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Duffy, L. N., et al. (2015). "Women in tourism: Shifting gender ideology in the DR." *Annals of Tourism Research* 52: 72-86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2015.02.017>. Publisher version of record available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160738315000390>

Women in tourism: Shifting gender ideology in the DR

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a b s t r a c t

The purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which the employment of women in the tourism industry has challenged or reinforced the traditional *machismo-marianismo* gender ideology in the Dominican Republic. Semi-structured individual, coupled, and group interviews were conducted in 12 coastal communities to investigate residents' perceptions about gender ideology as it intersects with the employment of women in tourism. The findings reveal tourism employment as a source of opportunity, with women gaining economic and social independence, but also conflict as women and men negotiate new gender roles and identities. Emphasizing issues such as the double workload, negotiating domestic tasks with partners, and tension resulting from employment, this study illuminates the pressing practical needs of Dominican women.

Keywords:

Cultural change
Gender ideology
Gender roles
Tourism employment
Dominican Republic

Introduction

Tourism's ability to influence cultural and social norms is of great interest to many scholars (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). One aspect that merits exploration is the gendered-nature of tourism

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production in lesser economically developed countries (LEDCs). This is particularly complicated in Latin American countries, such as the Dominican Republic (DR), where *machismo-marianismo gender ideology* firmly place women in the private sphere of the home and men in the public sphere of the community. However, because “the [DR] has been fundamentally restructured by the process of globalization, international debt, and neoliberalism” (Raynolds, 2002, p. 786; also see Bueno, 2013), women often need to seek employment outside the household. How, and to what degree, the shift of women working outside the household challenges traditional social structure and gender norms is a continued discussion in the feminist literature and further examination is needed.

From the late 1970s–1990s, the DR experienced intense tourism development encouraged by both international aid (e.g., World Bank funds developed the North Coast; see Freitag, 1994) and foreign investment. Neoliberal economic policy established tourism as a primary industry sector (Pozo, Sánchez-Fung, & Santos-Paulino, 2010), concentrated along coastlines that have transformed fishing villages into tourist destinations (Leon, 2007) and imposed substantial changes to the livelihoods of residents. Coinciding this, women joined the labor force within the tourism industry and manufacturing sector (also known as the free trade zones [FTZs]), counterbalancing the increasing rate of unemployment for men experienced during the same time.

Thus this study, based on interviews conducted in 12 coastal communities, explores the residents’ perceptions towards gender ideology as it intersects with the employment of women in the tourism industry and the way it has challenged or reinforced the ideology of *machismo-marianismo*. Questions were designed to reflect the underlying ideas of gender ideology including primacy of the breadwinner role, belief in gendered separate spheres, wife/motherhood and the feminine self, household utility, and acceptance of male privilege (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). Individuals’ beliefs towards traditional gender ideology were assessed alongside perceptions of women working in the industry and thereby a discussion of the influence of women working in tourism emerged.

There has been growth in the literature exploring temporary relationships and interactions in transnational tourist communities that influence gender ideology (Frohlick, 2007, 2013), studies of the migration of men and/or women and how it may impact gender ideology in relationship to labor (Georges, 1992; McIlwaine, 2010), and research examining the effect of tourism on gender norms (Tucker, 2007; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012). Likewise, there have also been studies acknowledging the way in which gender ideology influences women’s participation in tourism projects (Duffy, Mowatt, Chancellor, & Cárdenas, 2012; Tucker, 2007; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012). However, this study responds to the call to critically examine the way in which *tourism influences gender ideology* and how individuals within these contexts negotiate changes in gender discourse (Duffy et al., 2012; Ferguson, 2010; Tucker, 2007; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012). Moreover it expands on the paucity of tourism research on gender in Latin America (Duffy et al., 2012). By exploring residents’ perceptions towards gender ideology as it intersects with the employment of women in the tourism industry, we address the research question ‘do women working in the tourism industry challenge or reinforce the traditional *machismo-marianismo* gender ideology?’

Machismo-marianismo model of gender relations

The underpinnings of *machismo-marianismo* derive from the Catholic tradition and were exacerbated by the influence of colonialism and military control of the state (Stevens, 1973). *Machismo* continues to be influential within the region and can be understood as a paradigm that shapes male attitudes, behaviors, and identity such as masculinity, strength, and sexual prowess (Flake & Forste, 2006; Welsh, 2001). Likewise, others have posited that the ‘hypermasculinity’, or extreme male pride, is a culturally accepted and expected response to inferiority and powerlessness that stems from colonialism (see *machismo* in Welsh, 2001). A cautionary note to conceptualizing *machismo* is that though it is often considered for its undesirable attributes, it also has positive connotations for men as the ‘protector of the family’ and one who adheres to the ideas of *caballerismo*, or honor, chivalry, and loyalty to family (Fragoso & Kashubeck, 2000).

Stevens (1973) developed *marianismo*, as a counterpart to *machismo*, to explain women’s adoption of a submissive and passive role in the household by emulating the Virgin Mary. She fulfills her role as the spiritually strong being, countering the immorality of man and bringing balance to the model. In

the modern context *marianismo* helps explain why women tolerate and suffer from high levels of their partner's alcoholism, domestic abuse, and adultery (Chant, 1997). However, there are critiques of the model: first, it suggests that *machismo* could not exist without *marianismo* and vice versa; and second, it assumes that women have a positive experience in the private realm. Further, the model does not account for the devaluing of reproductive/domestic tasks in favor of individualized cash income that productive labor receives (Ehlers, 1991) which is a result of a globalizing economy.

