influenced the behavior of any of the participants in my research, but I do assert that I do not think it is common for anyone to decide to have sex with someone just because a third party says there is nothing wrong with it. It is more likely that I gave the women license to do things that they thought about already.

Applied Project

Because my degree will be in Applied Anthropology, specifically, it was important to have an applied project as the final product of my dissertation. I have used the information I collected to create a web site targeting women tourists planning to travel to Costa Rica. Using the data I collected, I was able to demonstrate that women need to assert themselves in sexual decision making and insist upon safety, specifically condom use. My data were usable, as STD risk is a contemporary issue that my data could speak to, with a web site designed to empower women to negotiate condom use and thereby reduce risk of STD infection.

Risk of Sexually Transmitted Diseases

As discussed in Chapter One, as the number of women who have been infected with HIV has increased in the past 20 years (Dworkin and Ehrhardt 2007), so has the need to discuss ways women, specifically, might protect themselves from infection. For this reason, the web site targeting women travelers to Costa Rica uses data collected in this dissertation to demonstrate to women that protection is in their own hands. My dissemination activities are centered on reducing the risk of transmitting sexually transmitted diseases through an increase in condom use among women tourists who intend to travel to Costa Rica. The web site I have designed as the final product of my dissertation is aimed at these potential tourist women and reminds them that they must protect themselves.

All of the women interviewed during my dissertation research were highly educated, middle to upper middle class North Americans and Europeans. Those who I asked specifically all stated that they know about safe sex practices. They know that condoms are the best preventative measure against contracting a sexually transmitted disease. Safe sex education, however, has limits. Middle and upper middle class white women in North America and Europe have been educated about safe sex and condom use for decades. They know how to use condoms, and they know about treatment of STD's. They have learned the statistics about incidence of STD transmission. Safe sex education does not spend enough time empowering women to make their own sexual decisions or to be insistent with men about using condoms, even though one of the primary reasons women leave themselves vulnerable to contracting an STD is that they

do not have enough power within their relationships (Orubuloye, Caldwell, and Caldwell 1993, McGrath, et al. 1993, and Feldman, et al. 1997, Wingood and DiClemente 1998). If women do not have the proper attitude about safe sex and condom use, then actually following through with using condoms will be less likely. Given that my target population is women travelers, one would expect that empowering these women to take charge of their sexual practices would be relatively easy as they are not dependent upon these men for economic or social resources as is often the case when women lack power over sexual decision-making within their relationships (Dworkin and Ehrhardt 2007, Orubuloye, Caldwell, and Caldwell 1993, McGrath, et al. 1993, and Feldman, et al. 1997, Wingood and DiClemente 1998).

Another reason why women often have less sexual decision-making power than their male partners is that they have a desire to keep their reputations intact. They do not want to be viewed as immoral or sexually promiscuous (Gomez and Marín 1996, Ford and Norris 1993, Cabada, et al. 2007, Abel and Fitzgerald 2006). This issue will also be addressed in my web site. Based on my interviews with men working in the tourist industry in Costa Rica, the men these women tourists will encounter will not view these women as sexually promiscuous if they talk about condom use or if they provide their own condoms during sexual encounters. The vast majority of men interviewed believe that tourist women are different from Costa Rican women and are held to a different standard. Raymundo clearly articulated what I heard often: “*gringas* are more free; they have more freedom.” This is both sexual and economic freedom, a freedom to make their own choices and do as they please. The Costa Rican men will not necessarily think

of tourist women as promiscuous, since they just think that being more sexually liberated is part of being an American woman.

As explained in Chapter Six, the majority of the men I interviewed suggested that they do not carry condoms with them and that they only use condoms when women insist upon it. For this reason, women need to be reminded that they have to take charge of protection against sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. Additionally, women need to be instructed in successful condom-use negotiation strategies to ensure that they are, in fact, going to protect themselves (Otto-Salaj, et al. 2008, Abel and Fitzgerald 2006). If women are waiting for men to bring up condom use, then they may not ever talk about it. Women need to be empowered to broach the topic themselves. I have chosen to target women tourists in an attempt to increase condom use, because I believe that this strategy is designed to protect both women and the men who have sex with them. As explained in Chapter One, it is assumed that providing women with successful sexual negotiation strategies will be of greater use than training men (Otto-Salaj, et al. 2008).

