

Tourism in Transnational Places: Dominican Sex Workers and German Sex Tourists Imagine One Another

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This paper considers how Dominican sex workers and German sex tourists imagine each other across national borders. They meet in a transnational space, Sosúa, a tourist town on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. Sex tourism has redirected migration patterns within the Dominican Republic to Sosúa, as well as off the island by building new transnational connections to Germany. I examine why Dominican women migrate to Sosúa's sex trade, how they see German men, and what happens when they actually establish ongoing relationships with them—both in Sosúa and in Germany. I also look at how German men find out about Sosúa, its sex trade, and Dominican women. I focus on forms of communication through which they find out about one another, communication that ranges from word of mouth to newspapers, magazines, and the Internet (in the case of the men only). In Sosúa we see the relationship among capitalism's disruptive, restructuring activities; powerful images, fantasies, and desires (produced both locally and globally) that are inextricably tied up with race and gender; the emergence of young, poor, black, single mothers who are willing to engage in the sex trade; and a strong demand for these women's services on the part of white, working-class, lower-middle, and middle-class, foreign male tourists.

Key Words: Gender, Transnational Processes, Tourism, Sex Tourism, Internet

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INTRODUCTION: "FANTASY"

This paper explores how Dominican women and German men, who are unequal in power and wealth, imagine one another across national borders, and then examines what unfolds once they actually become involved within the sex trade that has begun to flourish in Sosúa, a small town on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. Sosúa has become a popular vacation site for German male sex tourists.¹ Poor Dominican women are drawn into Sosúa's sex trade and new migration patterns are set in motion. Dominican women migrate from throughout the Dominican Republic to work in Sosúa's sex trade, where they hope to meet and to marry German men who will sponsor their migration to Germany. And, some German tourists and sex tourists fall in love with living in a Caribbean "paradise" and move to Sosúa permanently. With a large German population living in Sosúa, and a constant flow of European tourists, Sosúa has become a transnational sexual meeting ground, a sexscape of sorts, for two groups of individuals between whom there is a vast disparity in power.² One group is comprised of white, working class, and lower-middle and middle class males who have the resources to travel internationally or even to move permanently overseas if they want, while the other group consists predominantly of black, poor, single mothers who have limited resources and face innumerable constraints to legal migration off the island. A wide range of encounters mark their relationships. Some begin and end in less than an hour, while a few relationships become more long term as women migrate to Germany to live with their clients-turned-boyfriends/husbands.

In order to understand how Dominican sex workers and German tourists imagine each other, as well as their respective "home" countries, I explore the various cultural representations and gossip each group consumes and produces about the other. These depictions fuel their imaginations and, in some cases, initiate their migrations to one another's countries. I focus on the forms of communication through which they find out about one another, communication that ranges from word of mouth to newspapers, magazines, and the Internet (in the case of the men only). Assumptions based on race, gender, class, and nationality are present in both sex tourists' and sex workers' descriptions of one another. By looking at the growth of transnational social fields that connect Sosúa and Germany, and the flights of imagination and fantasy that flourish in this transnational context,

I hope to expand the current understanding of the concept of "transnational" and the ways in which gender, race, and nationality are mutually constituted within transnational contexts. We shall see that Afro-Caribbean Dominican women, both on the island and in Europe, increasingly are associated with the sex trade.

Fantasy clearly plays a large role in sex tourism. But the male sex tourists are not the only ones who travel to Sosúa to fulfill fantasies. Fantasy also plays a role in the experiences of Dominican women that I present. Many women look to these relationships to provide not only much needed money but also possibly marriage, visas, and greater gender equity in the households these women keep with Dominican men. These women might also hope for romance and love, but their fantasies are generally about resources and an easier life, rather than romantic bliss. However, even with these kinds of expectations, there are few "happy endings." In fact, during a recent return visit, I was deeply saddened to find so much reversal of fortune. I was most affected by the return of one sex worker, Nanci,³ unhappy and empty-pocketed, to Sosúa after living in Germany with her German husband. I was shocked to see her back in sex work, living hand to mouth, yet this time supporting one more child, a little girl she had with her German husband. I recount the story of her transnational relationship below. In earlier versions of this article, I highlighted Nanci's story as an unusual example of love and romance, but now it stands as a poignant example of the economic and emotional roller-coaster ride that many of these women experience. I also have been caught up in the happily-ever-after fantasy that sustains these women through their struggles in Sosúa. While I have learned to anticipate their return from Germany, disillusioned and divorced, like the women whose stories I tell here, I, too, continue to hope for the best.⁴ The few instances of migration of sex workers to Germany as the girlfriends or wives of German tourists continue to propel the fantasy that anything can happen, even though the few cases of actual migration that were known to my informants ended in eventual return and downward mobility.

METHODOLOGY AND OVERVIEW OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SEX WORKERS IN SOSÚA

This article is based on research I conducted while living in Sosúa in the summers of 1993, 1994, 1995, and the summer of 1999. This project benefits from advanced communications technologies, since

I have continued, since my initial field work in 1993, to correspond via fax and telephone with some of these women. My first encounters with Sosúa's sex work community were through a Dominican non-governmental organization, COVICOSIDA, which conducts AIDS outreach and education to sex workers. I accompanied *Mensajeras de Salud* (health messengers / AIDS educators), composed of sex workers and former sex workers, when they gave presentations to sex workers living in bars and boarding houses. While making the daily rounds with the health messengers, I had the opportunity to speak informally with hundreds of sex workers.⁵ I also closely followed the lives of 50 sex workers' who lived in a variety of bars, boarding houses, and rented apartments, and I interviewed them, with a tape recorder rolling, as many times as possible. I selected these women to represent a range of living and working arrangements available to sex workers in Sosúa.

Once women migrate to Sosúa to sell sex, they choose between working with foreign tourists or local Dominicans. This choice determines the amount of money they make, the number of hours they work, their degree of independence, and where they live. In fact, it is easy to identify sex workers' client base by their living arrangements. If women live at a bar, they work with Dominican clients and must follow the rules set by the bar owner. If they live on their own, either renting a room in a boarding house or renting an apartment or house (essentially shanties), they work with foreign clients. Because of the difference in the amount of independence each group exercises, particularly over their schedule, I call the two groups the "dependents" and the "independents." This paper is about the "independents"—women who live either in boarding houses or rent private dwellings and go to the tourist bars according to their own schedules to sell sex to foreign men. Also, I interviewed women whose rental apartments (and small houses) ranged in price. Since renting an apartment is the most expensive living option in Sosúa, these women often were receiving money wires from clients overseas.

Of the 50 women I interviewed, only two women were not mothers. (One of them was only 14 years old, and the other woman was infertile.) The women varied in skin color, but only a few identified themselves as *negra* (black), a term typically reserved for Haitians (del Castillo and Murphy 1986; Torres-Saillant 1995, 1999). Rather, they described themselves using a variety of terms, such as *morena*, *india*, and *india clara*.⁶ Most were between 17 and 28; some were as young as 14, while the oldest were in their late thirties.⁷ The practice

of consensual unions (of not marrying formally but of living together), which often organizes household dynamics for the poor in the Dominican Republic, also led to single motherhood and significant financial pressures for the women I met. Typically, these women receive no financial assistance from their children's fathers. I rarely met sex workers in Sosúa who had sold sex before migrating to Sosúa's sex trade, and I believe their status as single mothers is the most decisive factor in their entrance into the sex trade. Often women migrated to Sosúa within days of their "husbands'" (in consensual unions) departure from the household and their abandonment of their financial obligations to their children. Within a few months or maybe a year, most leave Sosúa as poor as when they first arrived, only to be replaced by another cohort of women.

Most women migrated from a rural setting where there were few job opportunities outside of sporadic agricultural work, or jobs that pay little, such as hair styling out of the home or waitressing at a local café. The women from Santo Domingo, the capital city, also held low-paying jobs, working in domestic service or in *zonas francas* (export-processing zones). Women who migrate to Sosúa to sell sex make the choice to try to earn more money—more quickly—than they can in any other legal job available to poor women with limited education (most have not finished school past their early teens), skill base, and social networks. These women come from *los pobres*, the poorest class in the Dominican Republic, and simply do not have the social networks to land work, such as office jobs, that offer security or mobility. Rather, they fall back on their own female-based social networks to find factory jobs, domestic work, or restaurant jobs.

These same female-based social networks supply Sosúa's sex trade. Women often follow the advice of a cousin or neighbor that in Sosúa they can earn more money than in other jobs and work fewer hours. Women employed in domestic work, or *zonas francas*, generally earn less than 1,000 pesos a month (US\$100), while sex workers working with foreign clients charge 500 pesos a client. In contrast, women working with Dominican clients charge 150–200 pesos a client. Sosúa's sex trade, potentially, holds out the opportunity to make enough money to cover the women's expenses in Sosúa, children's expenses (and parents') back home, and to start a savings account. These women try to get home to see their children and to bring money at least once a month. (Those whose communities are quite far and expensive to get to travel home less frequently.) Women

who manage to save money, after covering all their expenses, use their savings to buy or build a house, or if they are living with their parents, to make improvements on their parents' houses. Alternatively, they might try to start a small business out of their homes, such as a *colmado* (small grocery).

While saving money is not possible in factory or domestic work, the sex trade, in theory at least, provides enough earnings to save money beyond daily survival. In practice, though, it is costly to live in Sosúa, especially for the "independents." Rooms in boarding houses rent for 30–50 pesos a day, while renting an apartment ranges from 1,500 to 3,000 pesos a month, but also includes start-up costs that most women can not afford (such as money for a bed and cooking facilities). And, since none of the boarding houses have kitchens, women must spend more to eat in restaurants and for take-out, prepared foods. On top of these costs, women must budget for bribes to police (for release from jail), since sex workers usually are arrested five to ten times over the course of a couple of months. And, to make matters worse, the competition for clients is so steep, particularly during the high seasons, when the tourist bars are crowded with sex workers, that days can go by before women find a client. In such a competitive climate, some women charge less than the going rate of 500 pesos; instead, they may charge only 300 to 400 pesos. Thus, even though female friends and family members promise newcomers that the trade will yield savings and remittances, as well as cover daily living expenses, in reality, many women earn just enough for their daily expenses in Sosúa and modest remittances for their children. Realizing this, and missing their children, women usually return to their home communities in less than a year, just as poor as when they first arrived. They return to children who have grown in their absence, and to neighbors and family who inevitably will question their cover stories of work in Sosúa's restaurants and hotels.