Gendered spheres and spaces have been used to delineate gender roles and division of labor. In the DR, Raynolds (2002) identified separate gendered spheres where “men’s place is in the public realm of ‘la calle’ (the street)”, and “women’s place is in the private realm of ‘la casa’ (the home)” (Raynolds, 2002, p. 786). Male dominance is represented by men’s role as ‘breadwinners’, ‘heads of the household’, and ‘decision-makers’ (Georges, 1992; Safa, 2002). Women find their power in the domestic domain where they are responsible for food preparation, cleaning, caring for the sick and elderly, and the biological and social reproduction of children (Ferguson, 2010; Flake & Forste, 2006). It should also be recognized that scholarship on the topic is shifting to the use of *productive* and *social reproductive labor* because of the greying of spatial and temporal distinction of the public/private spheres; in spite of this, the spheres are still applicable in Latin America where they have remained well-defined (Safa, 1990).

Machismo–marianismo in a globalized economy

The intersection between the division of productive/reproductive labor and capitalism is essential to consider. Marxist feminists have explored this relationship previously, though their approach falls short on emphasizing the agency of the women, placing more importance on power over material resources and institutions (Parpart, Rai, & Staudt, 2002). Recently the emergence of postcolonial theory, has expanded the discussion of gender and capitalism with a greater focus on the themes of exploitation, peripheral dependence of LEDCs, and the colonial discourse of ‘Othering’ (McLeod, 2000). Early pillaging of natural and labor resources was prevalent in Latin America and Caribbean regions during the colonial era but even with decolonization, imperialism has endured through globalization, capitalism, and neoliberal economic policy (see the germinal work of Frank (1969) for the theory of underdevelopment in Latin America). As such, postcolonial feminism understands the oppression of women in LEDCs to be a result of the interrelated and overlapping processes of patriarchy, colonialism, and racism. Applicable to this study, then, is the work of Latin American feminists who recognize the plurality of women’s experiences (Vargas, 1992), and the emergence of the post-neoliberal movement that is firmly positioned as a resistance to the dominant neoliberal socio-economic policies. A stronger and united Latin American feminist agenda is anticipated (Gideon & Molyneux, 2012).

Research exploring the relationship between gender and global restructuring has concentrated on how the shifting division of labor due to structural adjustment policies has impacted women (Connelly, Li, MacDonald, & Parpart, 2000; Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Momsen, 2004). Many LEDCs that adopted structural adjustment policies face economic conditions that are moving women into the public sphere of production. It is within these circumstances where the *machismo–marianismo* model begins to break down as gendered divisions of labor are challenged. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Report (2006), “fewer families conform to the traditional nuclear model...[because] most women now participate in the labor market by the cultural transformation ushered in by modernity”(p. 34).

Gender, economic independence, and ideology

Initially, researchers assumed the increase in women’s economic contribution would bring about greater equity for women but contrary evidence has surfaced (Connelly et al., 2000; Momsen, 2004); the question remains whether women benefit from integration into the global labor market. Some scholars argue that decreasing a woman’s economic dependence on their male partners and improving their social role outside the household through employment is central to gender equity (Grasmuck & Espinal, 2000; Safa, 1990) as they achieve economic autonomy and gain respect by

financially supporting their families (Gentry, 2007; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012). Ferguson (2010) noted, “restructuring of household economic power away from total dependence on male income has opened up new power dynamics within the home, whereby women can claim greater rights and independence due to their increasing economic contribution” (p. 871). Likewise, Safa (2002) contested that in the DR “changes in the gender composition of the labor force are contributing to changes in gender relations, undermining the myth of the male breadwinner, and giving women greater economic autonomy” (p. 13). Leon (2007) also argued that “[t]he mere fact that [Dominican] women have access to work is in itself a significant improvement” and that “receiving a steady income every month... was perceived as being advantageous” (p. 351).

Conversely, ideology is pervasive in its ability to define women in their reproductive and domestic roles. How gender roles are constituted is “not a simple matter of material or economic power” (Grasmuck & Espinal, 2000, p. 241); norms and customs are informed by deep beliefs that dictate behavior and privileges of individuals in societies and impact all aspects of life (Sen & Batliwala, 2000; Smith, Ramakrishnan, Ndiaye, Haddad, & Martorell, 2003). This is aligned with Althusser’s (1985) notion of ideology, which is a system of imaginary relations that govern the real relations that individuals live. In this regard, subjects perceive their place in society from the ‘outside’ through the process of interpellation, and to expand freedom and choice of women, it would require “systematic transformation of institutions supporting patriarchal structures” and economic independence is just one aspect (Malhotra & Schuler, 2005, p. 72). Assumptions of gender roles have been “remarkably universal and enduring” and women working outside the house may not impact the deeply rooted ideology (Molyneux, 2006, p. 426; as cited in Ferguson, 2010). Still, Tucker (2007) found that tourism employment influenced gender identities and gendered spaces in Göreme, Turkey, where the dominant gender ideology has been informed by Islam and traditional Turkish culture.