I have some evidence that the women I interviewed believe that this is true. In general, the women interviewed agreed that there is more to be learned about preventing HIV and other STD's. I found that men do not think much about disease, and most of the women know that. As Sarah said

It's just that men in Costa Rica don't think about safe sex. Women here have kids young, like when they are teenagers. The men don't think about it at all.

Even when I probed the men about their fears and attitudes about sexually liberal tourist women, the majority of the men interviewed did not associate sexual experience with

acquiring sexually transmitted diseases. Because the men do not think about STD's, any type of disease prevention would have to be left up to the women therefore female tourists need to be made aware of that as well as their options for safe sex.

Web site

The web site created, www.safesexandtravel.com, has several components: quotes from men about sexual risk and condom use, citations from published research about protection against STD infection, first-hand accounts of female tourists, and links to other safe sex web sites for more information. Views of the actual web site are available below, to show the information provided to users. This web site is linked to the web site of my business, Beta Social Research, Inc., (Beta) as the company has agreed to take care of future costs of keeping the site maintained. As the company is a nonprofit research and consulting corporation, we have decided that this project is going to be one of our outreach activities. The intention is to make sure that the web site reaches as many travelers as possible, so Beta has agreed to pay for the site to be linked to travel sites and women's interest sites such as Salon.com by 2010, as funding becomes available.

First, the home page for www.safesexandtravel.com, is displayed as it appears on the Internet. This page reminds women that they need to control condom use when having sexual relationships while traveling.

Figure 7.1: Safe Sex and Travel in Costa Rica, homepage

Safe Sex and Travel in Costa Rica


- Home
- Women Travelers
- The Men
- The Issues
- Links
- Contact Us

Welcome to our web site!
This homepage promotes safe sex while traveling.

Holiday romances are common. Women travelers in Costa Rica frequently have sexual and romantic relationships with the men they meet while in the country. These men usually work in some capacity in the tourist industry: as bus drivers, tour guides, bartenders, waiters, and hotel staff.

As a woman traveler, you must protect yourself against sexually transmitted diseases (STD's). You control your fate. Only you can protect yourself.

You will find first-hand accounts of other women travelers. They will tell you about their experiences with men in Costa Rica. You will also see direct quotes from the men who have relationships with women travelers.



Women travelers like this one frequently travel alone in Costa Rica relaxing having a good time

Source: www.safesexandtravel.com

On the next page displayed, I have used excerpts from interviews with women that are contained in my dissertation. First, I demonstrate why women in the past have participated in sexual relationships with men in Costa Rica, with particular emphasis on their desire to experience someone different than the men they meet at home. Then, I emphasize their experiences with unsafe sex while traveling.

Figure 7.2: Safe Sex and Travel in Costa Rica, Women Travelers



Women Travelers

Women travelers have explained why they have had sexual relationships with men in Costa Rica.

Sarah* said, "men treat women differently in Costa Rica. They treat women better. My boyfriend treats me like a queen. He tries to take care of me. Yes, women are independent, but sometimes it is nice to have someone taking care of you."

Hillary said, "first of all because it's like he's different, culturally, he's not an American guy, I mean, he does have that machismo thing, and there are things that are attractive about it, . . . Okay, I mean, just like simple things, . . . it's just like respectful, like opening the door for you."

Marlena explained, "the first time I just happened upon the possibility with a man in Costa Rica. I mean, men hit on you everywhere. It just seems much more sexually charged than any place I have ever been to in the U.S. Men are more aggressive about hitting on women. Well, not aggressive. They are more forward, but in a nice way."

Women have explained their experiences with unsafe sex in Costa Rica.

Sarah said, "my boyfriend does not try to convince me not to use condoms, but he has tried to have sex with me without them and I told him that I would not do it."

Patty told me, "a man took off a condom during sex thinking that I would not notice. I immediately told him that I would leave if he did not put on another condom."

The women who have traveled to Costa Rica before you have not always insisted upon safe sex. You need to be aware of this as you enter into these relationships. When asked if she used condoms with men in Costa Rica, Linda told me, "no, not in the beginning because the attitude was that there was such a low level of HIV in Costa Rica that it wasn't a necessity. Stupid but . . . For the last four years I have because I realized that I needed to get my head out of the clouds and realize that they were lying to me about being faithful."