Also important for understanding these women's opportunities for economic and social mobility is the fact that they do not have immediate family members living abroad—particularly in New York, the primary migration destination for Dominicans. Nor do they have family in other popular destinations for Dominicans such as Boston, Puerto Rico, or Spain.⁸ Without family members abroad, these women receive no support from remittances that sustain many families in the DR. In addition, without relatives abroad, they cannot migrate legally through family sponsorship and have greater difficulty obtaining the visitor visas that would enable them

to leave the country. Consequently, they turn to Germany as a new migration circuit.

SOSÚA AS A TRANSNATIONAL SPACE

The presence of "foreigners" in Sosúa and their ties off the island are not new. As a banana plantation for the United Fruit Company in the early part of the century, and as a safe haven for European Jews fleeing persecution in 1941, Sosúa for some time has been an economic, social, and cultural crossroads between the local and the foreign. Both Dominicans and foreigners seem to rush to Sosúa. The town has emerged not only as a place of fantasy for European male sex tourists and Dominican female sex workers, but also for a variety of Dominicans who hope to find jobs in the tourist economy. With tourism come jobs, primarily in the service economy: kitchen and wait staff, domestic service, grounds keeping, and other assorted positions that maintain restaurants and hotels. Dominicans migrate from throughout the country to cash in on the tourist boom. They bank on the myth of endless opportunity in tourist spaces where vacationers spend their money. I suggest that Sosúa's "opportunity myth," which is tied up with its history as a transnational space, inspires a diverse group of individuals to believe that in this space they will realize their fantasies. The imagining of alternative lives, often fueled by the global circulation of media images (Appadurai 1991), spurs many Dominicans and foreigners to leave their current lives, either temporarily or permanently. While Dominicans come to Sosúa in search of money, often dreaming of striking it rich off the tourist trade, foreigners come for a beach vacation, to buy sex, or to start a new life in "paradise." Both groups are living out dreams they believe they can fulfill in Sosúa.

The intensity of transnational interactions has increased so dramatically with tourism that Dominicans envision the town as lying outside the authentic Dominican Republic. Time and time again I heard that Sosúa is not the "real" Dominican Republic, and Dominican friends urged me to visit towns in the countryside to see "true" Dominican culture. James Clifford could be describing Sosúa when he writes about "contact zones," those "transgressive intercultural frontiers," where "stasis and purity are asserted . . . against historical forces of movement and contamination" (Clifford 1997: 7). Therefore, when young women move to Sosúa to enter into sex work, they

are able to see themselves as taking the first step toward entering another country with more and greater possibilities.

Signs of foreign influence are everywhere—particularly by German citizens-turned-residents. For example, real estate “for sale” signs are usually in German; Sosúa supports a German bakery, news stores that specialize in German magazines and newspapers, and bars and restaurants that serve German beer and cuisine. All make it possible for the German community to reproduce its lifestyle—but in a less expensive, warmer climate. Postcards are even sold in German-owned souvenir stores declaring the Dominican Republic a German island: they read, “Welcome to the DDR: the Deutschen Dominikanischen Republik.” An article in *Express* (a daily newspaper published in Cologne) underscores just how dramatically German nationals have transformed Sosúa:

After Columbus and the Spanish colonizers, the Germans are the new masters on the island. “As a German,” Heiner comments, “you can do here whatever you want.” He should know, this is already his fifth “sex-trip” to the “DDR” (Heikhaus 1995a).

And, in the past few years more men from the former East Germany have joined former West Germans as sex tourists and residents of Sosúa.⁹ Both East and West Germans who settle in Sosúa do so as a kind of early retirement. Usually working-class or lower-middle class, these new residents can live a life of relative privilege not possible in Germany. With their savings and money from the sale of their cars and residences in Germany, they open tee-shirt shops, bars on the beach, or other tourist-oriented businesses to have an income stream every month. Their money goes much farther in Sosúa than in Germany or, for that matter, than in other “retirement spots” in the developing world. “I looked to retire in Thailand or Tunisia,” explained a middle-aged German woman, “but it is not as easy or as cheap to build a home.” With their swimming pools and housekeepers, the German expatriate community successfully finds economic mobility in Sosúa’s tourist trade. As one female owner of a beach bar boasts, “Although life is not a holiday here—you must work to earn a living—it still is better than life in Germany. Look, I can walk out of my house and drop into the sea. This is very nice.” Thus, increasingly, Germans know Sosúa not only as a cheap beach vacation, or as a place to buy sex, but also as a retirement community far from German winters and German taxes.

AGENCY AND THE SEX TRADE

Sosúa's sex trade is not simply a story of women who use sex work as a survival strategy, but also of women who try to use sex work in Sosúa as an advancement strategy. Marriage and migration are the key components of this strategy. These women see Sosúa's sex trade and marriage to foreign tourists as a fast track to economic success—a way not just to solve short-term economic problems, but to change their lives, and their families' lives, through remittances, in the long-term. These transnational relationships, sex workers candidly admit, are *por residencia* (for residence/for a green card), not *por amor* (for love).¹⁰ In this distinction we see a highly strategic and rational element to these women's "fantasies." Without these transnational connections, Sosúa's sex trade would be no different than sex work in any other Dominican town. By migrating to Sosúa, these sex workers are engaged in an economic strategy that is both very familiar and something altogether new. In short, these women try to take advantage of the global linkages that exploit them.

Even though I distinguish between sex work as an advancement or a survival strategy, I do not want to romanticize Dominican women's experiences in the sex trade. Dominican women have limited room to maneuver within the tourist economy and the sex trade. However, I see a great deal of what Ortner calls "intentionality" in these women's use of the sex trade.¹¹ Sosúa's sex trade stands apart from many other sex-tourist destinations in the developing world. Without pimps, access to drugs they can afford, or abduction and trafficking of young women, Sosúa's sex trade offers women a good deal of control over their working conditions (which is not to suggest that they do not risk rape, beatings, and arrest). However, despite women's active strategizing *progesar* (to get ahead) through the sex trade, women rarely enjoy lasting economic gains. Through sex workers' accounts of their relationships with German men, which I provide in the next section, we get a sense of just how wildly unpredictable the course of these relationships can be, and find a wide range of instances of dependency and agency.

DOMINICAN WOMEN'S MIGRATION TO SOSÚA: AS STEPPING STONE TO EUROPE AND A NEW TRANSNATIONAL FIELD

Since I claim that women's use of the sex trade for marriage is motivated primarily by hopes of migration, an economic strategy,

the change in women's economic security after they have worked in the sex trade for a while is an important indicator of their "success." I can analyze countless ways poor Dominicans are barraged by symbols of middle-class prosperity, and how this cultural production informs poor women's decisions to move to Sosúa, as well as their strategies of marriage for migration. Yet these symbols of comfort and power are only part of what "seduces" poor single mothers into the sex trade. Also important is the island's migration history. The seductive pull of this new migration circuit between Germany and the Dominican Republic cannot be fully understood without looking at the history of migration off the island.

The past few decades of Dominican migration to New York and the transnational cultural flows between these two spaces have led many Dominicans to look *outside—fuera*—the Dominican Republic for solutions to economic problems *inside* Dominican borders.¹² So adept are Dominicans at migrating off the island, that Sørensen even calls them "natives" to transnational space (1998).¹³ The quest for a visa to Canada, the United States, or Europe is virtually a national pastime. The Dominican musician, Juan Luis Guerra, captures this preoccupation with *fuera* and the visas necessary to get there in his hit song *Visa para un Sueño* (Visa for a Dream).¹⁴ A variety of legitimate means to get *fuera*, as well as scams, abound. Some are so desperate to get off the island that they willingly risk their lives. Many perish in *yolas*, small boats or rafts used to travel to Puerto Rico, and two stowaways in the landing gear storage-area of an airplane were crushed to death when the plane's wheels were lowered while landing in Puerto Rico.

The families of the sex workers I interviewed, for the most part, with no immediate family members abroad, have never had meaningful transnational resources available to them. Benefits of family members abroad can be considerable. One of Georges' (1990) informants summed up how class and opportunity, outside of the elite, are tied to migration networks to New York: "In the Dominican Republic there are three kinds of people: the rich, the poor, and those who travel to New York."¹⁵ In some ways, for poor young women, hanging out in the tourist bars in Sosúa is a better use of time than waiting in line at the U.S. embassy in Santo Domingo.

In light of how difficult it is to migrate off the island, it becomes clear why Dominican migrants in Sosúa work so hard to establish transnational relationships with the tourist population. Their transnational romantic ties act as surrogate family migration networks.

Consequently, migration to Sosúa from other parts of the Dominican Republic is both an internal and an international migration. As a transnational space, Sosúa represents a land of opportunity within the Dominican Republic and a point of departure to other countries. Sex tourism links the two forms of migration in a powerfully gendered and racialized way.

From Sosúa's tourist and sex tourist trade, new "transnational social fields" and migrations emerge (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1994; Goldring 1998). Even though most of these sex workers actually never will visit, let alone move to Germany, their links to German men through fax, phone, money wires, and return vacations to Sosúa create new transnational social fields as German businesses, recreational, and personal networks tie Germany and Sosúa together. These networks encompass Dominican women. The creation of new migration circuits between Germany and Sosúa for the German men who settle in Sosúa and the Dominican women who settle in Germany—no matter how many or how few individuals actually travel along them—facilitate transnational practices. Moreover, even though they are new, these transnational social networks linking Sosúa and Germany are increasingly efficient. One sex worker, Luisa, stopped receiving money wires from her German boyfriend when a former co-worker of hers from Sosúa's sex trade snitched on her. This co-worker was living in Germany with a man she met in Sosúa who was friends with Luisa's transnational suitor/supporter (the two German men, in fact, had vacationed in Sosúa together). Luisa's friend told Luisa's boyfriend that Luisa was living with a Dominican boyfriend and had not completely quit the sex trade, as she had promised. After this revelation, the money wires dried up, Luisa's German boyfriend stopped returning to Sosúa to see Luisa, and her plans of visiting him in Germany were ruined.