The continued impetus for tourism in the DR

The tourism industry has been attractive to LEDCs for its ability to create foreign exchange and quick return of investment. The DR began aggressively pursuing international tourism development as early as the 1970s with funding from the World Bank to develop the Northern Coastline; subsequent neoliberal economic reforms have facilitated a high level of tourism development (Freitag, 1994; Pozo et al., 2010). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2013), the DR more than doubled tourist arrivals between 1995 and 2005; in 2011, 4.3 million tourists arrived in the DR, an increase of 4.39% from 2010. FTZs, designated areas near transportation hubs (e.g. seaports, airports and national boundaries) where goods are received, manufactured, adapted, and re-exported without the intercession of customs authorities, were also introduced in the 1980’s to increase export-processing industries and diversify the Dominican economy (Bueno, 2013; Pozo et al., 2010). Following the conditions cultivated by dominant neoliberal economic policy at that time, FTZs and tourism have been allowed to operate under special privileges in the DR where the foreign industries are granted leniency and exemptions. Still, for FTZs to be lucrative, high inputs of cheap labor are required, which led to a threefold increase of Dominican women in the labor force between 1950 and 1980 (Bueno, 2013; Gregory, 2007). This type of cheap labor, which also includes entry level positions in tourism, are largely considered to be feminized and appropriate for women. However, according to a USAID report by Alamanzar and Manfire (2008), while the FTZs were initially the entry point for women into the labor market, “women’s labor force participation in the [FTZs] has been in steady decline over the last 15 years” (p. 1). Continued decline in FTZs because of global competition creates a growing reliance on tourism for economic growth and employment in the DR. In 2011, the national estimate for unemployment was 14.69% (total labor force participation = 63.79%), where the female labor force participation was 49.90% and male labor force participation was 78.00% (World Bank, 2012). In light of this restructuring of the labor force, it is particularly important to investigate how tourism employment impacts the institution of gender in the DR: do women working in the tourism industry challenge or reinforce the traditional *machismo-marianismo* gender ideology? This study explores residents’ perceptions towards gender ideology as it intersects with the employment of women in the tourism industry.

Methods

An emergent design was selected for this study because it accepts that the researcher has a working knowledge of the literature, allows for adjustment of procedures and questions based upon responses (Charmaz, 2008). Data were collected through semi-structured individual, coupled, and focus group interviews; thus some interactional data is present in responses reflecting the social context of the group (Lambert & Loisel, 2008). Additionally, participant observation data were collected using field notes and reflexive journaling, providing contextual data free from the perspectives of the participants.

Study sites and sampling

Twelve communities were selected based on travel guides (e.g. Fodors, Frommers, Lonely Planet), and information provided by the DR Ministry of Tourism Office. The communities can be divided into three main regions that represent different stages of the tourism area life cycle: the North Coast is in a state of decline, the South Coast is in a state of stagnation, and the East Coast is in a state of rapid development (Fig. 1).

The main sampling method entailed selecting a central location within each community and approaching every other household. The interview instrument was translated into Spanish and reviewed by a native Dominican speaker for accuracy. A local researcher conducted the interviews in Spanish, with the exception of one interview conducted in English, while the primary investigator recorded the conversation, took notes, and formulated additional probing questions in situ. While a comprehensive reflexive critique of the researcher-informant dynamic will not be explored here, it should be noted that the research team consisted of five women: the primary researcher who is a white, Western woman, two light-skinned, and two dark-skinned Dominican women; our bodies were interpreted by the dominant institutions they represent and that influence should be considered in the interpretations of the findings. Interviews lasted between 15 and 50 min. Local phone cards valued at approximately \$2USD were given as an incentive for participation.

Interview questions and analysis

The interviews began with questions related to overall perceptions of tourism and community issues (e.g. 'how do you feel about tourism development', 'what are the impacts of tourism development', 'how has tourism changed in your community', 'who benefits from tourism in your community', 'what are major community problems', 'what needs to be done to improve tourism development in your area'). Following this were questions adapted from Davis and Greenstein's (2009) compiled list of established gender ideology items collected from major social surveys including the General

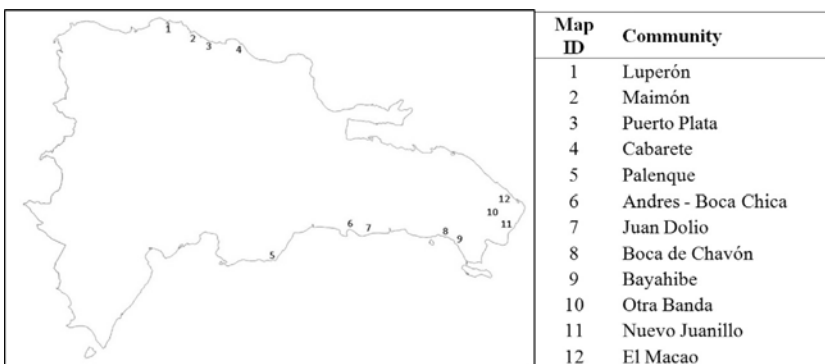


Figure 1. Map of communities surveyed in DR.

Social Survey; International Social Survey Program; the Intergenerational Panel Study of Parents and Children; Marital Instability over the Life course; National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1979 Cohort and Child/Young Adult Sample; and the World Values Survey.

Davis and Greenstein organized the various items identified from these surveys into categories reflecting major domains of gender ideology including: primacy of breadwinner role, belief in gendered separate spheres, working women and relationship quality, wife/motherhood and the feminine self, household utility, and acceptance of male privilege. This study selected one item from five of the categories, with the exception of working women and relationship quality, to include as a statement to solicit participants' perceptions (Table 1).