*names have been changed.

Source: www.safesexandtravel.com

Then, the page including quotes from Costa Rican men who have had sexual relationships with female tourists is displayed. The page begins by showing quotes about how the men perceive women travelers and their sexual experiences with them. Then, quotes about their unsafe sex with these women are used to demonstrate that these women might encounter men who do not view safe sex as a priority.

Figure 7.3: Safe Sex and Travel in Costa Rica, The Men



The Men

Costa Rican men have explained their perceptions of tourist women and their sexuality.

Vicente said, "sex is very easy. There are beautiful ladies you never think would look at you, but they do. They come to you. It's hard to believe, but it's true. . . . American women dream to have sex with a Latin guy because they are hot, passionate, and wild."

Federico said, "tourist women are different. They don't feel guilty about anything they do. They are not ashamed. They are more liberal. They have sex with a man very quickly, and they like to have sex with Latin men."

Pedro told me, "American women are totally different from Latin American women. They enjoy things more. They enjoy 200% of what they want. They are more liberal. They do not feel ashamed by anything that they want to do or that they actually do. This is something that is attractive to Latin men. American women are not more willing to experiment sexually, but in moments when they are making love, they enjoy every part of it. They give themselves totally to the man."

Costa Rican men also explained their experiences with unsafe sex with tourists.

Nestor said he "uses condoms almost always, but that it depends on how many drinks we both might have had."

Pedro never likes to use condoms and claims to only have sex with women he "trusts." I asked him if he was afraid of STD's and HIV, and he said yes. "Claro que si, tengo miedo. Of course I am afraid of HIV and STD's. Usually, I prefer to have relationships with married women who only have sex with their husbands. It is less dangerous."

Orlando also said that he always uses condoms at first. He uses them with women in the beginning of a relationship but as time goes on he does not use them. He also told me that he and his tourist girlfriend who returns year after year to see him do not use condoms with each other but that they do use them when they have sex with other people. Similarly, Elias said that he always uses condoms with the tourist women and with the *ticas* with whom he has affairs but that he does not use them with his Costa Rican girlfriend because he has had a relationship with her for a long time. He believes that there is less risk with a woman he has known for a long time.

Source: www.safesexandtravel.com

Finally, I display the page about published research concerning safe sex and the need to use condoms. This page includes reference to Downe's (1997) research explaining safe sex practices used in Costa Rica in general, specifically that men control condom use with Costa Rican women. Abel and Fitzgerald's (2006) research about why people may opt not to use condoms including: not wanting to ruin the spontaneity, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, because they believe that their partners are safe, and because their partners do not want to use them. This research is boiled down to its most basic elements, making it easy to understand. It should prove to be illuminating for people who may not have considered why they do not always use safe sex strategies. It may also help to convince some people that they should be safe in the future. Using

references to articles published in peer-reviewed journals likely provides information that the people who visit this web site have not seen previously, but the links to other web sites directs people to places that they have likely heard of before, such as that of the CDC and Yahoo! Health. This should give people a balanced view of safe sex.

Figure 7.4: Safe Sex and Travel in Costa Rica, The Issues



The Research

In 2004, "nearly 50% of infected people worldwide were women, up from 35% in 1985. In nearly every region of the world, the number of women with HIV/AIDS has risen, and, in most regions of the world, women and adolescent girls represent an increasing proportion of people living with HIV/AIDS" (Dworkin and Ehrhardt 2007:13). Half of all women newly infected with HIV are infected by their spouses or primary partners (Dworkin and Ehrhardt 2007), and married women are more likely to have a difficult time negotiating condom use with their husbands than are single women with their partners (Wellings, et al. 2006).

Abel and Fitzgerald (2006) have provided four reasons why condoms may not be used: sometimes people believe that it will ruin the spontaneity of the sexual interaction, others are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, some believe that their partners are safe and therefore do not need condoms, and others do not use condoms because their partners do not want to use them. Partners need to be able to negotiate condom use within all of their sexual interactions. "Research has shown that couples who can communicate openly about condom use and safer sex are more likely to reduce HIV behavioral risk through safer sex methods than couples who do not discuss these issues" (Otto-Salaj, et al. 2008:150).