To understand the long-term implications of the incorporation of Dominican women within German transnational networks, scholars need to rethink their conceptualization of the scope of transnational relationships without, as Smith and Guarnizo warn, stretching conceptualizations of transnationalism so far as to run "the risk of [it] becoming an empty conceptual vessel" (Smith and Guarnizo 1998: 3–4). First of all, we must acknowledge that persons who do not themselves move across borders can become incorporated within transnational social networks and live within a transnational social field. Secondly, we must address the issue of differential power held by the various actors within the transnational social field, a power

delimited not just by differences in class, gender, and race, but also by the relative power of the states in which they hold citizenship rights.

Larger transnational processes and the globalization of capitalism have enabled the rapid growth of sex tourism in Sosúa. Also important are the differential privileges that citizenship in various states confers. German citizenship and its accompanying benefits in the global economy facilitate unimpeded travel and tourism, as well as migration and resettlement. Germans face no barriers in establishing homes or businesses in the Dominican Republic and moving back and forth between Germany and the Dominican Republic, if they resettle. And German sex tourists travel with ease, since there are no visa requirements to enter the Dominican Republic. They hold much more economic power than the Dominican women from whom they buy sex.

These differences make it clear that any discussion of transnational processes and contexts has to examine the question of relative degrees of power of the various actors.

To differentiate the freedom of persons from certain powerful states to travel and establish transnational social fields from the restrictive access to travel or migration of persons from weak, impoverished states, I expand the use of the term transnationalism from above and below popularized by Smith and Guarnizo (1998). They distinguished between the transnational interactions and strategies of political leaders—transnationalism “from above”—and the mundane border crossing and personal and familial interactions of impoverished people. This latter set of processes Smith and Guarnizo dubbed transnationalism “from below.” I include in the term transnational “from above” the transnational connections made by middle class and wealthy persons who are citizens of states central to the accumulation and deployment of capital. And I see Dominican women’s creative use of the sex trade, with its intimate access to German citizens, as an example of transnational strategizing “from below.” However, while white German male citizens, as they travel or move to a new country, clearly benefit from their country’s position in the global economy (even newly capitalized East Germans), black Dominican women consistently face constraints due to their country’s marginal position in the global economy. Sosúa is but one more site where, broadly, we can observe globalization exacerbating inequality, and, more specifically, we can situate tourism and sex tourism as both relying on and reproducing inequalities in the global economy.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH GERMAN MEN

If the imagination of what “might be” plays an important role in how these women and men fantasize about one another and one another’s respective “home” countries, how do these relationships play out both in Sosúa and in Germany? Each group imagines the other as the opposite of the racialized sexual, romantic, or economic partners they meet in their home countries. These images are sustained not only by the brief encounters of sexual liaisons but also by the fact that a small sector of the sex workers are able to maintain relationships with German tourists over time and space. (I know of about five other relationships than the ones I mention here.) Dominican sex workers try to establish ongoing transnational relationships with foreign men by exchanging fax numbers, informing them of the Western Union in town, and encouraging them to telephone or to take their next vacation in Sosúa again.¹⁶ Since sex workers generally live in boarding houses where there are no phones, in order to telephone Europe they must go to Codetel, the Dominican phone company. But since they cannot receive calls there, when possible, they receive calls on neighbors’ phones, or their clients/boyfriends wire them money to make calls from Codetel. Codetel also has a fax service at which Sosúans can both send and receive faxes. Typically, in the faxes the women express how much they miss the men and urge them to return to Sosúa on their next vacation.¹⁷ They might also mention that they need money for their children and remind them of the Western Union in town. For some of the “independent” sex workers, dropping by the Codetel office is a daily ritual. Their trips to Codetel signal to other sex workers that they in fact have maintained contact with foreign men, sometimes multiple clients at a time. Of course, going to and from the Western Union office is even more prestigious—and lucrative—than visiting the phone and fax office. Finally, the most envied women take trips to Santo Domingo to the German Embassy to put plans in motion (with the help of their clients) to visit Germany with a tourist visa.

All of these practices reveal sex workers’ creative strategizing, which at the same time depends on their clients’ fulfilling their promises. These women labor to take advantage (to the extent that they can) of the men (and their citizenship) who are in Sosúa to take advantage of them. The women are at once independent and dependent, and exploited and strategic. Here gender and race become central organizing factors of these women’s migration to

Germany. Keenly aware of German men's eroticization of Afro-Caribbean women (as indicated in sex workers' narratives below), Dominican sex workers capitalize on their gender and race by using the sex trade as a way to leave the island.

They are not motivated, however, solely by the prospect of migrating off the island. Some women go to great lengths to establish relationships with German men not only for money and visas, but also in reaction to Dominican machismo. The women hope that German husbands will be more reliable financial providers.¹⁸ Sex workers idealize foreign men and demonize Dominican men in their discussions with one another. In fact, as we will see in Elena's story below, Dominican sex workers often dismiss foreign men's imperfections and instead describe them in idealized terms. This romanticized construct lies in contrast to the described failings of Dominican men, particularly their drinking and womanizing. Sex workers often assign characteristics to foreign men that are unmerited and unrealistic. For example, it was only towards the end of Elena's relationship with a German man, Jürgen, when his drinking was so obviously out of control, that her friends finally admitted that, like the Dominican men they constantly criticized, Jürgen was in trouble.

ELENA: LIVING WITH A GERMAN MAN IN SOSÚA

Elena, a 22-year-old sex worker, initially had migrated to Sosúa's sex trade after the father of her baby girl left her. She followed her older sister, who, at the time, was working in the sex trade. Elena ended up being the main breadwinner for her extended family. She brought remittances back home to pay her parents' monthly *colmado* bill and she eventually became the surrogate mother for two younger sisters, a step-sister, and a younger sex worker who came to rely on Elena.¹⁹ All these girls, plus Elena and her daughter, lived in a one-room shack, rotating between sharing the bed and sleeping on the floor. Elena stood out in the community of sex worker because, along with being kind and generous, she was a leader to whom other women turned for all kinds of advice. It was little surprise to her friends that she, literate and savvy, turned a fax relationship with a middle-aged German man into what many of them called a "marriage." After returning several times to Sosúa to spend time with Elena, Jürgen decided to move to Sosúa. He would return to Germany only several months out of the

year to supervise his industrial construction company and earn enough money to support him the rest of the year in his new Caribbean lifestyle.

To Elena and her friends, it appeared she was living out many sex workers' fantasy of quitting sex work and setting up house with a German man. Elena's older sisters and her friends envied the two-bedroom apartment with running water, electricity, and a full kitchen that she, Jürgen, and all of her dependents (her daughter, and three younger sisters and step-sister) moved into. But her actual relationship with Jürgen was far from ideal. Soon after Jürgen moved to town, Elena found out she was pregnant. At first, he was helpful around the house and doted on Elena. But, the novelty eventually wore off and he soon returned to his routine of spending most days drinking in the German-owned bar beneath their apartment. He also went out drinking every night with German friends. Most of the time he was drunk, and Elena saw him less and less frequently. What's more, their relationship reproduced traditional Dominican gender roles. He did not treat her any better than the previous Dominican men in her life. They constantly fought over money, which he tightly controlled. Since they were living together, and Jürgen was paying the bills (including tuition for her daughter to attend a private school), Elena considered them to be married. As her "husband" (in a consensual union), Elena saw Jürgen as financially responsible for the household, a role which she perceived he was not fulfilling. She asked "Why isn't he giving me any money? He is my *esposo* (husband) and is supposed to give me money. I need to know if he is with me or someone else. He pays for this house and paid for everything here. I need to know what is going on."

They fought so regularly that Elena started sleeping permanently on the couch. One day, without warning, Jürgen packed his bags and left for Germany for business. He paid the rent for the apartment for a couple of months before he left. However, Elena had no cash flow into the household. In Jürgen's absence, Elena took her daughter out of the private school for which he had been paying, since the tuition soon became overdue, and she started working at a small Dominican-owned restaurant. When Jürgen returned a couple of months later, they split up for good. She and her family returned to living in a shack without running water or electricity. She had not accumulated any savings or items she could pawn during her time with Jürgen and when they vacated their apartment, he took most of the furniture and the TV with him.

In many ways Elena was better off—financially and emotionally—before she met Jürgen. Even though she was living out many sex workers' fantasies of "marrying" a foreign tourist, she now lives like many poor Dominicans, struggling day to day without access to the resources necessary to build long-term security. Even though she appeared to have all the trappings of many sex workers' fantasies of "marrying" a foreign tourist, she ended up living in the same conditions of poverty as before. Although sex workers take on great risks and occupy a stigmatized status in Dominican society, Elena's status as the "wife" of a German sex tourist-turned-resident brought no long-term gains. And, despite other sex workers' aspirations to achieve what Elena had, Elena's relationship with a foreign man replicated many of the failings of Dominican men that sex workers so often decry. Jürgen turned out to be a volatile alcoholic who slept with other women, thus putting Elena (since they did not use condoms), and possibly her baby, at risk for AIDS. And, soon after he returned to Sosúa, Jürgen set up house with another sex worker. He now lives, Elena hears, somewhere in Asia.