From previous literature on women's employment in the tourism industry, the following questions were also asked: "Do you feel that women working outside the household in the tourism industry creates conflict in the household?", "Do women benefit the same way as men from employment in tourism?", "Do you think that women have had more opportunities since they entered the workforce?" A caveat to the methods is that responses could reflect a broader perspective towards women working outside the household (in any economic sector), reflecting a limitation of this study. Table 2 describes each interview quoted in this paper.

Interviews were translated and transcribed by an independent firm and uploaded to QSR NVivo 10. Field and interview notes were typed and imported into the program and linked to the interviews as memos. Data were analyzed by the primary researcher, however concurrent debriefing with local

Table 1
Ideological interview statements.

Category	What do you think about the following statement
Primacy of breadwinner role	A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family
Belief in gendered separate spheres	There is some work that is men's and some that is women's, and they should not be doing each other's
Wife/motherhood and the feminine self	Women are much happier if they stay at home and take care of their children
Household utility	If a wife works full-time, the husband should help with housework; Men should share the work around the house with women, such as doing dishes, cleaning, and so on
Acceptance of male privilege	It is still more important for a man to have a career than a woman

Table 2
Description of interviews.

Interview	Description
A	Three sisters in Puerto Plata (30–40 years-old), two who worked at tourist resorts.
B	Five fishermen in Bayahibe who transport tourists to Isla de Saona on day-trips. Four men were middle-aged, 35–55; one was 70.
C	Woman works at a tourist souvenir shop in Bayahibe and travels 45 min by bus each day for work. Widow, 42 years-old, two children.
D	Woman works at her father's hotel/restaurant/bar in Puerto Plata. 23 years-old, single, no children.
E	Woman works for a formal tourist vendor association in Cabarete. 38 years-old, domestic partner, and three children.
F	Woman operates a restaurant attached to her house in Bayahibe. 37 years-old, separated, two children.
G	Woman works at a retail shop that caters to both tourists and residents in Puerto Plata; 26 years-old, domestic partner, one child.
H	Eight motoconcho drivers who cater to both tourists and residents in Puerto Plata; ages ranged from 30 to 55 years-old.
I	Man who was part of a formal tour guide association in Maimón; 39 years old, married, three children.
J	Man worked at a tourism resort for many years in Luperón. 52 years-old, 16 children, with 12 different women.
K	Woman works at jewelry shop in Luperón; 28 years-old, domestic partner, one child
L	Eight family members who live near a tourist attraction in Puerto Plata; the mother, who is a teacher, was the primary speaker.
M	Woman operates a beach restaurant in Palenque. Widow, 62 years-old, 2 children.

research assistants allowed for early internal and external reflection (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The primary researcher conducted data analysis over an extended six-month period of time, which also allowed for reflection of initial coding. The first round of data analysis included attributing overall node classifications to each interview; interviews were identified by the community and region where the interview was conducted, gender of the respondent, and with coding that identified questions representing the five ideological domains. A second round of thematic coding was also conducted (40 nodes created). The coding and output was reviewed by an external reviewer who debriefed interpretations with the primary researcher. The richness in the responses did provide future considerations on narrative analysis, however, narratology was not the methodological framework chosen for this study (Culler, 2001). Including the stories of the informants would take away from presenting a macro-level discussion of gender and tourism development.

Findings and discussion

In total, 58 interviews were conducted and the narratives of the participants did not fit parsimoniously into the gender ideological dimensions. Therefore the findings are organized by the dominant themes that emerged: women in the tourism workforce; gender identity; trust, jealousy and interactions with tourists; and women's status.

Women in the tourism workforce

Though it upsets the traditional gender roles, women working outside the household have become the expectation. Three women interviewed in Puerto Plata, two of whom had worked at tourism resorts, and indicated that if “women don't work [and] they stay at home, men will complain very much...[it is] necessary for women to work” (Interview A). However, despite this expectation, traditional sentiments remain; a group of four fishermen in Bayahibe were resistant to the idea; one man reflected, “Well, that's what God imposed: men to work, women to look after the house” (Interview B). Yet they consented that, “in reality most men want their wives to work... because of the economy.” One woman who traveled 45 min each day to work at a tourist souvenir shop (Interview C) remarked, “Men like their wives to work, and cost of living is so expensive right now that if you bring five and I bring five, that's \$10 and life is better.” Consistent with previous discussions, the impetus for women working outside the household is the economic situation (Connelly et al., 2000; Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Momsen, 2004).

There was also a notable shift of women who had worked in the FTZs but are now reliant on tourism due to the decline of FTZs. As such, most interviewees had a positive outlook towards tourism work as the lifeline for their family's existence. Women were found in positions that reflect an extension of their traditional domestic roles: chambermaids, receptionists, waitresses, cooks, and tourist vendors which corresponds to past studies (Campos-Soria, Marchante-Mera, & Roper-García, 2010; Duffy et al., 2012; Timothy, 2001), which suggests that distinct gendered differences remain across types of tourism employment. Even so, Interview D, a woman who worked at her father's restaurant, bar, and hotel in Puerto Plata, indicated that women are starting to navigate positions that have traditionally been masculine jobs such as motoconcho drivers and bellmen who carry bags, and stated: “a lot of women are like if my husband can do it, I can do it too. And if my brother can do it, I can do it too.” She reflected how women have historically been oppressed by institutional policies, but with new laws and tourism development there is more “movement of women”. For example, in 2010 the Dominican Constitution incorporated a series of decrees supporting the right to equality without discrimination related to gender.