According to Downe's (1997) sample of 247 Costa Rican women, men control condom use and, therefore, also control STD prevention. This problem is compounded by the fact that a national committee established

in 1987 to study HIV/AIDS and strategies for prevention stated publicly that HIV is prevalent in homosexual and bisexual men but that "the prevalence of HIV and AIDS will rapidly increase in women who are irresponsibly promiscuous and in men who have sexual contact with these vectors" (Downe 1997:3). This could leave Costa Rican men thinking that they are not at risk if they are having sex with responsible Costa Rican partners and that they are, therefore, not a risk to other partners such as tourists. Whether or not Costa Rican men would attempt to control condom use with women tourists, however, is debatable. Pedro, Jesús, and Daniel all prefer to have sex without condoms, but would agree to use them if a tourist woman asked them to do so. Therefore, tourist women must try to take the lead in STD prevention strategies such as condom use as much as they possibly can.

Risk for some informants is associated with having sex with strangers, not just with having sex. This is not an uncommon idea. According to Bird et al. (2001:233) "individuals in committed relationships are less likely to use condoms consistently than persons in casual relationships, even if they do not know their partner's or their own HIV status." Furthermore, some people's belief "that trusted partners are safe partners may lead to the perception of decreased risk as trust develops in a relationship over time" (Bird et al, 2001:233).

Source: www.safesexandtravel.com

The other pages include the links to other web sites about both travel in Costa Rica and STD prevention strategies and an e-mail address where people can contact me for more information about this topic. Those pages are not included in this dissertation, as there is not much to see on those pages. They are very basic in their design, and seeing them would not contribute to the overall information contained in this chapter.

Recommendations for Future Research

Finally, I will discuss my ideas for future research into the area of female sex tourism in Costa Rica, specifically, and tourism and development in Costa Rica, more generally. My recommendations are based on the information I gathered through my interviews and observations, even when it was not directly related to the topic of my dissertation. For example, it would be a good idea to ask women about their condom use negotiation strategies, and I did not focus on that in my interview questions.

Sex Tourism and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

With my web site on the Internet, I will be able to keep track of how many people visit the site, and I will allow visitors to post their own messages. Hopefully, I will have the opportunity to do future research to measure the effects of my web site on women's behavior. One project that I would like to do in the future is to concentrate more on the women tourists and specifically talk to them about their sexual experiences and condom negotiation strategies. While, Romero-Daza and Friedus (2008) have completed similar research in Monteverde, I would like to take a more comprehensive approach, as I did in my dissertation research, talking to women in many popular tourist destinations throughout the country. Monteverde is an isolated community and is different from the majority of Costa Rica, both in climate and terrain as well as tourist population. This is why a comprehensive approach in many areas of Costa Rica would be preferable in my next research project. Ragsdale, et al. (2006) also completed research in Costa Rica that target women travelers and safe sex, but they used a survey instrument and relied heavily on statistical analyses, rather than on in-depth qualitative interviewing as a data collection strategy.

Sex Tourism, Wives, Girlfriends, and Families

In my research I focused on the relationships that occurred between female sex tourists and men working in the Costa Rican tourist industry with a particular emphasis on the men's experiences and perceived impacts on their lives. In the future one might want to discover more about the Costa Rican wives and girlfriends of these men. While it would be unethical to suggest to men's wives that they are having affairs, understanding how women feel about female sex tourists and foreign women in general would be an interesting complementary piece to my research. Then, we would know not only how the men are affected but how their wives and families might be affected as well. For this research, I would suggest a survey instrument aimed at women in Costa Rica, asking what association, if any, the women have with the tourist industry, so I could compare responses from women whose husbands/boyfriends work in tourism and those whose partners do not. Using a survey aimed at a random sample of Costa Rican women would help ensure that I did not alert any wives or girlfriends of my male interviewees about their other sexual encounters. I would not target these wives and girlfriends specifically.

Impacts of Tourism and Development on the Local Population

I have explored how tourism affects people working in the tourist industry in Costa Rica, but future research might explore how people in the country who are not working in the industry perceive tourism. It would be interesting to know whether people who are not receiving direct benefits believe that the economic and development consequences of tourism are beneficial for the country as a whole. It would also be interesting to know if they perceive that they receive any direct benefits from the

economic development resulting from the tourist industry. For example, several of the men I spoke to believe that improvements in infrastructure, especially the highway system, can be attributed to a desire to improve the tourist industry. I wonder if the people who do not work in tourism, specifically, would agree.