Underlying Elena's experience with Jürgen is another important question, the degree to which the sex workers' fantasies and realities of German men are shaped by the fact that the women are themselves migrants, having left their homes to seek their future in Sosúa. The mobility strategy of the Dominican women who migrate to become sex workers in Sosúa changes their lives, not only by bringing them into a transnational social field, but also through the experiences of migration and wage work. Both migration and wage work can have an impact on gender roles and on the expectations that women place upon men. Scholars of migration have asked whether migration reaffirms or reconfigures "traditional" gender roles (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Mahler 1997; Pessar 1996²⁰). Research on women-and-work questions whether wage labor increases women's authority in the household, while studies on women-and-migration reveal that the experience of living in a new country, combined with wage labor, often gives women greater social and economic independence and status (Hirsch 1997; Kessler-Harris and Brodtkin Sacks 1987; Kibria 1993; Pessar 1984; Repack 1995; Safa 1995; Zavella 1991). The lives of the Dominican women I studied highlight the complexities of these questions, because these women often begin migration as heads of households, their migration spurred by the financial burden of supporting themselves and their children. Dominican women's internal migration for the sex trade is a complex social

terrain in which gender roles are both reaffirmed and reconfigured. Thus, the question arises, how do these women's experiences and responsibilities as female heads of household inform the way they seek authority in their future relationships—with foreign or Dominican men?²¹ Although the sex trade allows women to out-earn Dominican male migrants in Sosúa, they have little similar potential sources of authority or independence in their relationships with foreign men. In fact, they become completely dependent on these men, not only for money, but as the cases of Nanci and Tati (two women who moved to Germany) illustrate, for much more.

NANCI: FALLING IN LOVE

Whereas most sex workers explain their transnational relationships in terms of strategic economic imperatives, Nanci recounted a love story. "This is completely for love," she gushed. Frank was a German man close to her age (she was 23 and he, 28). He spoke Spanish and got along well with her three year-old son. He bought her a plane ticket and helped her get a tourist visa so she could visit him in Germany for a month. When she returned, she showed me pictures of her visit to Germany, including pictures of Frank's parents and their middle-class home. Since Frank and Nanci agreed never to tell his family or friends that she had been a sex worker, the family did not know about her past. But since they decided to marry and made plans for Nanci to move to Germany with her son, she was fearful that they could find out. A former co-worker of Nanci's, Rosa, lived thirty miles away from Frank's family with a German man she also met in Sosúa's sex trade. Nanci worried: "Rosa's mother-in-law knows what Rosa did in Sosúa. And she knows I'm a friend of Rosa's. What if she ever said anything to Frank's parents?" Nanci's ties to Sosúa put a new twist on the importance of social networks in the migration process. The nascent networks linking Sosúan sex workers to towns in Germany act both as sources of support and concern for sex workers-turned-migrants. In many instances, women believe that struggling in isolation in their new European settings is preferable to being found out.

After marrying and living in Germany for a year, the two of them moved to Sosúa, where they had a little girl together.²² But, soon after moving to Sosúa, Frank ran off with another sex worker. He stopped all financial support to Nanci and her children. Even though Nanci went to a lawyer and got Frank to pay child support for one month,

there is little Nanci can do, since Frank and this other woman are now living in Germany. Nanci simply does not have the resources to pursue child support from the Dominican Republic while Frank remains in Germany. Like Elena, Nanci has experienced a reversal of fortune. She and her two children are living in a two-room shack in Sosúa in much worse conditions than when I first met her, before she married Frank. As I mentioned in the opening of this paper, I was quite shaken to see that the one relationship I knew of that seemed to grow out of love, respect, and romance, had crumbled. And, Nanci who had always taken great care to keep her house clean, and to dress well, was living in clutter and filth. She and the children were in stained clothes. Her lively sense of humor and optimism in the days when a number of European men were faxing her and sending her money, had been replaced by indifference. Nanci was back in sex work, and even Elena and she, who had been best friends, had grown apart. Nanci "only thinks of the discos," lamented Elena. "She thinks like a sex worker. She does not even care how she looks anymore. Did you see the house and the old clothes she was wearing?" While Elena had learned that sex work, contrary to its "opportunity myth," offered little security or mobility, and thus now earns less money working in a restaurant (and playing the lottery regularly), Nanci was still trying to use the sex trade to get ahead.

TATI: LA LOCA

Unlike Nanci, few women actually make it to Germany. So when Tati chose to return to the Dominican Republic, her Dominican friends and neighbors "thought I was crazy. This is what all the women want. They think that these men will have money and will solve all your problems." Yet Tati was desperately lonely in Germany and felt that her "husband" (they had not married yet), though able to supply her with material comfort, did not really understand her. "I did not like not being understood. I missed being near my family. I missed Dominican food and seemed to always have the flu. And I stayed in the house all the time. You need some kind of work." Her husband, she explained, did not approve of her working. "I am a very good seamstress but my husband refused to buy me a sewing machine since he did not want me to work." Without any income of her own, knowledge of German, or social networks through which to meet friends, Tati was dependent upon her husband for money and a social life. She believes he treated her well, by giving her

presents and remaining faithful by “not running around with other women.” But, he drank often and did not want her to telephone her family. Afraid she might leave him, he made sure she never had enough money to buy an airplane ticket to fly home. She became increasingly fearful that if she let him know she was planning to leave him, he would kill her. “You know many of these men kill their wives.” Unable to remain a day longer, Tati boldly went to the police. A few days later, she flew home to the Dominican Republic, courtesy of the German government. She waited at least another week before she called her husband to let him know where she was. At first, he did not believe her. Even though the police had interviewed him about abuse (while Tati was in a safe house waiting for her flight to the Dominican Republic) and decided that he in fact had not physically abused his wife, he never thought that she would find a way home.

LIVING WITH GERMAN MEN: FANTASIES VS. THE REALITY

Because migrating to Germany is a relatively new phenomenon, not many former sex workers, such as Nanci, or women who met foreign men in the tourist resorts, such as Tati, have returned to Sosúa to dispel the myths and gossip of an easy and fantasy-filled life *allá* (over there). Instead, women imagine lives of material comfort—possibly excess—for themselves and their children. Stories of women who are living out this fantasy circulate among sex workers like Dominicanized versions of the movie *Pretty Woman*.²³ Sosúa and its tourists represent an escape.²⁴ The women dream of European men “rescuing” them from a lifetime of poverty and foreclosed opportunities.²⁵ Sex workers and resort workers, of course, hope for romance and love, and maybe even more help in the household than with Dominican partners, but none of this is truly expected and thus not prioritized. Rather, there is an expected trade-off of love and romance for financial security and mobility. After all, these relationships are for *residencia* (visas), not for *amor* (love) (except, initially at least, in Nanci’s case). In Sosúa’s economy of desire, why waste a marriage certificate on romantic love when marriage can be parlayed into a visa?

Even after relationships end and women return to Sosúa broke, the community of sex workers still idealizes these failed migration stories. The fact that Jürgen was an alcoholic, for example, and that he and Elena always fought, were never mentioned in the gossip

mill. Although Jürgen cooked, it was only for himself, since he disliked the Dominican meals Elena prepared. But Elena's friends focused on the money he gave her for food for the household, not that she did all the household food shopping and preparation for the rest of her family on top of all the other household chores. Similarly, Nanci's and Tati's social and economic isolation in Germany was left out of their friends' depictions of their time in Germany. Both women depended on their husbands, not only for money but also for friends. But these aspects of living in Germany are passed over when sex workers gossip, in favor of foregrounding perceived material benefits.

Unlike Nanci, Tati chose to leave her German "husband" and Germany, primarily because her newfound material and economic security did not outweigh her feelings of not being in love, being misunderstood, isolation, and missing her "home" culture (especially food and climate) and her children. Tati's more realistic depictions of life in Germany were cast, in neighborhood gossip, however, as the exception, not the rule. In fact, even Tati's frightening story of being held against her will became a story of her craziness—not courage—in the gossip mill.

The social isolation in Germany can be acute. Unlike New York, there are none of the Dominican-run or frequented social clubs, associations, restaurants, or stores to help women such as Nanci and Tati feel at home. In fact, because of language and other cultural barriers, sex workers who have returned to the Dominican Republic after living in Europe explain that they rarely left their European boyfriends' or husbands' houses other than to go food shopping. Since the women tend to spend so much time close to home and do not earn any money themselves, they end up stepping into the role of a traditional Dominican "housewife." Nanci is the only woman I met who had a formal activity outside of the home: English lessons. At the language school she made the only friend she had, a woman from Turkey, outside of her husband's social circle. Some of the isolation is self-imposed, such as Nanci's fear of "discovery" that keeps her from socializing with her friend who is also a former sex worker. While, as in Tati's case, her husband built a relationship of dependency by tightly controlling her contact with anyone outside the home, including forbidding her to work.

Another sex worker, Andrea, who currently lives in Germany, also spoke about isolation during her first "trial" visit to live with her boyfriend in Germany. She recalled, "I stayed in and watched

Spanish TV except to go to the supermarket. But I don't like going out alone there. I don't think it is a good idea for a woman to go out alone in the street. People can see that I am Latina." But when I specifically asked if she experienced any racism, Andrea, like other sex workers who have lived in Germany, dismissed my suggestion. "Many people think I am Spanish; they don't know I am from the Dominican Republic." Andrea could in fact "pass" for Spanish, as she suggested, since she is light-skinned and has, by her own description, *pelo bueno* (good hair), or straight hair without visible signs of African ancestry.

In their discussions of Germany, none of these women ever referred to racial discrimination, racist attitudes, or encounters with anti-immigrant sentiment. Even when I tried to talk about anti-immigrant sentiment in Germany,²⁶ sex workers seemed unimpressed. Women reminded me that none of their friends had problems with racism in Germany, yet they admitted that both Andrea and Nanci were light-skinned. Elena explained, "Andrea does not have difficulties in Germany, since she is white." A set of new questions arises if these interracial couples have children.²⁷ None of the women I met who lived in Germany had, as of yet, children with their German partners. (Nanci and Frank had their little girl in Sosúa, not Germany.) Instead, they moved, or were in the process of moving, the children they had with Dominican men to Germany.