There was also no pejorative perspective towards these positions, and indeed they were highly sought after, which is contrary to how they are positioned in scholarly discussions where they are described as low pay and low prestige (Duffy et al., 2012; Gentry, 2007; Momsen, 2004). Interviewees suggested that some of these jobs are the best in the area and reflected the common sentiment heard that “any job being better than no job.” This notion is fitting for the context: men from local communities are not employed in better paying positions (relative to local women) – these

are held for the elite Dominicans from Santiago or Santo Domingo, or filled by imported management – so the hierarchy of tourism positions in these households was not detectable (see also [Leon, 2007](#)).

While women are taking on productive responsibilities outside the household, whether men are sharing domestic responsibilities is in question. Similar to past studies ([Chant, 1997](#); [Duffy et al., 2012](#); [Ferguson, 2010](#)), many women in this study were dealing with a ‘double workload’. A woman who operated a colmado, or a restaurant attached to her house, that catered to both residents and tourists had moved to Bayahibe because her husband had gained employment in the area. After their move, he lost his job and they began to rely solely on her restaurant income. The restaurant allowed her to combine productive and reproductive tasks, which is typical of the informal tourism sector ([Ferguson, 2010](#)). However she received little help from her husband even when he was unemployed; “he watched T.V. with the remote control in his hand” (Interview F). She suggested this is a growing source of conflict in the household because women are expected to work outside the house, yet most men still do not share in domestic responsibilities. Others agreed, as Interview C described men who just “lay down and wait for the woman to come and do everything”. However, some respondents suggested that sharing domestic responsibilities would be ideal with women who are now helping to support the household economically (Interviews A, D, G, H, I). Interestingly, one man stated that he was not going to share his view on this matter, “because she [the primary researcher] is going to tell you that’s male chauvinism” (Interview B), suggesting that he was keenly aware of divergent views towards gender roles that the researcher represented as a white, Western woman.

Gender identity

Gender identity and sense of self, constituted by gender roles, also emerged as an important theme in this study. Men remained deeply tied to their performance as the breadwinner. A man who worked as a tour guide in Maimón stated that, “men feel bad when they do not work, [especially] if the woman is working” (Interview I). Another man from Luperón, who had worked at a local tourism resort until it recently closed, commented that while women often need to work, “men should always work more than women” (Interview J). Likewise, women in this study also wanted to meet their role expectations as wife, mother, and caretaker of the family. Congruent with the findings of [Safa \(1990\)](#), when asking women about their work, most described themselves as the “ama de casa,” (housewife), though they worked outside the household. However, women have become breadwinners and one indicated that her husband is annoyed when she earns an income while he does not, which was “happening right now” (Interview E); several echoed this sentiment (Interviews A, C, D, E, H, K, L, M).

Related to the phenomenon of shifting divisions of labor is gender role conflict, or the idea that gender roles may create negative consequences, particularly when the expected roles restrict one’s ability to actualize their human potential ([O’Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986](#)). This has been studied largely on men with the application of the gender role conflict scale, which was constructed for masculine norms of North America ([O’Neil et al., 1986](#)). There has been little application to Latin America, perhaps with the exception of [Fragoso and Kashubeck \(2000\)](#) who studied Latin American migrant men in the United States and the interplay between *machismo*, gender role conflict, and mental health. The disconnect between the socialized expectations of gender roles and the realities that may prevent meeting these expectations has led to interpersonal conflict and psychological distress such as stress, anxiety, low self-esteem, anger, substance use, and depression ([Fragoso & Kashubeck, 2000](#); [Good, Robertson, Fitzgerald, Stevens, & Bartels, 1996](#)).

This study found that gender role expectations were dictating division of labor and it was widely desired that when possible, women would return to the private sphere and men to the public sphere (Interview B, E, G, H, I, J, L). It should be reiterated that women and men both largely coveted this return to the traditional division of labor. There were exceptions, though, as one woman indicated that men might be more disposed to reinstating the division. She noted that once men find work, they often say to their partners/wives, “...you have to leave your job or I’m leaving you... the woman has to cook, has to wash the clothes, take care of the kids, [and] that they cannot work...” (Interview D).

Additionally, there was also some discourse around women developing an identity through their work outside the household. One woman working in a jewelry shop suggested that, “men are selfish... sometimes they do not like their wife to work, so that they can feel like a man” (Interview K). This

particular woman grew up working various informal tourism jobs with her sisters (e.g. selling things to tourists on the street). She currently has a salary plus commission position that has given her freedom to buy things for herself such as clothes and shoes. She was also in her fourth semester at a university and spoke about her longer-term careers plans that would “hopefully be in something other than tourism.” For now, she identifies herself as a jewelry-maker and seller.