All tourism, no matter the type, has economic impacts on the country visited. Many new jobs in developing nations can be attributed to the tourist industry. Tourism is often one of the leading industries in foreign investment and revenue. For this reason, tourism and development should be studied in greater depth, especially in Costa Rica, where it is the second ranked revenue earner. Additionally, studies of tourism should provide a balanced view of possible positive and negative consequences of tourism development. Because my informants all work in the tourist industry, they might see the industry as more beneficial than someone who does not work in the industry. My dissertation did not lend itself to interviewing people who did not work in the industry, because the focus of my dissertation was men working in the tourist industry who were having sexual relationships with female tourists.

If I had been doing a project about tourism and development in general, it would have been important to interview both tourist industry workers and people who do not work in the industry. Maybe someday I will undertake a project of that type. As my male informants suggested, tourism means more for their country than anything else. As discussed in Chapter Four, they attribute advancements such as improvements in roads and ecological preservation to tourism. Much future research could examine in detail how tourism has affected Costa Rica, including a discussion of how people living in

remote areas feel about tourists coming to their small towns. I think their perspective might be in contrast to that of tourist industry workers.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Instrument: Male Tourist Industry Workers

Demographic and Background Information

- (1) Please tell me your name and age.
- (2) Are you married? Do you have children?
Probes: Do you have a significant relationship? Are you living with someone? Have you ever been married?
- (3) When did you first begin working in the tourist industry? (as a tour guide, bus driver, rafting guide)
Probes: What was your first job in the industry? (If not the same as current job – How long did you have that job? When did you start your current job?)
- (4) What are the duties of your job?
- (5) Do you enjoy your work? What are the positive aspects about your job? Are there any negative aspects? Please explain.
Probes: Do you enjoy spending time with the tourists? Do you enjoy traveling throughout your country? Do you speak English? any other languages? Does that help in your job? Does it make a difference?

Effects of tourism on the lives of male Costa Rican tourism workers

- (6) Has working in the tourist industry changed your life in any way? Please explain.
Probes: Are you making more money? Does your current job carry with it any social status?
- (7) Have you ever accepted gifts from tourists?
Probes: Please explain the context of that exchange.
- (8) Have you ever had a relationship with a female tourist? Please characterize that relationship. (Where was she from?)
Probes: Did you love the woman? Did you have sex with the woman? Did you ever accept gifts from the woman? What attracted you to her? (money, looks personality, green card status, belt notch status, bet with another driver/guide)
- (9) Tell me more about your relationships with American tourists.
Probes: What do you and the other men think of these women? Are they viewed as more sexually permissive/experienced? Do you gain any social status with other men in the industry by having sex with American women? Once you have been with one American woman, do you think it is easier to find others who are willing to have sex with you?

Appendix A: (Continued)

Sexual relationships between male tourist workers and female tourists

- (10) How did the relationship begin? Who initiates the relationship? How?
Probes: Were your relationships with women you met on day-tours, week-long tours? How did you get to know the women? Did you feel as if you had your choice of any woman you wanted? Were there other women competing for your attention? Did you make the first move? Was she easy to convince to be with you?
- (11) What kinds of things did you do together? Where did you go?
Probes: Where did you typically have sex with this woman? If it was a no tell motel, who paid? Did you ever go dancing with the woman/women with whom you had relationships?
Other interviewees have suggested a connection between dancing and sex. What do you think about this?
- (12) When you choose a woman to have sex with, are you looking for a woman who has had many sexual experiences? Are you looking for a virgin? Do you look for anything in particular? Does it not matter?
- (13) Is there a difference between getting a young or pretty woman and getting an old or ugly woman? Please explain the difference.
- (14) Are these relationships hidden or displayed openly?
- (15) Are these relationships generally long term or short in duration?
- (16) Are these relationships characteristic of romantic flings? Was it just sex?
Probes: Who controlled the relationship? Was it equal? Who decided what you did? where you went? when the relationship was over?
- (17) Explain the difference between a short romance with a tourist and a longer romance with a Costa Rican girlfriend. Is it easier or more difficult to have a romance with a woman for just a few days? Why?
- (18) Why do you think that tourists have sex with you or other drivers or guides?
Probes: Do you know about the idea of the Latin Lover? Is this true?
- (19) What types of sexual experiences are you looking for? from a tourist? Why? Does this
have any effect on your decision to have sex with American women?
- (20) Do you talk to other drivers or guides about your sexual conquests? Do you think that the tourists talk to other women about you?