Because actually getting to Germany is a rarely won prize, sex workers often talk about strategies they would employ to get the most out of this hoped-for migration. Sex workers fancy that in Germany they would act like women, such as Andrea, who strategically left her German husband (while living in Germany) for another German man who, as her cousin in Sosúa explained to me, "had more money." It is common knowledge that Andrea did not love her first husband. "He is very fat," sex workers made a point of repeating. Nor did she love her current boyfriend. Economic advancement eclipsed romantic dreams. On the eve of her departure for Germany, Andrea spent the night with her Dominican boyfriend, the man she loved. She did not lie about her feelings for her soon-to-be German husband, "No, it's not for love." But with images of an easier life for her and her two daughters compelling her to migrate, she put love aside. Even though her friends know that Andrea's marriage was far from perfect, she is still seen as living out a fantasy. Her cousin and friends seemed puzzled when I asked whether Andrea was in love with her new German boyfriend. Besides, a network of family, such

as this cousin and her two children, depend on Andrea to send remittances. In this sense, family obligations are tied up with local constructions of “love” and what constitutes a successful relationship. After all, Andrea was lucky enough to get off the island. Now, she is expected to—and willingly does—help out the other single mothers in her family, her parents, and her good friends, such as Elena. She even has sent new sneakers, jeans, and belts to a circle of her closest friends (all sex workers). With so many financial expectations and demands on Andrea, there is pressure on her to keep her relationship afloat, no matter what. Considering the benefits for family, and even friends, it is easy to see why they, while sporting new fashions from Germany, perpetuate the fiction that marriage in Germany is without significant conflict.

Language barriers, cultural differences, racism, and domestic-abuse issues were all waved aside. Women such as Andrea become symbols of all that is possible in Germany, while Nanci’s friends blame her for the break-up of her marriage. Elena declared, “Nanci never should have moved to Sosúa with her husband with all these sex workers here. No man would stick around.” Finally, underlying sex workers’ portrayals of Tati as foolish is an assumption that life *allá* in Germany is, for now at least, better than *aquí* (here on the island).

IMAGING DOMINICAN WOMEN: DESIRING THE SEXUALIZED OTHER

Just as Dominican women look to German men to be better providers than Dominican men, German men, too, compare Dominican women to German women. They imagine Dominican women as more sexual, more compliant, and having fewer commodity needs and desires. In fact, as Dominican women hope (but do not expect) German men to break with traditional assumptions about gender roles, German men expect Dominican women to adhere to very traditional—and regressive—understandings of gender roles. And, as the Internet postings below underscore, race plays a central role in how the white German sex tourists imagine Afro-Caribbean Dominican sex workers.

In examining desire in colonial Southeast Asia, Stoler looks at the myths of the sexualized Other in colonial texts, commenting that “. . . colonialism was that quintessential project in which desire was always about sex” and that “sex was always about racial power, and

that both were contingent upon a particular representation of nonwhite women's bodies" (Stoler 1997: 43). In sex tourism, we are well familiar with first-world travelers/consumers seeking exoticized, racialized "native" bodies in the developing world for cut-rate prices. These two components—race and its associated stereotypes and expectations, and the economic disparities between the developed and developing worlds—characterize sex-tourist destinations throughout the world.²⁸ So, what are white German men "desiring" when they book a flight from Frankfurt, for example, to Puerto Plata (the nearest airport to Sosúa)? In the case of the Dominican Republic, the availability of "dirt cheap colored girls" (as one sex tourist describes on the Internet) draws sex tourists. The inexpensive prices (compared to red-light districts in Europe) often help them make up their minds.²⁹ Since these women work "freelance," the clients do not pay any middlemen (such as pimps or bar owners). Accessibility to sex workers also makes it easy for men to decide to buy sex. Sex tourists do not have to look very far to find the women. The red-light district is in the center of town, where sex workers seem to be at every turn. Some nights, especially during the low tourist seasons, sex workers outnumber the tourists in the bars. A German newspaper article comments on this accessibility and paints Sosúa as a sex tourist's dream:

Just going from the street to the disco—there isn't any way men can take one step alone. Prostitutes bend over, stroke your back and stomach, and blow you kisses in your ear. If you are not quick enough, you get a hand right into the fly of your pants. Every customer is fought for, by using every trick in the book (Heikhaus 1995b).

Some men like Dieter, a 43-year-old bank employee from Frankfurt, return to the Dominican Republic for all of their vacations. Dieter has been there nine times. While sitting in a bar in the "Bermuda Triangle" (a nickname among German sex tourists for the center of sex-tourist bar activity), Dieter commented, "It is *better*³⁰ here than Thailand" (Heikhaus 1995b). The photo accompanying this article, which was part of a seven-day series on the sex trade in Sosúa, "Sex, Boozing and Sunburn," shows Dieter wearing a tee-shirt with the words "sex tourist" on the front (which he had purchased in Thailand). The headlines in this series of articles advertise Sosúa as little more than a sex-tourist destination and all Dominican women as sexually available; for example: "No One Remains Single in the Bermuda Triangle" (Heikhaus 1995a) and "Hot Nights in

Sosúa: The Most Sinful Mile in the Caribbean” (Heikhaus 1995b). The German media have been covering Sosúa’s sex trade since the early 1990s. The word is out, at least in Germany, that this is a place to add to the list.³¹

THE INTERNET, THE MASS MEDIA, RACIALIZED FANTASIES, AND THE GLOBAL SEX TRADE

With all the attention in the German press, the Dominican Republic has become one of Germany’s favorite vacation destinations—especially for sex tourists. There is an ever-increasing association—both on the island and in Europe—between the sex trade and Dominican women.³² This phenomenon, of associating a nation’s women with prostitution, is increasingly on the rise, in part due to the Internet, but also to sex tourist’ travels, and to the trafficking of Third-world women to night-clubs and brothels throughout the world. This association has worried Dominican women who *never have been* sex workers that the families and friends of their German boyfriends/ spouses might wonder if they *had been* sex workers. And, since Dominican women’s participation in the overseas sex trade has received so much press coverage in the Dominican Republic,³³ women’s experiences living or working in Europe are suspect. “I know when I tell people I was really with a folk dance group in Europe, they don’t believe me,” a former dancer worried. Often, in casual conversations with shop owners or friends (who were not sex workers), when Sosúans spoke of a woman working overseas as a domestic, waitress, or dancer, they inevitably would raise the possibility of sex work, or explicitly rule it out by vouching for the authenticity of a particular woman’s version of events abroad. One Dominican café owner cynically explains why everyone assumes that Dominican women working overseas must be in, or have been in, the sex trade: “Dominican women have become known throughout the world as prostitutes. They are one of our biggest exports.” Elena’s German “husband,” Jürgen, also comments on this association, “Everyone in Germany knows about the Dominican Republic, you know, like Thailand.”³⁴ Media attention in Europe, such as the seven-article series in *Express*, perpetuates the image of the island as a haven for sex tourists. The Internet has also played a significant role in getting the word out about this latest hot spot.

Considerable attention has been paid to the role air travel, instant banking, and other “modern” technologies have played in transna-

tional circuits. Any exploration of the relationships among globalization, women's work choices in the global economy, and women's migration for work, must now investigate the role of the Internet in producing and disseminating racialized and sexualized stereotypes of women in the developing world.³⁵ On-line travel services make it increasingly easy for potential sex tourists to research sex-tourist destinations and to plan trips. To help travelers, some services provide names of "tour guides," and even names and pictures of local women. For such sex-tourist sites as Sosúa, previously known primarily by word of mouth, the Internet has the potential of speeding up the transmission of information as well as further stigmatizing *all* Dominican women as sex workers. Most of the sex tourists I met in Sosúa had been to other sex-tourist destinations before traveling to Sosúa. These seasoned sex tourists, many of whom claim that they are "bored" with other destinations, arrive in Sosúa based on the recommendation of friends. The Internet is likely to increase the traffic of both veteran sex tourists and first-time sex tourists to previously little-known sex-tourist destinations like Sosúa. This was the case, for example, for one veteran sex tourist who posted his experiences in Sosúa and Boca Chica (a tourist town on the south coast of the Dominican Republic)³⁶ to the World Sex Guide.

I wrote to this home page a few months ago (and you were kind enough to include it) regarding my admiration for the women in Thailand and Brazil . . . Through this page and others on the Internet, I heard wonderful things about the women of the Dominican Republic and decided to check it out for myself. I just spent two weeks there . . . I thought if I could find a place much nearer than either Brazil or Thailand to satisfy my needs (warmth, water and women) it would be a true godsend (September 5, 1996).

It is also possible that sex tourists who find Sosúa through the Internet might be more abusive and violent than many of the sex tourists who choose Sosúa based on friends' recommendations.³⁷ Writing about the Internet and sex trafficking and tours, Hughes (1996) claims that two of the main attractions of Bangkok's sex trade are conditions of slavery and child prostitution. She explains how the Internet could be putting more women and children in danger.

Men promote both of these abuses on the Internet [slavery and child prostitution]. One man tells others, "Yes, there is slavery in Bangkok. Some girls work against their will . . . They are in effect 'owned' by the hotel." He describes where those "kept" girls are to be found and gives other men two options, either "be gentle and give the girl a good time whether she is a slave or not," or "treat them more or less any way you want—and many

men do. . . hotels like this should be like paradise for those of us who are into S&M." (Hughes 1996: 73-74).

This Internet exchange raises the question of how these men would treat Dominican sex workers, or any sex workers throughout the globe, if they were accustomed to exploiting women and children forcibly held in slave-like conditions.

For this paper I have looked at two web sites, the World Sex Guide and a "travel publisher," Travel and the Single Male (TSM), which post writings from alleged sex tourists.³⁸ While the World Sex Guide is a free web site through which "volunteer researchers" post information about sex-tourist destinations, TSM advertises the following services to its paying members: photos from their women-of-the-world travel collection; a chat room with special guest hosts from around the world (including one in Boca Chica); a private message board; travel movies; and a pen-pal club "where you can actually see the girl you are writing to and then perhaps meet her."³⁹ This on-line travel service uses "satisfied customer" testimonials as a way to entice new members (which is where I saw these postings).⁴⁰ In the process, they advertise not only their service, but also Dominican women as sexual commodities. I include some of the free postings here regarding women both in Sosúa and in Boca Chica to give an idea of how much detailed information (including names of two Dominican women below) is available through the Internet. Here are two postings from TSM (keep in mind that any of these postings could be fabricated):

TSM, I am a new member but I am very excited each day to read all the new postings. TSM is great!!! I have viewed your photo section and am curious how I can locate two chicas (Marie and Perla) in this section. I only hope they are still living in Boca Chica because I will be visiting soon. I realize you are very busy but can you direct me to who might have this information. Thanks (October 18, 1997).