Trust, jealousy, and interactions in tourism work

Trust and jealousy emerged as a theme because tourism work often requires longer, unpredictable hours and higher levels of interactions with tourists. These qualities of tourism work are embedded into a larger cultural context of sex tourism, romance tourism, and sexualized travel marketing that define many Caribbean tourist destinations (see Brennan, 2004). One woman noted that if a woman stays out late at night for work, the man would question her motives (Interview D). Another woman from Cabarete working as a beach tourist vendor strived to prevent tension with her husband by returning home from work before he does: “he nearly always finds me at home” (Interview E). It should also be noted that incorporating these negotiation strategies are not as common in the formal sector where set work hours are required. Interview C discussed the concerns of what happens “if the man gets home, and doesn’t find the woman at home, maybe he doesn’t like it, maybe he doesn’t have a meal...,” which could leave him “dissatisfied”. For many women in this study, the better paying and more secure formal jobs in tourism conflicted with domestic tasks and flexibility in their day-to-day schedules as did less-structured, informal jobs such as operating a colmado from the household. Past studies also found that gender ideology, norms, and role expectations directed the type of position choices and how women are involved in the tourism industry (Duffy et al., 2012; Tucker, 2007).

Additionally, one man in a group of eight motoconcho drivers suggested that if Dominican men see their partner or wife talking to another man – even if it is related to their job – they get very jealous and “there is an argument” (Interview H). This is particularly problematic in tourism as there is a high level of interaction between working women and male tourists, which is further complicated because of the prevalence of sex tourism in the DR. The perception of the “opportunity myth” was first identified by Brennan (2004) and it suggests women view relationships with foreign men as a way to breakout of the cycle of poverty and improve their socio-economic status. This has led some men to be concerned about the possibility of local women seeking intimate relationships with foreign tourists. One of the motoconcho drivers indicated, “girls, and their girlfriends, and everything, their wives, go out to find tourists, and they fall in love very much...,” which was an idea that was upsetting to this group of interviewees.

There is also a growing acknowledgment of women sex tourists across the Caribbean region (Frohlick, 2007, 2013). Ethnosexual tourism between women tourists and local men can also result in an economic gain for the men involved (though the exchange of money between female tourists and local men is not as explicit as it is between male tourists and local women). However, it also results in the increasing invisibility of local women (Frohlick, 2007). While this dynamic did not emerge, there was data suggesting that men may also see opportunity from intimate foreign relationships where men exploit their own partners, girlfriends, or wives to benefit from the economic opportunities of sex tourism in these communities. Interview D disclosed that “guys come here and look for a wife”, and when a Dominican woman finds an “American boyfriend” (e.g. a male tourist who provides housing, food, and other material items for them in return for sexual services during subsequent trips to the DR), their Dominican male partner expects to gain from that situation too:

The [Dominican male] partner is a ‘chulo’ of the Dominican girls, so they have to work, work, work, work for them to get money and to maintain them...and when the girl doesn’t give money to them, they hit the girl, [and] sometimes they kill the woman...

The culture of the chulo is systematic of the larger social issues present in these communities concerning poverty and limited opportunities. But not everyone participates in sex tourism or chooses to pursue relationships with tourists as a way to improve their status, though it may be a factor influencing the dynamic of relationship trust. As Interview G suggested, when there is a loss of trust, this leads “the couple to be violent. And sometimes there are even homicides.”

In addition to women working outside the house, the sheer presence of tourists from the Global North may also influence the gendered norms in the DR. Previous literature had noted that cultural exchange may result in the replication of behaviors of tourists (e.g. demonstration effect; Fisher, 2004). Likewise, the way tourists consume and create demand for the sexualized, exotic 'Other' in the Caribbean region has been well-documented (e.g. Kempadoo, 1999). One of the motoconcho drivers (Interview F) lamented:

In the past, Dominican women used to go bathing dressed, because Dominicans didn't want anybody to see anything. Now, after the arrival of women tourists, they wear a little g-string... Dominicans are very macho, you see? I don't want anybody to see what is mine...the truth is there has been [change] after tourists came here.

This highlights tourism as a multidimensional cultural phenomenon that in addition to employing women, gender ideology may be influenced through exposure to other cultures. Gregory (2007), in an ethnographic study of Boca Chica (South Coast) that examined the socio-cultural impacts of transnational development, which primarily takes form in tourism and manufacturing sectors, suggested that "changing attitudes about gender roles among Dominican women were less a result of their encounters with Western feminism than of their growing economic independence as wage earners both at home and abroad" (p. 78, italics added for emphasis). However, direct exposure to women tourists, who are informed by western feminism may indeed influence other areas of gender ideology related to sense of self or presentation of gender identity.

Women's status

Women's status can be considered a larger umbrella term associated with women's autonomy, power, empowerment, authority, valuation, and position in society. Smith et al. (2003) defines it as "women's power relative to men's in the households, communities, and nations in which they live" (p. 5). It considers both women's relative power in decision making to their partners (e.g. intrahousehold) and women's relative power to men across the community in terms of equality (e.g. extrahousehold). Many scholars and organizations have explored the ability of tourism to create opportunities for women's empowerment (United Nations World Tourism Organization & United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2011). However, empowerment has been critiqued for being too quixotic, often interpreted as only an outcome when it is also a process, and not studied within the appropriate social, cultural, and/or historical context to which relative associations of power can be understood (Parpart et al., 2002). Thus, utilizing a framework of women's status provides an alternative approach for understanding power shifts between women and men.