Probes: Do you ever choose to have sex with a tourist because other guides or drivers have told you how good the sex was?

Appendix A (Continued)

(21) Do you consider a relationship with a tourist to be a conquest for you or for the woman? Or is it a conquest for both of you?

Probes: Would you be angry to discover that you were just a conquest for the tourist? Why or why not?

(22) Do these relationships have any effect on your professional or personal lives?

(23) Approximately how many women have you had sex with? How many tourists?

(24) Do you use condoms when you have sex with tourists? Always? Do you use condoms with your Costa Rican girlfriend/wife? Always? Why? When you use one is it because the woman wants to or because you do?

Probes: If he says no to one or the other . . . Why is there a difference between the two women? If he says no to condom use with Americans . . . If the Americans are more permissive, why aren't you afraid of HIV or AIDS?

(25) Have women ever offered payment of any kind for sexual relationships?

Why? How does payment occur? Is it formal or informal? What is exchanged for sex? (By this I mean: Did you ever give accept any gifts from the women? money? clothing? Did she buy you drinks? dinner? Did you get to stay with her in her room as opposed to the room you were supposed to stay in?)

Probes: Do you need the money? Doesn't your job pay well? Is it the same as the situation with the Rasta? Why not? What are the differences?

Costa Rican Life

(26) Explain the relationships between men and women in Costa Rica. Who controls the relationships? domestic life? Is it equal?

(27) Why do Costa Rican men need more than one woman?

(28) Are there two types of women? One to have sex with and another to marry? Why? How do you know the difference?

Tourism and Development in Costa Rica

(29) What impacts, if any, has tourism had on your country in the past five years? How has tourism effected the economy overall? For people working in the industry? For you specifically?

Probes: Could these changes in the economy have occurred without tourism? How? What future impacts do you believe tourism will have on your nation's economy? On you specifically?

Appendix A (Continued)

- (30) Do you believe that your country is dependent on the revenues earned by the tourist industry? In what way? Would typical life in Costa Rica be different without tourism? How would your life be different?
- (31) Much development has occurred in your country as a result of tourism. Please explain that development. What has changed in your country as a result of tourist revenues? Do you think that this development would have occurred without the influence of tourism? What else do you believe could have caused such a change, if anything? Do you believe that tourism is the best possible development strategy for Costa Rica? If not, what would you suggest?
- (32) Do you believe that your country is better off for relying so heavily on tourism? Why or why not?
- (33) Do you believe that the relationships that you have with female tourists have any impact on your country's economy? How? Why?
Probes: Do you believe that the expectation of such a relationship leads women to travel here?
- (34) What contact, if any, have you had with the ministry of tourism? What role do they play in your job?
- (35) What kinds of regulations, if any, are you bound by as a worker in the tourist industry?
Probes: (if yes) Where did you learn of these regulations?
- (36) Have you ever been trained for your job as a driver or a guide? Where? Who trained you?
- (37) Do you need any type of special license or credentials to work in the tourist industry as a driver or a guide? Where did you receive this?
- (38) To your knowledge, has the U.S. government played any role in the growth of the tourism industry in Costa Rica? Have any non-governmental organizations from the U.S. played a role in the growth of tourism in Costa Rica?
- (39) Do you believe that more hotels, restaurants, bars, and tour companies are owned by Costa Ricans or by people/corporations from other countries such as the U.S.?
- (40) Do you believe that the revenues from tourism in Costa Rica provide more benefits for the people in Costa Rica or for people/corporations in other countries such as the U.S.?
- (41) Why do you believe that most people travel as tourists to Costa Rica?