(TSM Reply): Inside the site we have a private message board where you can contact our members who actually live in BC and they'll tell you if these women are still there. I've met Perla and she is a wonderful lady! This is my favorite Caribbean beach and a great spot for a fun vacation.

Hello, TSM: Just returned from three days in Boca Chica, I wanted to thank you for the advice and the great club. I am quite pleased that I joined, and feel membership was very well spent. I met some great people on my trip and the girls were much better than I expected. This was a vacation I shall not ever forget. Much better than Moscow, Quebec or

Spain. I am already planning my return trip, plan to try some of the places recommended by TSM in the future (May 27, 1997).

Here is a posting from the World Sex Guide:

Subject: Sosúa, DomRep

... The best way to get a girl is to go to the discos at night. ... When you enter the disco you will feel like you're in heaven! A tremendous number of cute girls and something for everyone's taste (if you like colored girls like me!). I didn't see any girl I would call "ugly." Most of them are ok, but some look really like models. You only have to sit down at the bar or start to dance, everything will happen without any activity of you. Every time I was there and sat down several minutes later 6 or 7, sometimes 10 girls come in my nearness, start dancing in a very stimulating way and stare at me. But there is no need to take a girl directly; you can take a lot of time to make your decision (October 1997).

Race is central to what these sex tourists desire in their travels. Just as Stoler (1997) observed in colonial texts, desire for sex, race, and power are tied together in these modern-day cyber texts. The sex tourist quoted above, like many of the postings I include, focuses on the skin color of the sex workers, while another posting to the World Sex Guide advised, "Most of the girls in the DR are very dark spanish to deep Black. So, if you like white girls only do not go there" (October 1997).

PLAYING THE "GREEN CARD"⁴¹

Nearly every sex tourist I met in Sosúa said a friend had told them about Sosúa. Men who found out about Sosúa from their friends (by word of mouth) also pointed out, as did the Internet postings, that the girls were "cheap" and "dark." A group of friends who traveled together from Germany told me, while drinking at a bar in the middle of the day, "Dominican women are beautiful; there is a range of skin color." One of the men piped up, "I like them in the middle. Mocha. And, they are not short like other Latin women."

A German beach bar owner and his customers explained to me how German men see Dominican women. "Dominican girls like to fuck. With German women it's over quickly [the men at the bar roared at this]. But Dominican women have fiery blood. German women don't know how to fuck ... When the sun is shining it gives you more hormones." Sex workers take great pride that European men have told them that they are more sexually appealing than

European women. Much like Richard Parker's (1991) research on how Brazilians represent themselves in sexualized terms, Dominican sex workers also employ sexual discourse when describing themselves. Their sexual prowess, Dominican sex workers suggest, is why European men vacation in the Dominican Republic. "These men are here because European women are cold. Not Dominican women—we are *caliente* (hot)," Elena boasted. After being told over and over by German men how hot and sexy they are, sex workers use these racialized stereotypes to capture men's attention. For example, as part of their seduction, sex workers often dance alone provocatively in night clubs to display, indeed advertise, their sexuality. As the following story illustrates, sex workers draw on and perpetuate sexualized stereotypes of Afro-Caribbean and Latina women, bragging that Dominican women dance more sensually than European women and are better lovers.

One afternoon in Sosúa I was talking with a group of women who were all friends. Some were sex workers and some had left sex work to marry Dominican men. I asked how they thought the tourists saw them. Not one of the women could contain herself: At once, among howls of laughter, they shouted out "hot," "sexy," and even "Dominicana." For these women, being Dominican is synonymous with being sexual. Elena quieted the crowd, explaining she had a good story to tell:

I was at the Anchor [the biggest tourist nightclub] one night and a Spanish couple approached me. They said that in Spain, Dominican women have a reputation for being good lovers. So they wanted me to go to bed with the wife, not the husband, so that she could learn what it is that Dominican women know.

This story set off the already rambunctious crowd. "What did you do?" "Did you do it, did you do it?" Elena's older sisters who were there protested protectively: "She would never do that, never." After letting her friends carry on for a few minutes, Elena laughed: "Of course I didn't go with them."

She and the crowd reacted "appropriately" to the two revelations: First, they expressed revulsion at the mention of sex with a woman; and second, they cheered Dominican women's international fame as good lovers. Their dramatics highlighted a sex workers' code of behavior that views homosexuality as transgressive, and endorsed the European couple's explicit acknowledgment of *Dominicanas* as sexually desirable and proficient.

Dominican women are also sought as potential girlfriends. Not all men in the bars only look to buy sex for the night, but some also hope to find a girlfriend or a wife. For Jürgen, Dominican sex workers offered more than just sex. He asserted that they make good girlfriends since they are easily placated, "They are happy with enough money to eat and to have a place to sleep. Sure, they want money, but not like women in Germany." By describing Dominican sex workers as having a modest range of commodity needs and desires, Jürgen renders them more compliant, indeed "simple," and thus, less demanding than women he meets in Germany. Another sex tourist went so far as to call Dominican women "children." After moving to Sosúa, he learned that: "If you are going to have prostitutes as girlfriends you have to get them when they are young and just starting to sell. Then you have a chance of molding them, getting them to flush the toilet, or to stop sticking their fingers up their noses." For this tourist-turned-resident, having ongoing relationships with Dominican sex workers offered him endless opportunity for control.

In some relationships such as Elena's and Jürgen's, the couple does not speak a language in common. Part of the attraction of a relationship with a Dominican woman might be that she cannot make known her opinions or desires, let alone demands. Indeed, I served as interpreter between Jürgen and Elena when they fought. Since Jürgen spoke English, but little Spanish, and Elena spoke no German or English, she asked me to help her understand why Jürgen was mad at her, as well as to communicate her feelings to him. Hamilton has pointed out that the inability for sex workers to communicate with their foreign clients/boyfriends adds to their "allure and mystery." In the case of Thai bar girls, they are not "devoted to the ceaseless round of rational discussion, demand, insistence, requirement, justification, and so on which is taken to characterize relationships with Western women" (Hamilton 1997: 154-55). It is not difficult to see why men would find this muteness attractive. In fact, I interviewed German men who came to Sosúa because they had male friends in Germany who had married Dominican women (not all were former sex workers), and they too wanted to meet beautiful, dark-skinned women.

Many sex tourists know that the women respond to them, for the most part, because of their first-world citizenship. Thus, like the sex workers in Sosúa, who strategically seek to build transnational relationships, these men know that these relationships will most likely be "for residence" and not "for love." A German bar owner

elaborated on this two-way fantasy and performance when I asked about one of his customers who was lifting up the shirt of a sex worker with whom he had spent the previous night. "She tells him she loves him and he believes it. How does she see him? For the money. They are all actresses. The men want to believe, so they do, at least as long as they are on holiday. Once he stops paying, she moves on and forgets him."

And, a well-traveled sex tourist is cynical about Dominican sex workers' interest in long-term relationships:

... I know a lot of the reports on the Internet describe how incredibly friendly and sweet these women are and that many of them just want to meet a Westerner. This is not the case. Not even close. There are only dollar signs in these women's eyes. They are business women and nothing more. This is not only my observation—but that of some others I met. ... All of us have spent lots of time traveling around the world to its various fleshpots and placed these women way down on the scale of overall personality and charm (September 5, 1996).

Other postings indicate that clients try to capitalize on sex workers' desire for a literal ticket out of Sosúa. One message reminds men that encounters with sex workers could turn into something more. "Don't discount the possibility of a non-monetary relationship with Dominican women. It's not a hard thing to come by and—in my experience—is more rewarding." This "researcher" also discovered that even if he was not interested in keeping the relationship going after his vacation ended, the illusion of his long-term interest "goes a long way."

... Ask them if they want to go to the beach? Which one? Are they free tomorrow? They think they're practically married at that point. Tell 'em all about yourself. Make friends with them. That goes a long way. Take them out of one club and bring them to another (October 20, 1997).

It is easy to see from these postings why so many of the sex workers I met ended up lied to and disappointed and why their own interest most often tends to be financial.

CONCLUSION: WHO TRAVELS? WHO MIGRATES? TRANSNATIONALISM FROM ABOVE AND BELOW

Dominican women choose to migrate for sex work in Sosúa, as opposed to participating in sex work in other towns, based on their hopes of what "might be." Even though the imagination allows indi-

viduals throughout the world "to consider a wider set of 'possible' lives than they ever did before" (Appadurai 1991: 197), whether or not these fantasy lives are attainable depends on who is doing the imagining and where. The "local" becomes central to discussions about the "global." Transnational practices, such as faxing a German client or receiving money wires, are "embedded in specific social relations established between specific people, situated in unequivocal localities...." (Smith and Guarnizo 1998: 11). Sex workers' experiences in Sosúa demonstrate that local social and economic realities inevitably override the power of the imagination. Fantasy images might draw a woman to Sosúa to sell sex, but her choices and experiences there depend on her class, gender, race, and nationality.

Thus, although I take seriously the impact of the global transmission of media images on Dominican women's imagination, and consequently their migration and labor choices, I proceed with caution. Too much emphasis on the global circulation—of people, capital, ideologies, commodities, technology and media images—at times offers facile explanations for the effects of globalization. Although transnational spaces seem to promise endless possibilities and to blur divisions between the center and the periphery, the majority of sex workers' experiences in Sosúa suggest a different dynamic. Transnational spaces not only are sites of new economic, cultural, and sexual possibilities but also are location which can reproduce existing inequalities. In sites such as Sosúa, there is opportunity for transnational practices from "below," but they are often trumped by those from "above." Sex workers in Sosúa might exercise some control over their conditions of work (as opposed to sex work in other sites) and might try to use the sex trade as a strategy of advancement, but their decisions and actions as agents constantly collide with those of sex tourists. As one savvy sex worker, Ani, describes, sex workers (and other Dominican migrants hopeful of striking it rich off the tourist boom) who come to Sosúa often end up disillusioned. "They hear they can make money, and meet a gringo, so they come to Sosúa. Some of the women enter sex work, because they want it all so fast. They come with their big dreams. But then they find out it is all a lie."