With regard to women's status at the household level, several interviewees suggested that decision-making is still the man's responsibility (Interview B, H, J, L); Interview L reinforced this, stating that women "cannot decide in the same way the man can..." relative to the purchasing of food and household items. This control of decision-making was heard in how men discussed women working outside the household; for example, several men stated that women needed to be "allowed to develop," though some of the language suggested that men were the ones that still decided whether women could pursue employment, education, or a career (Interviews B, H).

However, exploring whether working outside the house in tourism resulted in more opportunities for women (probed for both opportunities intrahousehold and extrahousehold), one man in the group of motoconcho drivers (Interview H) noted, "when women work, things change." Because, a second man added, "she rules herself... since she gets money. She works and rules herself." A third man then stated, "No, she *wants* to rule herself" (italics added for emphasis), after which all the men laughed. When asked if this is why they don't want them to work another man, implying yes, clarified that "since she works and earns, she has strength." When asked if they would tell their wives or partners this, one man said "no, no, no..." indicating that this is not an open dialogue they have with their partners.

Women also suggested that they are noticing more opportunities. The woman operating the colmado in Bayahibe had recently separated from her unemployed husband, disclosing to us that she had also been a victim of domestic violence. She stated that "when the woman works outside

the household. . . the man cannot dominate the woman as before, you know?" (Interview F). Another woman who operated a restaurant on the beach in Palenque stated that,

.. .when a woman works outside the household, she becomes independent, you see. And it is not the same any longer, she doesn't put up any longer with the many things that her man wants her to do. But if she is at home, she has to put up with him, because they are the ones who take their salary home. (Interview M)

Further, some suggested that it is the act of gaining independence that creates conflict: "some women are independent and when they start jobs and go out with friends and share with her family, the men get mad... and hit women" (Interview D). This highlights the delicate area of transition between women gaining opportunities and increasing their relative power status in the household, to the issues of conflict that may arise as women and men deal with this transition of their roles and relative power. Some scholars have suggested that 'backlash' may occur when women begin working outside the household (Chant, 2002; Duffy et al., 2012; Ferguson, 2010). For example, Duffy et al. (2012) suggested that women working and/or making more income than their partners may "invoke issues of domestic violence, particularly if the status quo of the 'breadwinner' role is challenged" (p. 798). Likewise, Ferguson (2010) noted that men may become violent because they are fearful of losing power in the household.

At the community level, the women from Interview A agreed that women received more respect from their partners once they began working outside the household. Furthermore, several women indicated that they had more 'girlfriends,' or a social network after starting to work outside the household (Interviews A, C, D, F, G). However, only a few indicated that they felt women had a larger, collective voice in the community as a result of working outside the house (Interviews A, G).

Implications

These findings suggest more attention is needed to understand the processes faced when negotiating shifting gender role expectations, identities, and relations within the household as this could address larger patterns of domestic violence. Gender and development frameworks (Momsen, 2004) can address the practical gender needs, which are needs identified by women who are impacted by the situation in question, however they may not necessarily challenge traditional gender ideology, and instead address pressing issues that impact quality of life for women (Moser, 1993). Collectivizing and politicalizing issues such as the double workload, how to negotiate domestic tasks with their partners, or how to work through tension that results from working outside the house, could be considered pressing practical needs of Dominican women, however further assessment involving local women is needed.

Development projects engaged with international partners should be culturally, historically, and socially situated to the host context (Boonabaana, 2014; Duffy et al., 2012; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012), and evident through the informants in this study was a discourse to address the needs at hand (not necessarily to challenge traditional ideology) in supporting and respecting the culture of the everyday people in the DR. Thus, as researchers from a Western context, we must carefully tease out our own biases of Western feminism from the informants' situation. Similarly, care must be taken in establishing leadership positions and involving ex-Pats within a program that undertakes women's practical needs. The Western-centric, "external" approach to advising residents to change their approach for the betterment of their community smacks of the very neo-imperialism that has exacerbated tensions between genders.

Development projects in tourism with an overt goal of women's empowerment, have most often been implemented on a small, community-based scale. In the DR there is a hegemonic structure that privileges for-profit, transnational companies, raising concerns of the difficulty of implementing policies that address gender needs without the support of the companies and government. Though most tourism businesses tend to avoid political activism, if they operate under an umbrella of corporate social responsibility, they should consider themselves important stakeholders in this discussion because they can control policies and practices that directly address some of the factors at hand. For example, tourism businesses could provide flexibility in shift hours that could help women

negotiate their double workload, they could also critically assess their use of sexualized imagery of Dominican women in marketing, or partner with non-governmental organizations that are concerned with women's issues to help form the social and institutional support for their employees.

Limitations and suggestions future research

This exploratory use of [Davis and Greenstein's \(2009\)](#) compilation of gender ideological aspects could be further modified for future use in studying gender ideology. An important caveat to this discussion is that tourism is not an isolated activity. Subsequently, a discussion of tourism should be embedded into the larger social, cultural, and economic context, making it difficult to single-out the influences of tourism employment on gender at any one point. Further, a weakness of a structural approach to understanding inequality and oppression is that historical and cultural variations are not always dealt with appropriately; future gender analysis of tourism employment in the DR should consider the historical context of the treatment of women.