Appendix A (Continued)

- (42) Characterize the typical tourist in Costa Rica. The typical American tourist. Where do they like to go? What are they hoping to see? Describe the typical American. How do you feel about Americans?
- (43) What preconceived notions about Costa Rica, if any, do you believe tourists bring with them when they travel here? What preconceived notions about Costa Rican people, if any, do you believe tourists bring with them when they travel here?

Appendix B: Interview Instrument: Female Tourists

Demographic and Background Information

- (1) Please tell me your name and age.
- (2) Are you married? Do you have children?
- (3) What is your occupation?
- (4) Do you travel often? Why? For pleasure? For business? Have you been to the Caribbean or Latin America before? When? For what reason? Why did you choose to come back? Have you been to Costa Rica before? When? For what reason? Why did you choose to come back?

Sexual relationships between male tourist workers and female tourists

- (5) Have you ever had a sexual relationship with a man in this country? More than one relationship of this sort? Was it a man who works in the tourist industry? What was his job? How did you meet him? (Do you speak Spanish? Did that help in the relationship?)
Probes: (if married) Have you ever had an affair at home? Is there a difference in these relationships?
- (6) How did the relationship begin? Who initiated the relationship? How?
Probes: Were your relationships with men you met on day-tours, week-long tours? How did you get to know the men? Did you feel chosen? Were there other women competing for his attention? Did you make the first move? Was he easy to convince to be with you?
- (7) Are these relationships hidden or displayed openly?
- (8) Are these relationships generally long term or short in duration?
Probes: If they say it was just time to go home, ask them what they think would have happened had they stayed longer.
- (9) Are these relationships characteristic of romantic flings? Was it just sex?
- (10) Do people at home know about these relationships? Do you tell people about it?
Do these relationships have any effect on your professional or personal lives?
- (11) What kinds of things did you do together? Where did you go?
Probes: Where did you typically have sex with this man? If it was a no tell motel, who paid?

Appendix B: (Continued)

- (12) Did the man expect for you to pay when you went out?
Probes: Did you ever give any gifts to the men? money? clothing? Did you buy him drinks? dinner? Did you let him stay with you in your room as opposed to the room he was supposed to stay in?
- (13) Did you travel to Costa Rica for the specific reason of engaging in sexual relationships with Costa Rican men or did you happen upon the possibility of this relationship?
- (14) What did you find most appealing about a relationship with a Costa Rican man? What do you find most appealing about the men? Do you think that a relationship with a guy in another country is, by nature, different from one you would have in the U.S.?
Probes: When she talks about machismo Latin men, ask her what is attractive about that. How did you feel about being with him that is different from how you feel about being with a guy when you're at home? How do men in Costa Rica treat you that is different from the way that men treat you at home?
- (15) What kind of men do you date at home? Do you date a certain "type?" How are the men you have dated in Costa Rica been similar to and different from the men you date at home?
Probes: Do you know anything about the Latin Lover stereotype? Is it accurate?
- (16) Do you believe that one of you controlled the relationship more than the other? Was it equal? Who decided what you did? where you went? when the relationship was over?
- (17) Do you find yourself being hit on often when you are in Costa Rica? How do you think Costa Rican men perceive of American women? How do they compare us to Costa Rican women? Are we different? Why? What enables us to be different?
- (18) What was the least appealing thing about the relationship? Why?
Probes: Do you think he has had other relationships of this type with other tourists?
- (19) Have you practiced safe sex with these men? That is, do you always use condoms?
Probes: Why didn't you? Aren't you afraid of HIV and other STDs? Have you ever discussed the possibility of HIV or STD transmission with any of these men? Have any of these men ever given you an STD?

About the Author

Ellen Puccia received a Bachelor's Degree at the University of Miami in 1995 with a double major in Anthropology and Sociology where she graduated *magna cum laude*. She received her MA in Anthropology at the University of South Florida (USF) in 1998, and continued to complete her Ph.D. She began teaching at USF in 1999 and continued to do so through 2003. She also worked as an adjunct professor at Eckerd College from 1999 through 2002 and at Manatee Community College from 2006 through 2007.

While at the University of South Florida, Ms. Puccia worked for three years at the David C. Anchin Center as a research associate and project manager where she completed education research. She is currently the Executive Director of Beta Social Research, Inc. and President of Beta Development Associates, Inc., research and consulting firms specializing in evaluation research.