Now that we have seen how both groups—tourists/sex tourists and sex workers—imagine one another, I want to look beyond the obvious class and racial differences between these two groups of migrants. Connections are rarely made between these two kinds of migration—one by a group whose members have an opportunity to

live well in their own country, and the other by a group whose members have limited opportunities. German men's and Dominican women's motivations to migrate to one another's countries are indeed quite distinct. However, both migrations result from global flows and rely upon specific transnational practices and technologies. German migration to the Dominican Republic and Dominican sex workers' strategies to migrate to Germany both epitomize globalized flows of people, culture, and, most importantly in these cases, fantasy. The new migration circuits and cultural and economic loops that have emerged between Germany and Sosúa expand conceptualizations of transnationalism, while at the same time, they once again reveal the inequities—particularly those based on race, gender, and nationality—that transnational processes rely on, reproduce, and challenge.

Yet there are also many clear differences between these two migrations. Smith and Guarnizo's critique of the "totalizing emancipatory character" of transnationalism recognizes that "while transnational practices and hybrid identities are indeed potentially counter-hegemonic, they are by no means always resistant" (Smith and Guarnizo 1998: 5). Transnational processes not only potentially open up new opportunities from "below" for "natives," but also from "above" for first-world travelers who could eventually turn into migrants. Whereas Dominican sex workers cannot travel or move to Germany without help securing visas or paying for airline tickets, German tourists/sex tourists are a privileged group that travels without visas, and can use vacations as a time to shop for girlfriends/brides. Clearly, this "bride shopping" as a transnational practice offers nothing liberating, but rather grows out of an exploitative and regressive impulse to find women who might not try to negotiate for any kind of authority in the household. "Asymmetries of domination, inequality, racism, sexism, class conflict and uneven development in which transnational practices are embedded and which they sometimes even perpetuate" (Smith and Guarnizo 1998: 6) are clearly present in tourism, sex tourism, and the "bride shopping" that might develop while on vacation in Sosúa.

Looking at Fanon, Stoler asks how sex in both colonial and post-colonial contexts has been used as a "vehicle to master a practical world" (Stoler 1997: 43–44). Dominican women's strategizing within Sosúa's sex trade can result in German clients' paying for sex workers' children's education (as Jürgen did for Elena's daughter), or into helping sex workers get a fledgling business off the ground (such as

a clothing store or hair salon). Yet, since any use of sex between black local women and white foreign men in a postcolonial context is a "crucial transfer point of power, tangled with racial exclusions in complicated ways" (Stoler 1997: 44 on Fanon 1967: 63), today's sex trade is inextricably linked with a violent colonial history for Hispaniola's women. In the relationships between sex tourists and sex workers, there are similarities to the relationships between the colonizer and the colonized. Yet, I do not mean to suggest that Dominican sex workers are simply "enslaved and colonized."

Rather, we have seen many examples of creative strategizing by sex workers that have grown out of new transnational technologies, such as the practice of faxing multiple clients on a regular basis. Women who decide to migrate to Sosúa expressly to work in the sex trade with foreigners play out Ortner's notion of "partial hegemonies" as they actively try to transform their brief encounters with European clients into marriage proposals and visa sponsorships. However, Dominican sex workers do not use the Internet (even though there are several new cyber cafes in town), which is but one more example of how transnational relationships reproduce inequality. And, despite all the strategizing, a recurring story seems to unfold: most sex workers in Sosúa end up just getting by, rather than improving their children's futures as they hoped. They might see Sosúa and its tourists as a gateway to a better life, but they are still constrained by their status as poor women who engage in a highly dangerous and illegal profession. Thus, no matter how persuasively media images condition their fantasies, a gap remains between their boundless imaginations and the constraints of their social and economic realities. These short- and long-term sexual encounters illustrate Torgovnick's assertion that despite all the scholarly fuss about the "crossing and recrossing of things," little critical attention has focused on the "social and economic facts" behind these global flows. She reminds us that celebrations of global flows can be short-sighted:

The problem is one of *sprezzatura*, of carnivalesque rejoicing, of celebrating the crossing and recrossing of things, of believing that contact and polyphony are inherently liberating. Certainly, I understand, and even share the impulse to enlist in Marshall McLuhan's global village. And, I'm all for having fun and for the carnivalesque moment . . . The essence of the carnivalesque is that one cannot tell male from female, rich from poor, black from white: those differences, ordinarily so crucial, do not matter for the duration of the carnival. Everything is freer there, everything is possible. But carnivals do not last. And the interpenetration of the third and first

world is not just festive. Behind the festivities are social and economic facts we should not forget (Torgovnick 1990: 40).

The failure of the majority of Dominican sex workers to leave Sosúa with foreign husbands or fattened bank accounts brings to life Torgovnick's dream-shattering pronouncement that "carnivals do not last." Sosúa and the experiences of the individuals who live, work, and vacation there, force a re-evaluation of the opportunities within transnational spaces. In this economy of desire, some dreams are realized, while others prove hollow. White, middle-class, and lower-middle class European visitors and residents are much better positioned to secure from "above" what they want in Sosúa than poor, black Dominican sex workers and other Dominican migrants who are likely to be disillusioned by Sosúa, tourism, and tourists.

It remains to be seen what will happen to Sosúa. It is possible new sex-tourist destinations in other developing countries eventually will diminish Sosúa's popularity. It is also possible that because of the Internet, more sex tourists from more countries will "discover" Sosúa and its sex trade. What is certain is that both sex workers and sex tourists will keep looking to one another to fulfill their fantasies.

NOTES

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1. Although foreign tourists and sex tourists in Sosúa are from all over Europe and North America, the majority of tourists and sex tourists are from Germany. Thus, in this paper I focus on German sex tourists and Dominican women's experiences in Germany.
2. German citizens comprise the largest group of foreign residents living in Sosúa. The overall population of Sosúa is estimated at 28,303 (Oficina Nacional de Estadística). The German embassy in Santo Domingo estimates that 20–25,000 German citizens live in the Dominican Republic. Although they do not have any exact figures, since German citizens are not required to register with the embassy, they believe only 1,000 Germans live in Santo Domingo and even smaller numbers are scattered throughout the country. Thus, they assert that the majority of Germans live on the North Coast.
"Sexscape" builds on the five terms Arjun Appadurai coined to describe global cultural flows: Ethnoscape, mediascape, technoscape, finanscape, and ideoscape (1990: 6–7). I use the term to refer to the spaces to which individuals travel to buy sex. These spaces depend on differences in power between the buyers (sex tourists) and the sellers (sex workers). Thanks to Marc Edelman for suggesting this phrasing.
3. I have changed all names of sex workers and clients.
4. The difficulty of field work with a group of women who use Sosúa as a starting point for migration to Europe is conducting follow-up research once they have migrated overseas. These women are dispersed throughout Germany. I have through letters, as well as letters sent to their friends remaining behind in Sosúa, heard accounts of women who are happy. For example, on my most recent visit to Sosúa, Ani's circle of friends assured me that Ani was "very in love" with an Austrian man she met right after I last had been in Sosúa. But, since no one has Ani's address, and she did not pass through Sosúa while I was there, I have no way of confirming her love story.
5. It is difficult to estimate how many sex workers are in Sosúa. At any one time there might be 300 women. The number shifts with the tourist seasons, with women returning home for extended visits with their children during the low seasons. During the high tourist seasons, such as after the New Year and during August (when Germans have a long vacation), the tourist bars and boarding houses are bursting with women.
6. Torres-Saillant comments on Dominicans' downplaying of their African descent, even though, as he writes, "Blacks and mulattos make up nearly 90 percent of the contemporary Dominican population. . . . No other country in the hemisphere exhibits greater indeterminacy regarding the population's sense of racial identity. . . . Some commentators would contend, in effect, that Dominicans have, for the most part, denied their blackness" (1998: 126).
7. Although my main Research Assistant (an ex-sex worker) who is a keen observer, most recently has observed younger and younger girls in the tourist bars (early to

- late teens). Other veteran sex workers, during the summer of 1999, confirmed her claim. Interestingly, when I asked German residents who are regulars at the bars if they had witnessed this downward shift in age, they said no. Young sex workers do a very good job of concealing their age.
8. By the end of the 1980s, Venezuela and Spain were the most important destinations for Dominicans after the United States and Puerto Rico. In terms of other European destinations beside Germany, Dominican migrants rank fourth among the documented migrants in Spain. Dominican migrant associations claimed, in 1996, that 30,000–40,000 Dominicans lived in Spain (Sørensen 1998). Spain is an older migration circuit than Germany. It is more difficult now than in the early 1980s to get “entertainment visas” to work in the sex trade there.
 9. In May 1999, a new German association, the “Internationaler Residenten Club Sosúa, INC,” was founded in Sosúa.
 10. Other studies on the sex trade explore this line between love and money. Yos Santasombat has observed in relationships between Thai sex workers and *farang* men (white-skinned Westerners) that “the line between money and love becomes very fuzzy. . . . [W]hat starts out as a money-oriented transactional arrangement becomes a mixed involvement, a more complicated relationship . . .” (1992: 15–17 cited in Hamilton 1997). And, Pruitt and LaFont (1995) use the term “romance tourism” in their study of the relations between white female tourists and Afro-Caribbean men in Jamaica. These relationships have an emotional component and are constructed through a discourse of romance. By proclaiming their love for their female liaisons, the local men distinguish themselves from sex workers. There is a similar phenomenon in the Dominican Republic, with male *sanky-pankies* (the term evolved from “los hanky-pankies”). Like their Jamaican counterparts, they do not work for cash, but for gifts, meals and other expenses that are at the discretion of the female tourist. For more on Dominican *saukies* see de Moya, Garcia, Fadul, and Herold (1992).
 11. This sense of agency, of choice, presents an important counter-example to depictions of sex workers as powerless victims of violence and exploitation. McClintock warns against conflating agency with context in discussions about sex work, “Depicting all sex workers as slaves only travesties the myriad, different experiences of sex workers around the world. At the same time, it theoretically confuses social *agency* and identity with social *context*” (1993).
 12. Two important studies document Dominican migration to New York: *Between Two Islands* (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991) and *The Making of A Transnational Community* (Georges 1990). They shed light on Dominican migration strategies and transnational ties which link Dominican sending communities to New York as a “response and resistance” to the Dominican Republic’s integration into the global economy (Glick Schiller, Basch, Szanton Blanc 1994). This response is informed by ideologies that view New York, Germany, and other places off the island as spaces where individuals are more likely to make economic gains than within the Dominican Republic.
 13. It is estimated that 10% of all Dominicans live outside of the Dominican Republic (Jordan 1998).
 14. It is on account of this preoccupation that Pessar named her book on Dominican migration after Guerra’s popular song, *A Visa for A Dream: Dominicans in the United States* (1995). The Visa Office of the Bureau of Consulate Affairs of the U.S. State Department reports that in 1997, 21,381 visas were issued for Dominicans