It would be wise to take note from [Zambrana \(2013\)](#) who calls for expansion of feminist framework specific to Latin American women because of the critical absence of Latina women in social science research that accurately depicts the diversity of struggle (and agency) of these women. She reminds us that there are severe constraints with regard to Western feminist scholarship often employed by white, middle class scholars conducting research in Latin America because this feminist theory is often grounded in personal experience that includes powerlessness from men, but negates to treat race and class as primary oppressive elements at play. As such, there is always a concern of ethnocentric bias and further engagement with post-colonial, Latin American feminist theory is warranted. Methodologically, lack of prolonged engagement with the communities and development of rapport with participants was a concern for this study and future studies should seek to develop stronger rapport to increase trustworthiness of data ([Creswell & Miller, 2000](#)).

Another area that bears mentioning for future research is the heteronormative nature of the questions, and the study overall. Leisure and tourism research has endeavored to critique how social practices have regulated bodies, gender, sex, and sexual orientation ([Dunlap & Johnson, 2013](#); [Henderson & Gibson, 2013](#); [Robinett, 2014](#)). It is understood that hegemonic beliefs forcibly direct people into pre-conceived categories. But it is also of concern that researchers of dominance and privilege (i.e. white, Western) be cautious in infusion of political ideologies from their countries. Still, women's involvement in tourism may open the door to political activism amongst women in the country around labor, but also eventually gender and sexual identity ([Foster, 2011](#); [Frohlick & Johnston, 2011](#); [Montgomery & Stewart, 2012](#)). Until these self-determination related efforts emerge, we took the stance to be cautious in inserting this perspective within the questions.

Future research should also explore the interplay of gender, race, and class in tourism employment as the communities involved in this study are in a gradual process of being restructured by the forces of globalization, but some of them also by increased levels Haitian immigration as a consequence of the 2010 Earthquake. There is also no agreement on whether economic independence can create sustainable changes in women's status, and further longitudinal work is necessary to explore this notion. Nonetheless, there is evidence to suggest that while economic and social independence from tourism work is a critical catalyst to shifting gender ideology, it is the snowball effect of changes to gender roles, identity, and relations that combined, are working to challenge the broader institution of gender ideology.

Conclusion

This study sought to explore the way in which the employment of women in the tourism industry has influenced *machismo-marianismo* gender ideology in the DR. As a result of the economic situation in these Dominican communities, women working outside the household have become the expectation rather than an exception, and are consequently taking on a 'double workload' in positions that are an extension to their traditional gender roles, a similar finding to [Chant \(1997\)](#) and [Ferguson \(2010\)](#). However, these positions were not described 'lowly' by the informants, contrasting to how

they have been characterized in the literature because tourism work is considered a lifeline for household income as other industry sectors (e.g. manufacturing, fishing, and agriculture) continue to decline. Moreover the unique qualities of tourism work, including long hours and the nature of the service sector that creates high levels of interaction with tourists, are a source of conflict as it can create mistrust and jealousy between partners (Brennan, 2004). These communities are situated in an environment with a prevalence of sex tourism, the myth of opportunity from developing relations with foreign tourists (along with the culture of the 'chulo'), and continued sexualized imagery of Dominicans in tourism promotion, may also influence gender relations (Kempadoo, 1999; Pritchard & Morgan, 2000).

Additionally, men's gender identity remains deeply tied to their performance in the public sector as the breadwinner (Flake & Forste, 2006), and likewise women, even if they work outside the household, first describe themselves as a housewife where their role as wife, mother, and caretaker of the family was most important (Safa, 1990). If the economic imperative for women to work disappeared, most informants desired to return to the traditional division of labor even though there was indication that some women are finding a new source of identity in their work. Women's status as it represents women's power relative to men also appeared to be shifting at least temporarily with women gaining economic and social independence through tourism work (Ferguson, 2010; Leon, 2007). There did not appear to be a change in household decision-making as men are still the primary decision-makers. However, women are 'developing', 'ruling themselves', and increasing their autonomy which appears to be felt by both women and men in this study.

The notion of conflict was present across the study. The changing divisions of labor, unique qualities of tourism work, challenges to gender identity and roles, and the increase in women's autonomy in the household, were all sources of conflict between partners. Conflict was central not only during the interviews, but it was observed and discussed during debriefs with the research team. The importance of this is related to growing rates of domestic violence and femicide. Domestic violence has recently been identified as an epidemic in the DR; between 2005 and 2011 there were 1,353 feminicides, or deaths of women by their husband or partner (Centro de Estudios de Género, 2012). The discourse of domestic violence in the DR is complex and part of daily life, and women's economic independence is a central aspect to the conversation. These findings provide some evidence that economic independence gained through tourism work is rightly part of the phenomenon: "[s]ocieties with high levels of inequality and experiencing rapid social change often have an increasing level of interpersonal violence" (Momsen, 2004, p. 93). It is a delicate balance between staying in a system where traditional ideology prevents women from improving their status (and thus subject to domestic violence, and oppressive force by their partner), and breaking out of the system and challenging the ideology that may bring about reactionary violence in the household (see Bueno, 2013 for further postulation on whether conflict occurs because of women's lack of access to resources, or violence is a result of destabilizing the gender ideology).

This study reaffirmed Higgins-Desbiolles (2006) notion that tourism can create complex socio-cultural impacts to local communities and their institutional social structures, namely it has shown the array of changes to gender ideology occurring in the context of coastal communities in the DR. It is important that further research investigates the ways in which tourism influences gender relations, norms, identities, and ideologies in various contexts (Duffy et al., 2012; Ferguson, 2010; Tucker, 2007; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012), and more broadly, how it influences the overall social fabric of tourism communities.

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