- (this includes all categories, including replacement visas). In the same year, 57,663 non-immigrant visas also were issued for Dominicans visiting the United States.
15. In their latest study on Dominicans in New York, Hernández and Rivera-Batiz (1997) estimate that there are 495,000 Dominicans living in New York, while 832,000 live in the United States.
 16. Hamilton (1997) notes a similar pattern in Thailand, where sex tourists return frequently because of relationships with one or more sex workers.
 17. The women write the faxes in Spanish. I did not meet a single sex worker who could speak or write German. If the German men do not understand Spanish, they enlist the help of friends in Germany who can translate the faxes. If they are communicating by telephone, the men try to speak some broken Spanish.
 18. Ironically, the Dominican "macho," whom sex workers criticize, can prove more reliable than North American or European men. Elsewhere I explore how relationships with Dominican men in fact can bring unanticipated rewards (Brennan 1999). Even though it is on an irregular and unpredictable basis, Dominican men (as regular clients or boyfriends/lovers) can supply small amounts of money to sex workers that help them get through short-term crises (medical bills, school supplies, clothes for children, etc.). Despite the stories sex workers tell of abandonment and abuse by Dominican men, some eventually leave sex work to "marry" (in consensual unions) faithful, hard-working local men.
 19. Actually here "parents" consist of her step-father and his wife in a consensual union, since her biological mother was dead and she had no contact with her biological father.
 20. For the purposes of this paper I follow Mahler's description of gender roles as "both the gendered division of labor and relations between men and women" (Mahler 1997: 2). In this paper, these "relations" are between Dominican women and German and Dominican men.
 21. Since Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) has observed that gender relations in a household are most likely to be reconfigured under "family stage" migration in which men and women take on new roles in their spouses' absence, the question arises as to how the experience of migration affects single mothers and how they compose their future relationships?
 22. With over 7.3 million foreign residents in Germany, Germany recently overhauled its citizenship and naturalization laws, which took effect on January 1, 2000. A child such as Nanci's automatically becomes a German citizen upon birth if at least one parent is a German citizen. For Nanci to obtain German citizenship under the new naturalization regulations, she would have to be married to a German citizen for eight years (although spouses can usually apply for citizenship after being married 3–5 years); give up her Dominican citizenship; have not been convicted of a major felony; demonstrate she can support herself and her family; and demonstrate proficiency in the German language and declare her allegiance to the Basic Law, the Federal Republic's constitution (Germany Embassy in Washington, D.C. 2000).
 23. In the last scene of the movie *Pretty Woman*, the affluent, powerful Richard Gere "saves" Julia Roberts, a plucky, but poor, sex worker. As Roberts' "white knight," he arrives hanging out the sunroof of a limousine carrying red roses. Gere then scales Roberts' fire escape to "rescue" her through her bedroom window.
 24. Erik Cohen (1971) and Glenn Bowman (1986) have written on a similar phenomenon between Palestinian youths in Israel and tourist women. The possibility of

- marriage and emigration with tourist women offered an escape from “the humiliation of always being marked as inferior in interactions with Israelis” (Bowman 1986: 78).
25. For a critique of this idea of sex workers needing “rescuing” see Greenberg (1991). And see novelist William Vollman’s brash and insensitive depiction of his own “rescue” of an underage Thai sex worker as a manly and daring adventure in the music magazine *Spin* (1993).
 26. Peck (1995) explores anti-immigrant violence in Germany, the refugee “problem,” and what it means to be a “German” versus a “foreigner.”
 27. Children born in Germany to German fathers raise different issues than those for children of the various migrant groups living in Germany. The narratives in *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out* (Opitz, Oguntoye, and Schultz 1992) provide a poignant glimpse of life in Germany for non-white German citizens.
 28. Davidson observes similar racialized fantasies in Cuba’s sex trade. She describes the white-skinned sex tourists as “fascinated by black sexuality, which is imagined to be ‘untamed’ and ‘primitive’ and therefore more uninhibited, exciting and abandoned than white sexuality” (1996: 46).
 29. On average, Dominican sex workers charge 500 pesos/US\$50 for an encounter. Generally there is no time limit, and they do not charge for separate sex acts.
 30. This is a play on words, since in this case *geiler* (better) also means “hornier.”
 31. In this paper I focus on foreign men seeking paid sexual encounters with local Dominican women. There are, however, local Dominican men, called *sanky-pankies*, who seek sexual encounters with foreign women. The original *sankies* in the mid-1980s were young men in their late teens and early twenties who worked on the beach renting water equipment. Their trademark was bleached dread locks, as well as tanned and toned bodies. *Sankies* were known for wooing white, female, middle-aged foreign tourists. In this period of tourist development, many of the female tourists were French Canadian and Canadian. These men did not work for cash, like female sex workers, but for gifts, meals, and other expenses at the discretion of the female tourists. Much like the “romance tourism” Pruitt and LaFont describe between Jamaican men and tourist women, *sankies’* skills often included treating the tourist women as “girlfriends” through a discourse of romance (1995). However, French Canadian female tourists have described giving their Dominican “lovers” money (even though they did not ask for any) and clothes, as well as paying for meals and drinks (Herold, Corbesi, Garcia, and de Moya 1992). Today, most of the original *sankies*, successful at marrying female tourists, are now living in Canada. Sosúans gossip that they are now divorced. There is, however, a new crop of young men who try to meet foreign women on the beaches and in the nightclubs. Even if they do not have dreads, Sosúans derisively refer to them as *sankies*.
 32. Here I am referring to Dominican women selling sex both in the Dominican Republic and overseas (except New York).
 33. Dominican newspapers have been full of stories over the past decade of Dominican women’s participation in the sex trade in Europe. An estimated 50,000 Dominican women have been trafficked in the 1980s and early 1990s—either voluntarily or forcibly—in the sex trade in Europe (Parejo and Rosario 1992). One researcher estimated that during this time that 30–40 trafficking rings specialized in the international trafficking of Dominican women (Van Den Berg 1991). However, a number of European countries, such as Spain, have made it more difficult

- to obtain "entertainment" visas, which were used to traffic women in the 1980s. What's more, between reading the Dominican press and hearing stories passed on by women who returned from Europe's sex trade, Dominican women generally are fearful of sex work overseas.
34. It is not just Dominican women who have been associated with the sex trade. Immigration officials in Hong Kong have targeted Thai women at the airport as suspected prostitutes (Schloss 1999). Codenamed "Operation Hoover," officers were ordered to stop Thai women aged 18–40. Similarly, Israeli officials have systematically deported Russian women at the airport, assuming these women are being smuggled into Israel's brothels. The Russian Ambassador to Israel assesses how such profiling stereotypes all Russian women, "Those who suffer are not only the girls who practice prostitution, but all the women who come from Russia, especially those with fair hair, who are treated badly" (Aharanot 1999). Russian women are also associated with prostitution in Northern Cyprus, a resort area, where, as throughout the Black Sea region, they are derogatively referred to as "Natashas".
 35. Although connections between the Internet and the sex trade remain under researched, there is scholarship on virtual sex, or Vsex (Deuel 1996), and the anonymous nature of the Internet and the possibility of creating new identities (Hall 1996). We can assume, for example, that many of the men who are members of *Travel and the Single Male* (which I discuss later in the paper) do not use their real names when writing about their experiences as sex tourists.
 36. Boca Chica is a tourist beach town on the outskirts of the capital, Santo Domingo. Many tourists make day trips to Boca Chica from the capital either to swim or to buy sex. It has the reputation of being highly commercialized and quite seedy. Like Sosúa, Boca Chica, when mentioned, immediately evokes images of the sex trade for Dominicans. I found many postings on the web about Boca Chica.
 37. Of course, there is violence in Sosúa's sex trade and the women are at risk anytime they leave a bar with a client. See Brennan (1997) where I write more extensively about these risks and how the women try to manage them as well as about two murders of sex workers in Sosúa.
 38. The addresses for these sites are <http://www.worldsexguide.org> and <http://www.tsmtravel.com>. Sex-related sites account for over 50% of Internet use.
 39. Since I am trying to unravel how German men *in Germany* find out about Sosúa and its sex trade, I found this travel service through a German search engine. Although the service and all the postings are in English, it is obvious that English is not the first language of many of the men who are posting messages. Since there are so many errors in grammar, I will not write (sic) after each one.
 40. However, I noticed that recently (1999–2000) both sites do not offer as many free postings from their members as they did in the past. The Internet opens many new ethical questions for field work. I decided that not only could I not pay money to support this site, but I was also uncomfortable assuming a false identity of a male sex tourist. Of course, I could always join as myself, a female academic, but I presume my queries about members' travels to Sosúa would invite heavily censored responses.
 41. Thanks to Charles Keeley for suggesting this phrasing.

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